

# Friday Times

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## Local

## Not a water festival



Local Spotlight

By Muna Al-Fuzai

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The national holidays in Kuwait will begin on Thursday evening and end on Monday night. This period is like a big escape for people, with congestion at the airport expected to reach its peak. Congratulations to them! It's a wise decision because of what happens annually in the name of celebrating the national days, and it is natural that many want to be away during these days.

For years now, the celebration of the national holiday has become a festival of wasting water, after the decision of the environment authority to prevent the use of foam due to health risks. So using water has become a phenomenon and is the most prominent feature of the Kuwaiti celebrations. In Dec 2017, the administrative judiciary issued a verdict to force the Cabinet to prevent the wastage of water during the national celebrations. This decision also opened a debate on the wastage of water throughout the year.

Kuwait is among the countries suffering from water poverty, high cost of seawater desalination and groundwater scarcity, so such a logical decision is required. A morning tour of residential areas is enough to see some maids and drivers clutching hoses to wash cars, with large lakes forming on streets as if a pipe has burst. It is a really sad and shameful scene.

The efforts of the Environment Public Authority succeeded in passing a law criminalizing the use of foam during national celebrations. Will it succeed, in cooperation with the ministry of electricity and water, in pushing the Council of Ministers to adopt a similar law criminalizing the wastage of water in the streets during the celebrations, and face the water sprays?!

I think that the problem is not only in wasting water, but also in how we convey the concept in our children's minds that emphasizes the importance of preserving water. How can we teach this to our children as long as we allow them to spray water on people and waste it just for fun?

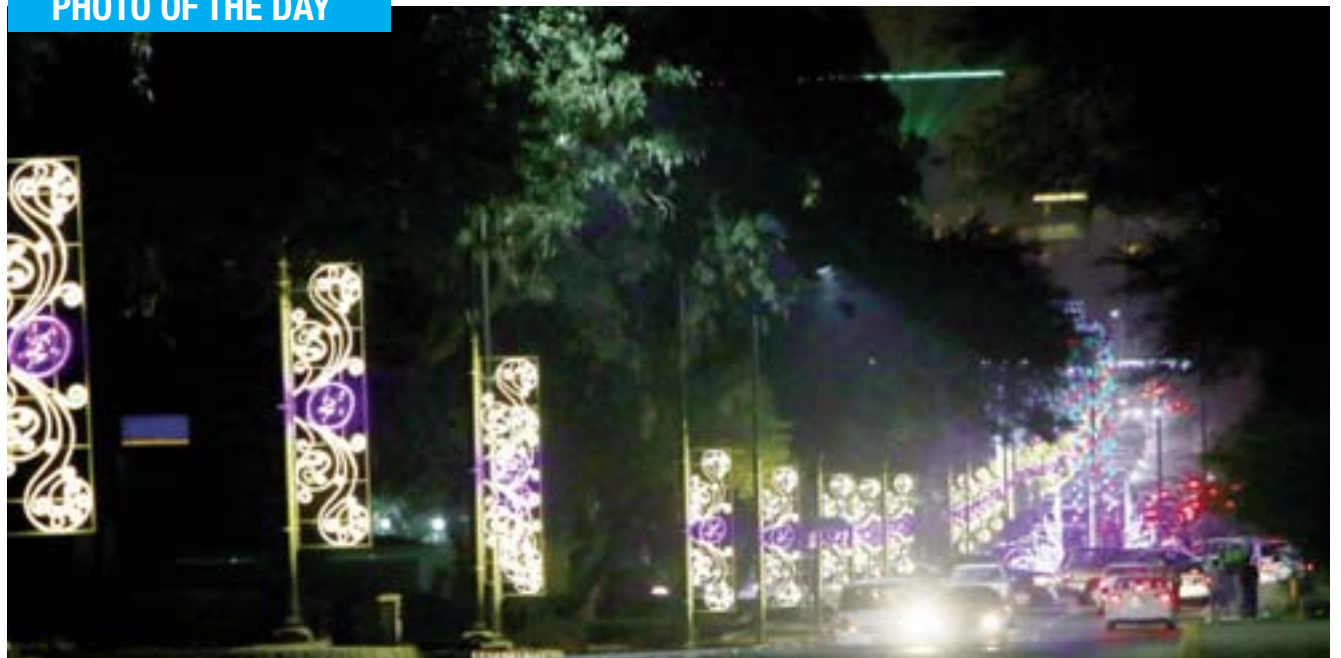
Recently, the government carried out campaigns against those who waste water washing cars. I support such an action because the value of a drop of water costs the ministry - from production till distribution - a lot of money and efforts. But this doesn't seem important to those who waste water just to play and harm others. Is there is no understanding of the culture of celebration, or has the government left things up to people, leading to chaos and wastage of water?

Many countries in the world impose fines on people who waste water because of a lack of adequate water resources such as rivers and the fear of facing drought that threatens the lives of all. The United States legally issues fines on areas that waste water. For example, the State Water Resources Council Control said in a press release that Beverly Hills and three other areas were fined \$61,000 because they consistently failed to meet the goals of water conservation.

In Kuwait, since 2011, there has been a discussion on the subject of wasting water throughout the year, especially with regards to washing cars, and imposing fines. The large water puddles damage the streets and cost the state budget large sums of money for maintenance. The per capita daily consumption of water sometimes reaches 500 liters, a number that clashes strongly with the reality of water poverty. The ministry of electricity and water is seeking to contain this phenomenon through the work of a judicial control team and fines of KD 500.

I wonder how the law will be applied on the wastage of water on the national days. The coming days will show who is the strongest - the law or the revelers - to ensure the holiday is a celebration and not a water festival.

## PHOTO OF THE DAY



Ahmadi governorate decorates the streets of Kuwait's oil town every year with thousands of lights to mark the National & Liberation Day celebrations. Thousands of revellers and visitors visit in the evenings to see the lights. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

## Give us hope, Joanna!



IN MY VIEW

by Nejouad Al-Yagout

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Life is difficult, and anyone who thinks otherwise is either living under a rock or too consumed with distractions to realize the state of the world. However, contrary to popular belief, the world is not getting more dangerous; we are simply becoming more aware. Whether this is due to the Internet, social media particularly, or a collective spiritual awakening or shift in consciousness is not important for this article. What is important is: we are becoming more aware.

Last week, the body of Joanna was found in the freezer of an abandoned apartment. The employers were not Kuwaiti. We know their nationalities by now, and it is no longer necessary to reiterate them here in order not to galvanize further judgement - as murder is a global issue and not one confined to any specific region or race.

The timing seemed disastrous, at first. This was only weeks after His Excellency, the President of Philippines, Rodrigo Duterte, imposed a ban on OFWs in Kuwait. Upon closer inspection, the divine timing could not have come at a better date. This discovery, so closely after a ban, seemed to create a shock that was followed by a sacred silence, almost as though we secretly acknowledged the seriousness of the situation. Our government promised to provide justice for Joanna, and it seemed as though both the ban by the president in addition to the discovery of Joanna's corpse brought two nations, on the brink of a diplomatic rift, closer.

Our Amir, ever-ready to defuse tension, has invited the President of the Philippines to Kuwait early next month to find a solution to this ongoing challenge. Unfortunately, drastic measures are sometimes needed to wake us up from our stupor of separation, and in this case Duterte's ban and the consequent discovery of Joanna's corpse were the catalysts needed for two countries to join forces to address an issue that has long warranted our attention: the (mis)treatment of domestic helpers.

But why do we have to wait for a tragedy to unite us? Why did a beautiful human being who left behind her family to find a better life have to die for us to awaken? And will her death awaken us, or will we continue to perpetuate this cycle of abuse regardless of where we come from or who we are?

Hopefully, we will not take the stance of a Member of Parliament who considered banning expatriates from hiring domestic helpers. This shift in blame will only plunge us deeper into darkness, lest we forget that the ban was implemented prior to the discovery of the victim's body.

Anyway, may this tragedy in particular (along with the ban) make us all ponder, make our hearts break in order to open; may the tragedy resurrect our collective conscience and remind us that when we are not aligned with love and respect, crimes run rampant. The solution is not just about strict enforcement of laws or the implementation of committees to monitor employers and employees, but about the implementation of a system that reminds us of our equality. And that system can only come from within us. What is external is merely a projection, a manifestation of the thoughts that shape us.

What needs to change is our mindsets. We can no longer afford to view ourselves as superior. We can no longer threaten our domestic workers with deportation if they raise their voices in defense, or keep their passports locked in our safes. We can no longer blame the government's silence for our actions.

What needs to change is much more than laws to protect the rights of so-called minorities. What needs to change is the belief that there are minorities. Paradoxically, we are among the minorities in our country.

We have learned from other nations that the law only changes what is on the surface. For example, women have been fighting for their rights for eons, and on a superficial level, they have gotten rights, but men still subjugate women; and women are still not paid equally anywhere in the world. This is because the mindset has not changed. The same can be said for the rights of refugees worldwide. There are laws to protect them, but they are still widely mistreated and disrespected and considered inferior.

What Joanna - a martyr for humanity - can teach us is that the only thing that can protect others from such a similar fate is knowing that we are all equal and teaching ourselves and future generations, not in a philosophical manner, but through actual realization. We all live on this planet, so we all have a right to be here, there and everywhere. And while we are here, let's respect each other. Let's remember that we are all souls seeking connection. Nelson Mandela wisely stated: "No one is born hating another person because of the color of his skin or his background or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite." So, let's start teaching love!



# Kuwait Times



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## RESCUED ANIMALS GET 'HOME' COMFORTS

By Nawara Fattahova

**H**aving five or six pets in a house seems like a lot but having 80 is unbelievable! Meet Mimi, animal rescuer and activist. She has rescued and provided shelter to hundreds of animals in Kuwait, most of them abused, abandoned and lost animals. She is currently fostering 65 cats and 16 dogs - the numbers change as she gives some up for adoption and rescues others.

"It's very hard to take care of all of them by myself, but I love animals. I started volunteering to rescue animals in 2009 with a cat, which I took to a shelter. I then joined various animal rescue groups, which trained me how to help these creatures. After my father passed away in 2012, I was alone, so I brought many animals at my house for fostering," Mimi told Kuwait Times.

Even after cleaning the place daily, the huge number of animals leaves the place smelling foul. It was hard to pass through the house without a facemask due to the strong stench. Mimi has placed the dogs and cats in all five rooms of her house, and lives in a separate room in the yard. She sends most of the rescued animals abroad. "Since I started this activity, I have found homes for about 100 cats and dogs in Kuwait, and have sent more than 350 dogs and cats abroad, mostly to the US. I have paid the shipping costs for 90 percent of these animals. A few times members of animal groups in the States came here to take the dogs with them, while a few times donors from Kuwait paid for sending the animals abroad," said Mimi.

All the dogs and cats that she fosters were either rescued by her or by other people who brought them to her. "Sometimes, people bring a dog that they don't want anymore and simply tie it to the tree in front of my house, or they fling it over the wall of the building into the yard. Some people call to tell me they have a dog that they don't want any more after it grew up, as they only liked it when it was a puppy, and have now got bored with it," she lamented.

"Many people have no sense of responsibility. They buy a small kitten or puppy and when it grows up, they kick it to the street. The case is worse with dogs, as people consider it an impure or unclean animal, so they start throwing rocks on it on the street. Many dogs that I have rescued were tortured by people," Mimi said.

She has found many abused dogs in Maidan Hawally. "The most tortured dog that I fostered was beaten by people in Maidan Hawally and took a long time to recover and trust people again. We found it tied to a pole in an abandoned room. It turns out there is a gang of Arab youngsters locking up the dogs in this area. They let them roam in the streets during the day to eat from the garbage, and lock them in that abandoned room during the night. It seems they sell them for dogfighting. I tried to speak to the families of these youngsters, but they didn't do anything," Mimi explained.

"From the same area, I rescued another dog that was tortured. Its skin got damaged and hair is not growing in that part of its body. Also from Maidan Hawally, I got three other dogs that were beaten by the residents. They even tried to poison them, but I rescued them in the nick of time. I have sent two of them to the States already. When I brought them to my house, the dogs couldn't believe that I let them sleep on a bed," she added.





## Local

Friday, February 23, 2018



Every cat and dog has a story. "I was fostering an expensive dog that I received from his Kuwaiti owner who gave the dog up as he had an accident and became disabled, so he couldn't take care of it anymore. I found it a family in the US for adoption. Also, once I found a beautiful husky tied to a pole in Shuwaikh in the heat of August. I rescued it and also sent it to the States. His owner there sends me its photos and tells me that people there always ask him from where he got this beautiful dog," Mimi noted. "When I rescue any animal, I directly take it to the veterinary for a checkup and treatment if needed. Also, the vet can tell the age of the animal. Once I found a dog that was around 14 years old - I sent it to the US too," she said.

On how she manages to keep the dogs with their loud noises and how the neighbors react, Mimi explained that they only bark when a stranger enters the house, otherwise they are quiet. In addition, she has installed insulation material in the entire house to minimize noise and disturbance as much as possible. She hopes to find volunteers to help her in fostering the animals or finding good and trustworthy people to adopt them. Mimi also feels sorry for the large dogs that are at the house all the time, as she is not able to take all the dogs daily by herself for a walk. So she would appreciate it if some volunteers can at least help her take the dogs for a walk.

Cases of abandonment and abuse of animals are rising in Kuwait, so demand has increased for more rescuers. There are many groups and individuals fostering animals in Kuwait, including: Paws Kuwait, Kuwait Animal Rescue Unit, Rescue Adopt Foster, Kuwait AASP Shelter, Q8 Help, Save a Soul Kuwait, Become a Foster Guardian and others. You can find these all on Instagram if you want to help support animal rescue groups in Kuwait.



— Photos by Joseph Shagra



# Held without charge

By Kuwait Times staff

If you are a non-Western expat, have no wasta and get into a conflict with a powerful person in Kuwait, it may lead you to lose your freedom for an indefinite period claims the family of a man imprisoned here without charge.

Ahmad, 31, was active on social media, particularly on Twitter. One day he got into a discussion over a religious issue, and the next day he was arrested by the criminal investigations department. He hasn't returned home for more than two years, according to his family members.

He has never been charged. Has never faced a court or even the public prosecution. And no official can seem to explain why he's in jail or how long he will be kept there.

Being sanctioned or imprisoned for committing a crime or violation is correct, but being illegally imprisoned without charge is in conflict with all international laws. His family hasn't found a solution to release him or even been given a chance to defend him in court.

"We didn't find anyone to help us resolve Ahmad's situation. We asked help from the embassy, but they told us they can't do anything as he is not officially charged, so they can defend him. The only thing the embassy helped us with was not giving them Ahmad's passport to be deported," Ahmad's sister Huda told Kuwait Times.

Ahmad's family doesn't want him to be deported. "My parents came to Kuwait in the early 1960s and all of us were born here. Even most of my uncles and aunts from both sides are in Kuwait. We have no family or relatives back home," she added.

Huda claims the rest of her family and herself don't know what was Ahmad's crime. "Ahmad is in the deportation prison for more than two years, after he spent some time at the criminal investigations department. I asked him what he did wrong and what he was accused of. He said that when he was arrested, they asked him about his accounts on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook, how did he get his followers, if he knows them and so on," she said.



**KT uncovers the case of a 'missing' man held in a Kuwait jail with no charges for more than two years**

"The only thing he knows for sure is that the person behind his imprisonment is an officer in the interior ministry, who had a fight with him over a sectarian subject. Ahmad also told me that this person vowed he will deport him without any official accusation. It seems this person is very powerful and has friends in prison and various departments of the ministry," she added.

Ahmad's family went to a lawyer to help them but they were not successful. "My other brother met a lawyer to

discuss Ahmad's issue with him, but the lawyer told him he can't help him if he hasn't been officially charged with committing a crime, as there is no case filed against him to be defended. The lawyer advised him to find some wasta to release Ahmad," Huda said.

According to her, they visited three former and present members of parliament to help them, but they didn't do anything. "We also contacted the Kuwait Human Rights Society, which couldn't provide any help as there is no official case filed against him. Finally, some people advised us to visit an official at the interior ministry who is close to the minister, who may help us resolve this problem. I went to his office twice with my mother, and we are hoping that he will help us, although two months have passed already."

Ahmad's situation in the prison is awful. "Ahmad complained of the bad treatment he is getting in prison, telling me that the person who got him there is using his friends to make him suffer. He told me that he never receives any of the things we bring him to prison. Many times, the guards wake him during the night and don't let him sleep. In Ramadan, they switched the air-conditioning off so he couldn't even fast. He is in solitary confinement and wishes to be in a place without a ceiling. Our father passed away last year and Ahmad couldn't attend the burial or see him for the last time," Huda anguished.

"If Ahmad has committed a crime, let him be legally charged and have the opportunity to defend himself. We don't mind if he is sentenced to imprisonment - at least we will know for how long he will stay in prison, and it will be a legal process," concluded Huda.

## Goodbye to the Tea Man

By Athoob Al-Shuaibi

In Sharq, amid the roadwork, car horns blare angrily as drivers try to navigate traffic jams to reach the First Ring Road through the intersection between Shaheed Park and a gas station. At the rear of the station, an old man in a wheelchair and a woman in a black abaya sit under a tree in a small patch of grass. Every day, they come here to spend long hours outdoors by the highway. It's a curious sight, so I met the couple to learn more.

"I am ill and need to get some fresh air, but my house has no windows. I come here after noon prayers. I then go for Asr prayers, then return to sit here until sunset," the man named Fakhouraldein said. He has been working in Kuwait for 30 years. His first job was with the late Dr Abdul Rahman Al-Sumait, founder of the Association of Direct Aid for Charitable Action.

"Dr Al-Sumait and his wife were a kind-hearted couple. I lived with them in their home and worked at the association. When I had children, it became difficult to provide for their needs. So Dr Al-Sumait's wife

helped me get a job at the interior ministry at a higher salary as a tea man. But eight years ago, I had a traffic accident that caused my disability while vacationing back home in India," Fakhouraldein said.

When he came back to work in the ministry, it was difficult for him to continue. His boss, however, was understanding of his health and physical condition, and allowed Fakhouraldein to stay at home until he fully recovered. "There are people in Kuwait who are really kind and have a generous hand. Thank God I have known many of them throughout my life in Kuwait," he said.

Fakhouraldein's wife remained silent all the time, but wept as she recalled the painful incident when her husband pulled up his pants leg to reveal the injury. "My wife has to push the wheelchair and walk down the street. The streets are all dug up, and the roadwork makes it hard for pedestrians to walk in the area. This is why we're here. It is very difficult to move in the wheelchair," he lamented.

Fakhouraldein is due to travel to India soon because of his condition, and is not sure if he will return.





# DAI: Serving Kuwait's cultural scene since '83

Since it was founded in 1983, Dar Al-Athar Al-Islamiya (DAI) has been serving the Kuwaiti cultural scene via spreading arts and culture appreciation locally, regionally, and globally. DAI, celebrating its 35th anniversary, was founded to display the collections owned by Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and his wife Sheikhha Hussa Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah. While initially displaying Al-Sabah's collections, DAI evolved with the institute now owning over 30,000 art pieces, artifacts and objects from the Islamic world, Spain, China, and more.



Sheikhha Hussa Sabah  
Al-Salem Al-Sabah

Speaking to KUNA, head of the DAI fellowship founding committee and member of the National Council for Culture, Arts, and Letters (NCCAL) Bader Al-Baijan said that the institute played an integral role in preserving and displaying important Islamic art and artifacts. DAI also has a hand in organizing cultural events and exhibitions in various parts of the world, which makes it one of the most active entities

promoting arts and cultural appreciation, said the official.

Al-Baijan also indicated that Dar Al-Athar Al-Islamiya organized several training courses to spread cultural awareness amongst all sectors of society namely children. DAI took part in several global exhibitions from 1985 until 1989. The institute also organized since 1990 several exhibitions in Kuwait and elsewhere, informing the world about DAI's collection. — KUNA



Dar Al-Athar Al-Islamiya. — KUNA photos



Antiquities displayed at Dar Al-Athar Al-Islamiya.

## Kuwaitis and ice cream: A story of passion dating back to the '30s

The weather during the summer in Kuwait is known for its scorching heat and suffocating humidity, which drives most people almost mad. However, in the 1930s, Kuwaitis were introduced to Al-Barred (ice cream), also referred to by its Turkish name Dondurma. The delicacy became an instant hit amongst people, especially during the summer season. In his book on handicrafts and old commercial activities in Kuwait, historian Mohammad Jamal said

a person known as Abu Eskandar from Iraq introduced ice cream to the country.

Ice cream was handmade using a mixture of water, sugar and color additives, said Jamal, adding that the mix was put into containers and covered in salt and ice to lower the temperature and preserve the contents. He added that ice cream was sold in traditional coffee shops and it was served in small plates to eager customers.

Amongst the first people to open ice cream shops in Kuwait were the late Hussein and Abbas Shishtar, in addition to Abdunour Al-Awadhi and Mohammad Busheri, said Jamal, indicating that in the 1940s, the late Shaaban and Gholum Ghathanfari opened the first factory that supplied ice cream to cafes and shops. Later on, ice cream became more available to the masses to the point of having venders roaming the street nowadays, calling people to buy the sweet and tasty dessert, said Jamal. — KUNA





## Local

# FM chairs high-level UN Security Council meeting

## Commitment to UN Charter, laws of great importance

**NEW YORK:** Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah yesterday presided over a high-level UN Security Council meeting on "Purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security". The meeting, proposed by Kuwait, saw the UNSC member states renewing their commitments to improve the mechanisms for addressing the risks posed to the international community and enabling the council to deliver its mandate in preserving peace and security worldwide.

Speakers at the gathering noted that the meeting took place shortly ahead of Kuwait celebrating its 27th Liberation Day, a reminder of the collective will and ability of the international community to liberate Kuwait from the Iraqi invasion of 1991 pursuant to the provisions of the UN Charter. In his address to the meeting, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled thanked the Secretary-General of the United Nations Antonio Guterres for "the valuable briefing" he offered to the Council. He reaffirmed Kuwait's support to the efforts of the UN chief and his vision for improving the working mechanism of the UN and minimizing the threats facing the world. He also thanked former UN secretary-general Ban Ki-moon for his briefing.

Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled said: "The theme of

our meeting today 'Purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security' is exactly the same as the targets of the UN Charter. Let me quote the first lines of the preamble of the Charter: 'We the peoples of the United Nations determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind, and to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small.' Kuwait's invitation for holding this important meeting aims to provide a chance for assessing our collective responsibilities towards the commitments specified in the UN Charter."

Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled regretted that some members of the UN failed to deliver their commitments and committed flagrant violations of the principles of the UN Charter, thus posing grave risks to the international peace and security. He noted that the Kuwait's selection of the theme and timing of this session bears the significance that commitment to the purposes of the UN Charter and international laws is of great importance for all UN member states, particularly the small ones. "Kuwait will be celebrating, on February 26, the 27th anniversary of its liberation from the Iraqi invasion in 1991; this liberation was



**NEW YORK:** Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah presides over a high-level UN Security Council meeting on Wednesday. — KUNA

the fruit of global commitment to the principles of the UN Charter," he pointed out.

On the tools available for the UN Security Council to deliver its mandate in maintaining peace and security, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled highlighted the roles of chapters VI, VII and VIII on action with respect to threats to the peace, breaches of the peace, and acts of aggression; and regional arrangements, respectively. "After more than seven decades of its adoption, the UN Charter remains to be an effective means of preventing and settling disputes through peaceful ways," he added.

Regarding the unity of the UNSC, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled said the ability of the Council to shoulder its responsibility depends primarily on consensus among its permanent members. "The recent years or decades showed that the Council failed to act vis-a-vis grave crisis due to divisions among its five permanent members which abused their veto powers," he regretted. He cited as examples the Palestinian cause that remained unsolved over the last 70 years and the Syrian crisis the entered its seventh year with the death toll rising to more than 400,000.— KUNA

## Feuding Gulf states urge Syria to stop Ghouta violence

**RIYADH:** Gulf states yesterday urged an end to the deadly assault on Syria's rebel-held enclave of Eastern Ghouta, as rival Saudi Arabia and Qatar joined ranks in calling for an immediate truce. Regional titan Riyadh, which leads a four-state Arab bloc boycotting Qatar over accusations of ties to both Sunni Islamists and Shiite Iran, demanded the regime of Bashar al-Assad end the violence that has left more than 300 people dead and sparked international outrage.

The statement however stopped short of outright condemnation, appealing instead to Damascus to adhere to UN Security Council resolution 2254, which calls for a nationwide ceasefire and a political transition. "We stress the need for the Syrian regime to stop the violence, to allow in humanitarian aid, and to take seriously the path of a political solution to the crisis," the Saudi foreign ministry said on Twitter. "We are concerned over the continuation of Syrian regime attacks on Eastern Ghouta and the impact on civilians there."

The UAE, a military ally of Saudi Arabia that is also boycotting Qatar, expressed concern at the escalation of violence and called for an "immediate truce" to halt the bloodshed and protect civilians. It also called for allowing humanitarian and medical aid to civilians. Rival Qatar, however, slammed the assault as an outright "massacre". "The State of Qatar expresses its strong... condemnation of the massacres and intensive aerial bombardments carried out by the forces of the Syrian regime," read a statement released by Qatar's foreign ministry.—AFP

## Dutch-Kuwaiti diwaniya promotes academic and cultural relations

**THE HAGUE:** Kuwait and the Netherlands launched this week a unique diwaniya project to promote cultural and academic relations and to build people-to-people contacts between the two countries. A group of eight students from Kuwait and eight from the Netherlands held three days of intensive meetings and discussions in the Netherlands flesh out this new project.

Counsellor at the Kuwait Embassy at the Hague Ali Al-Thaeidi noted that this project comes at a crucial time when both Kuwait and the Netherlands hold non-permanent seats in the UN Security Council. He told KUNA that the students discussed important issues facing the world such as energy, climate, terrorism and youth, and the joint-cooperation between the two countries in the Security Council to contribute effectively to the international community's engagement with these issues. It is first time in which students who hold no official status are in in discussion on how to strengthen the relationship between the two countries bilaterally and internationally, said Thaeidi.

In Kuwait, the diwaniya has been held for over 200 years, contributing to the country's political structure and parliamentary system. In the diwaniya, a broad scale of issues can be discussed, and hence they found it an inspiring way to further strengthen Dutch-Kuwaiti-relations. Abdullah Al-Yahya, secretary of board of directors and head of the finance and information technology at Kuwait's foreign ministry who is heading the Kuwaiti delegation, said the proposal came from the Dutch foreign ministry a

year ago. "Choosing the name diwaniya was very interesting. We accepted the proposal immediately," he told KUNA.

Eight undergraduate university students in Kuwait were chosen for the project and they were given six months to prepare. He noted that it is the first time that such a diwaniya project has been held and Kuwait has proposed to hold a second diwaniya with the Netherlands in Kuwait next year. Yahya stressed that he was "very impressed" by the performance of the Kuwaiti students.

The first day of the diwaniya, held at the residency of Thaeidi on Feb 19, was devoted to issues like international humanitarian law and the water-energy-food nexus. The second day was devoted to lectures by Dutch diplomats at the Dutch foreign ministry, followed by a museum tour and participation in Kuwait's national day reception. Yesterday included a tour and briefing of the Netherlands institute of international relations, UNESCO and the Dutch institute for water education in the city of Delft.

KUNA spoke to a number of Dutch and Kuwait students on the sidelines of the National Day reception on Tuesday evening. Hamad Al-Mutairi said all eight of them were from the American University of Kuwait and all of them were specializing in international relations. "Our experience from this project is very positive," he said. Ali Al-Qallaf said the project is "very interesting and very informative. It is like an academic exchange between us and with the Netherlands. We were introduced to the Dutch culture and we introduced them to Kuwaiti culture."

Ali Al-Khuraibat said the project is an "interesting collaboration and a very unique opportunity." Fatima Al-Mazyad said: "It was a very nice experience. We engaged in a lot of cultural exchange." "We were both on the same page when it came to international humanitarian law and protection of civilians. We all believed in one vision," adding that that after completing her studies, she would like to become a diplomat to represent Kuwait.

Dutch student Menk Vierdag, who studies at the Leiden University, is doing his masters in international relations. He said he found the diwaniya project very interesting and it gave them an opportunity to discuss food energy and human rights. "It was very interesting to see the perspective from the Kuwaiti side.—KUNA



# Duterte says may expand ban on outbound workers

## HRW urges Kuwait to agree new worker safeguards

**MANILA:** Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte said yesterday he would extend his ban on sending workers to Kuwait to include other countries if investigations showed Filipinos were being seriously abused by employers elsewhere. The Southeast Asian country has suspended the deployment of workers to the Gulf state since last month after Duterte said the abuse was unchecked and had driven several Filipino domestic helpers there to suicide.

"We are doing an audit now (to) find out the places where we deploy Filipinos and our countrymen suffer brutal treatment and human degradation," Duterte said in the central province of Iloilo. He was visiting the wake of a Filipino whose body was found this month in a freezer at an abandoned apartment in Kuwait, with signs of torture.

The killing was the final straw for Duterte, who asked commercial airlines to help the voluntary repatriation of workers from Kuwait. The Philippine Senate began an inquiry on Wednesday into deaths and abuse of Filipino workers. More than 2 million Filipinos are working in Kuwait and other Middle East countries, including Qatar, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, but many cases of abuse have also been reported elsewhere. They often work as domestic helpers, construction workers, engineers and nurses.

Kuwait has sought to mend diplomatic ties by inviting Duterte to visit, its state news agency KUNA said on Monday. The Philippine labor ministry wants Kuwait to be able to assure safety of Filipinos before the ban can be lifted. Duterte said a list of both reported and unreported cases of mistreatment of Filipino migrant workers would be prepared, which he described as "a long, long task", without mentioning any timetable. He said he would not speculate on the countries to which the worker ban could be extended.

Filipinos abroad sent home last year a record

high \$28.1 billion in cash remittances, money that helped fuel spending and sustain robust expansion in one of the world's fast-growing economies. Duterte has said his long-term aim is to slow the exodus abroad by boosting the domestic economy and creating jobs that provide workers with sufficient income.

### HRW criticizes ban

Meanwhile, Human Rights Watch called on Kuwait to agree to greater protection for migrant workers as a Philippine delegation was due in the state yesterday to discuss an outcry over alleged abuses of Filipinos. But the New York-based watchdog also criticized the ban imposed by the Philippines last week on migrants leaving to work in Kuwait, saying it was likely to increase the number resorting to unregulated channels that exposed them to a greater risk of abuse.

"Kuwait should confront the outcry over deaths, beatings and rapes of domestic workers by taking immediate steps to reform the kafala system, which traps workers with abusive employers," HRW's Middle East women's rights researcher Rothna Begum said in a statement late Wednesday. The kafala or sponsorship system, widely prevalent in the oil-rich Gulf states, ties migrant workers' visas to their employers, prohibiting workers from leaving or changing jobs without prior consent.

"The Philippines should work with Kuwait to protect workers rather than ban them from migrating, which is more likely to cause harm than to help," Begum said. "Both Kuwait and the Philippines have an opportunity to work together to increase protections for domestic workers and fix the gaps that are leaving workers vulnerable to extreme abuse." Kuwait has said it is investigating reported deaths and abuses, and insisted there were only a small number considering that there are more than 250,000 Filipinos working in Kuwait. — Agencies

## Labor from new countries to lower recruitment fees

**KUWAIT:** The Cabinet's decision to assign Al-Durra for Manpower Company to bring in workers from new countries such as Indonesia, Bangladesh, Vietnam, Nepal and others will lower recruitment fees and ensure the rights of employers and employees, the company's General Manager Saleh Al-Wuhaib said yesterday. The company is working hard to bring domestic workers from new countries in coordination with the concerned Kuwaiti authorities, Wuhaib told KUNA. He also stressed the company's efforts to ensure the employees were healthy and fit to work, saying that such efforts will be in coordination with the health ministry and the countries providing manpower.

He explained that the company handles all recruitment procedures with symbolic prices, high efficiency and speed of completion, in addition to qualifying them through courses in their countries. Al-Durra is the first company in Kuwait to be formed from national bodies concerned with the public's interest. It was established to achieve a qualitative leap in this type of business, as it carries a national and humanitarian vision in the

management of the labor market, he said.

The company started to bring in experienced Sri Lankan cooks with recruitment fees of KD 500-600 (\$1,650-1,980). Their salaries range from KD 120-170 (\$400-560). Wuhaib said external bodies of employment abroad are responsible for determining the fees for labor recruitment in accordance with the laws of those countries, adding that the cost of recruiting Sri Lankan domestic workers was at about KD 960 (\$3,215) with the company gaining 10 percent from the recruitment process.

The rise in the cost of recruiting Sri Lankan domestic workers is due to the increase in the fees of employment offices in Sri Lanka, which range between KD 550-600 (\$1,815-1,980), as well as the official procedures of medical examination, transportation and fingerprinting, that cost about KD 240-300. The company receives about 200 daily calls from customers to request the employment of Sri Lankan workers, said Wuhaib. He added that the prices of recruiting labor at private agencies are between KD 1,200-1,500 (\$3,960-4,950).

Al-Durra for Manpower Company, in accordance with law no. 69/2015, is a Kuwaiti company specialized in the recruitment of foreign workers. Its ownership is distributed between the Union of Consumer Co-Operative Societies by 60 percent, General Authority for Investment with 10 percent, General Organization for Social Insurance 10 percent, the General Authority for Minors Affairs 10 percent and Kuwait Airways 10 percent. — KUNA

## Anti-graft body wants Assembly report on deposits

By B Izzak

**KUWAIT:** The Anti-Corruption Authority yesterday demanded the final investigation report prepared by a National Assembly panel that probed allegations of illegal bribes accepted by members of parliament, a senior official said. Assistant Secretary General at the Authority Mohammad Buzub said the authority wants to study the report after receiving a complaint from former MP Abdullah Al-Turaiji about claims of a new graft case.

Turaiji said earlier this week that he has filed a complaint accusing several former and current MPs of corruption that involved hundreds of real estate dealings in the five electoral constituencies. He demanded that the Anti-Corruption Authority investigate the new claims and supplied them with documents.

He has not disclosed any names to the media.

About 13 former and current MPs were accused accepting millions of dinars in bribes for casting their votes between 2006 and 2009. The public prosecution had investigated the allegations and decided to shelve the case because of insufficient legislation to prosecute the lawmakers. But after a resounding victory by the opposition in the Feb 2012 election, the Assembly formed a committee to investigate the corruption scandal, but could not complete it because the constitutional court dissolved the Assembly four months later. The investigation was however completed by the new Assembly when the committee was headed by Turaiji himself. The publication of the news in 2011 led to street protests demanding the resignation of the former prime minister Sheikh Nasser Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, who finally stepped down in late November of the same year. In a related development, opposition MP Riyadh Al-Adasani yesterday criticized the failure of the Assembly to approve the key legislation on conflict of interests, saying this has caused Kuwait to go down further by 10 places on the corruption perception index. He said that the legislation should have been approved immediately after the exposure of the so-called bank deposits corruption case in which a number of MPs had reportedly accepted bribes. Adasani said he will not let the suspected graft in

the interior ministry go without a proper investigation and eventually penalizing the perpetrators.

### Grilling mulled

Separately, leading opposition lawmaker Jamaan Al-Harbash, who was freed after serving more than three months in jail, said the opposition will consult carefully with all MPs before deciding whether to grill the prime minister or the interior minister regarding their imprisonment. Harbash was in jail along with MP Waleed Al-Tabtabaei and dozens of opposition activists who were handed harsh jail terms for storming the National Assembly building in Nov 2011 following a demonstration against corruption.

They were jailed for three months before the cassation court freed them on bail pending the completion of the trial. Harbash said that they had entered the Assembly building as a reaction to MPs receiving KD 53 million in bribes from former senior government officials, describing the case as the most serious corruption case in the country. Meanwhile, Tabtabaei submitted an amendment to the 2015 law establishing a company to recruit domestic helpers from abroad. The proposed amendment calls to allow citizens to recruit maids directly from abroad after the company failed to resolve the problem of high prices.



# Kuwait embassies mark National, Liberation Days



MUSCAT: Kuwait's embassy in Oman celebrates the National Days. —KUNA photos



DOHA: Kuwait's embassy in Qatar celebrates the National Days.

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait embassies around the world celebrated the 57th National Day, the 27th Liberation Day and the 12th anniversary of HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's assumption of power. In Muscat, the embassy held a ceremony that included an exhibition on different Kuwaiti publishing, attended by senior Omani officials. In a statement to KUNA, Kuwaiti Ambassador to Oman Fahad Al-Mutairi congratulated the Kuwaiti leadership and people on the occasion. He also hailed the recently

signed Duqm refinery project agreement between Kuwait and Oman with a cost of over \$8 billion divided on the two sides equally.

Kuwait Embassy in Qatar also held a similar ceremony organized by Ambassador Hafeeth Al-Ajmi. It included an exhibition showing documentary movies on His Highness the Amir's achievements. Meanwhile in Malta, the ceremony, organized by Ambassador Faisal Al-Adwani, was attended by senior Maltese officials,

including acting President of Malta Dolores Cristina. In her speech to the celebration, Cristina hailed aid provided by Kuwait through the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED). They added that they are looking forward to signing agreements on higher education and scientific research with Kuwait. In India, the ceremony was organized by ambassador Fahad Al-Awadi and attended by senior officials who extended their greetings to the Kuwaiti leadership and people. —KUNA

## Palestinian charity in Gaza celebrates Kuwait's Nat'l days



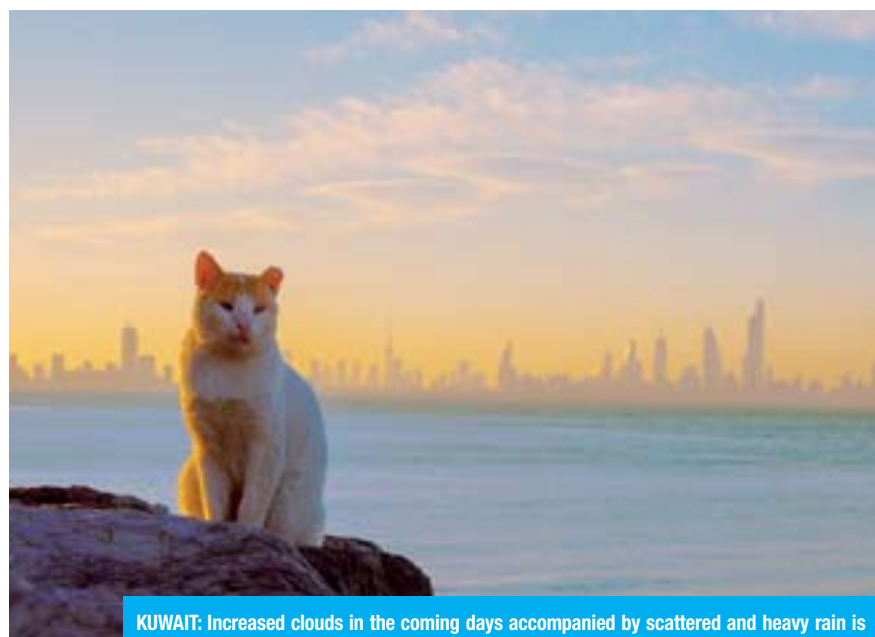
**GAZA:** A Palestinian charity in Gaza Strip organized a festival on Wednesday to mark Kuwait's national days. People in Gaza wanted to share the joy of national days celebrations with Kuwaiti people in recognition of their humanitarian support to Palestinian people, Director of Gaza-based Al-Falah Charity Ramadan Tanburah said in a press statement. He lauded Kuwait's role as hub for humanitarian action and its defense of the Palestinian cause and backing to Palestinian charities. He congratulated Kuwait's Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, government and people on the dear occasions. —KUNA

## Cloudy weather forecast with chance of rain

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait is currently affected by the seasonal Sudan depression, accompanied by relatively humid air, which might lead to increasing clouds in the coming days accompanied by scattered and heavy rain, said Abdul Aziz Al-Qarawi, the weather forecaster at Kuwait Meteorological Center (KMC). Today, the weather will be partly cloudy with light to moderate southeasterly wind at a speed of between 8-30 km/h. The maximum expected temperatures will be between 24-26 degrees Celsius. Sea state will be light to moderate, and waves will be between two to three feet.

Tonight, the weather will be partly cloudy to cloudy with light to moderate southeasterly wind at speeds between 8-28 km/h. The minimum temperature expected is between 12-14 degrees Celsius. The sea state will be slight to moderate with waves at one to four feet and a chance of scattered rain.

Tomorrow, weather will be partly cloudy to cloudy with chance of scattered heavy thunder rain, and southeasterly light to moderate wind active sometimes at speeds of be-



KUWAIT: Increased clouds in the coming days accompanied by scattered and heavy rain is forecast. —KUNA

tween 15-45km/h, the expected maximum temperatures between 23-25 degrees Celsius. During the night, weather would be partly cloudy to cloudy with chance for scattered thunder rain and the wind is southeasterly light to moderate, active

sometimes with speed between 15-45 km/h. The minimum temperature is expected between 15-18 degrees Celsius and the sea state is light to moderate high sometimes, waves from two to six feet, with chance of fog at some areas. —KUNA





Trump suggests  
arming teachers

## Four arrests over Taiwan's 'first' bitcoin robbery

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**KAFR BATNA, Syria:** A man carries a severely wounded Syrian at a make-shift hospital in Kafr Batna following Syrian government bombardments on the besieged Eastern Ghouta region on the outskirts of the capital Damascus. — AFP

# Chaos deepens in Syria enclave

## Death toll for Damascus 5-day blitz hits 368

**DOUMA:** The Syrian regime rained rockets and bombs on Eastern Ghouta yesterday, killing another 19 civilians as international pressure mounted to stop the carnage in the rebel-held enclave. Calls for a humanitarian truce in one of the bloodiest episodes of Syria's seven-year-old conflict went unheeded as the death toll for Damascus's five-day blitz rose to 368. The United Nations chief said the bloodshed wreaked by the aerial campaign had turned Eastern Ghouta into "hell on earth", while German Chancellor Angela Merkel called for an end to the "massacre". Residents huddled in basements as government forces pounded the besieged enclave with rockets and bombs, turning towns into fields of ruins and even hitting hospitals.

According to Doctors Without Borders, 13 of the facilities it supports in Eastern Ghouta were damaged or destroyed in three days, leaving remaining staff with very little to save the hundreds of wounded brought to them every day. In the

hospital mortuary in Douma, the main town in the enclave just east of Damascus, bodies wrapped in white shrouds were already lining up on the floor, two of them children. Little pools of blood dotted the way to the hospital, where most of the victims of the sustained rocket fire unleashed by government troops yesterday were taken.

### Nowhere safe

"The rocket fire hasn't stopped this morning. Around 200 ground-to-ground rockets struck Douma alone," said Rami Abdel Rahman, head of the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights. Morning rain appeared to initially keep warplanes away but the sky cleared by midday and jets, some of them Russian according to the Observatory, soon returned. Russia has so far denied direct involvement in the assault on Ghouta but the pro-government Syrian newspaper Al-Watan reported yesterday that Russian warplanes and advisers had joined the battle.

Regime and allied forces have been massing

around the enclave, in which an estimated 400,000 people live, ahead of a likely ground offensive to flush out holdout Islamist and jihadist groups. The brief respite provided by the rain yesterday encouraged some residents to venture out of their basements and shelters, to buy food, check on their property or enquire about their relatives and neighbors. In the town of Hammuriyeh, a queue had formed outside a shop as starving residents tried to stock up but another rocket sowed panic and sent everybody back to their shelters. In Douma, a young boy tried to peddle lighters on the street but rocket fire quickly forced him to scamper back to cover.

### Powerless

An AFP correspondent saw rescuers known as the "White Helmets" forced to stop their efforts to retrieve a wounded woman from the rubble of a collapsed home when air strikes resumed. When they ventured back to the site, the woman was dead. The indiscriminate bombardment and the

strikes on medical facilities sparked global outrage but few concrete options emerged to stop the bloodletting. "The killing of children, the destruction of hospitals—all that amounts to a massacre that must be condemned and which must be countered with a clear no," Merkel said. Russia has asked for a special meeting of the UN Security Council and the Red Cross has demanded it be allowed to enter the besieged enclave to help overwhelmed doctors and nurses to treat the wounded. The aid community voiced its frustration as the world appeared once again powerless to stop a conflict that has left almost 350,000 dead in seven years and caused destruction rarely seen since World War II. Humanitarian agencies are "sickened that no matter how many times they've raised the alarm, taken the step of speaking out, called on the Security Council to do something, the violence and brutality will sink to new lows," a statement by the Syria INGO Regional Forum said. Talks for a deal between the regime and the armed groups controlling Ghouta appear to have stalled. —Agencies



# Somalia's forensic lab targets rape impunity

## Troubled country tackles widespread sexual violence

**GAROWE:** The new freezers at Somalia's only forensic laboratory can store thousands of DNA samples, although for now there are just five. The big hope is that they could be the start of a revolution in how the troubled Horn of Africa country tackles its widespread sexual violence—provided some daunting hurdles are overcome. The first sample arrived at the start of the year taken on a cotton swab from the underwear of a woman, a rape victim from the village of Galdogob. It was wrapped in paper and driven 250 kilometers to the Puntland Forensic Centre in Garowe, capital of semi-autonomous Puntland, slipped into a protective glass tube and placed in one of the three ultra-low temperature fridges.

If DNA ID can be teased from the sample, this would be a crucial step in convicting the woman's rapist. No longer would it be a case of he-said-she-said, in which the survivor is less often believed than the accused. Two decades of conflict and turmoil have made Somalia a place where lawlessness and sexual violence are rampant. "Now, people who have been raped hide because they don't have evidence," said Abdifatah Abdikadir Ahmed, who heads the Garowe police

investigations department. But with the lab, he said, "it's a scientific investigation. There are biological acts you can zero in on."

### Challenges

Not yet, however. Abdirashid Mohamed Shire, who runs the lab, has a team of four technicians ready but is awaiting the arrival of the final pieces of equipment. Their work to provide the evidence that might convict or exonerate is yet to begin. And the pressure is on. The freezers mean the DNA samples can be safely stored for years but Somali law allows a rape suspect to be held for a maximum of 60 days. Shire needs the analysis and identifica-

### Lawlessness and violence rampant

tion machines urgently so that, as he put it, "justice will be timely served".

The laboratory, partly funded by Sweden, was launched last year after the Puntland state government enacted a Sexual Offences Act in 2016, which criminalized sexual offences and imposed tough penalties. But technology alone will not solve Somalia's many judicial weaknesses. The DNA sample from Galdogob, for example, was stored in unclear and unrefrigerated conditions for five days before being sent to the lab, mean-



**GAROWE, Somalia:** Laboratory technicians work on DNA testing at the Puntland Forensic Center in Garowe, Puntland State, Somalia. — AFP

ing a defense counsel could potentially argue the DNA evidence had been tampered with. Human rights lawyers worry the new lab might backfire for this reason. "A lot of thought needs to be given to how the chain of custody can be preserved in these kinds of cases," said Antonia Mulvey of Legal Action Worldwide, a Kenya-based non-profit organization. More fundamen-

tal still is the failure of Somalia's police to take sexual assault cases—and their jobs—seriously. Corruption is rife, with a legal advisor to Puntland's justice ministry saying officers "meddle" in cases, undermining them for personal gain. "My concern is that the corrupted system could not make a sure success of the lab," the advisor said, requesting anonymity to speak candidly. — AFP

## Fugitive Bahrain militants die at sea en route to Iran

**DUBAI:** Three suspected Bahraini militants wanted on terrorism charges died at sea in unexplained circumstances this month and another is missing, activists said, after they appear to have fled the country by boat headed for Iran. The incident shines a rare light on alleged links between a small, armed fringe of Bahrain's Shiite Muslim opposition and Iran, which authorities in the Western-allied Gulf kingdom accuse of helping stoke years of attacks against its police.

An activist group in their home village called Youth of Karbabad hailed the four men as "holy warriors" in a statement, saying they sought to flee authorities by sea. "They were martyred...in a sinking in regional waters near Iran on February 7 in hazy circumstances which remain unclear". Ruled by a Sunni monarchy, Bahrain has cracked down on perceived threats since pro-democracy Arab Spring protests in 2011 led mainly by the island kingdom's Shiite majority were quashed with help from Gulf Arab neighbors. It has shuttered the main opposition parties, jailed or stripped the citizenship of prominent dissidents and put the top Shiite spiritual leader under de facto house arrest. According to Bahraini security dossiers on the men lost at sea reviewed by Reuters, all of them had been convicted in absentia for attacking police and taking part in riots and were on the run inside Bahrain. One, Maytham Ali Ibrahim, was wanted for killing a police officer with a fire bomb last April. Bahrain's coast guard denied any knowledge of the incident. Iranian authorities did not respond to requests for comment, and Tehran has denied any support for Bahraini militancy. — Reuters

## Trump suggests arming teachers

**WASHINGTON:** US President Donald Trump suggested arming teachers to deter mass shootings as he faced broken voices, tears and demands for action at a meeting with survivors of the gun rampage that killed 17 people at a Florida high school. Trump also promised "very strong" background checks on gun owners during the poignant "listening session" on Wednesday, in which he heard first-hand accounts from bereaved parents and friends, and schoolchildren who narrowly escaped with their own lives.

As he sat with these people, Trump was photographed holding a piece of paper with notes suggesting questions or other things to say to them. As seen on the photographs, these included "What would you most want me to know about your experience?" and "I hear you." Social media lit up with criticism of Trump's apparent need for help in sounding compassionate to people who are suffering.

Trump's proposal to arm educators received a cool response, too, from a teacher who survived the shooting as well as the local sheriff at a town hall meeting in Florida. "A gun-free zone, to a maniac—because they are all cowards—a gun-free zone is 'Let's go in and let's attack,'" Trump said. "If you had a teacher who was adept at firearms, they could very well end the attack very quickly," Trump said, suggesting that 20 percent of a school's teachers could be trained to carry concealed weapons. "This would only be obviously for people who are very adept at handling a gun," Trump added.

The televised White House meeting came as students

staged street protests across the country to demand stricter gun laws following the murder of 14 teens and three teachers at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida. Holding signs reading "Never Again" and "Be The Adults, Do Something," teenaged survivors of last Wednesday's shooting rallied outside the Florida state Capitol in Tallahassee. "No longer can I walk the halls I walked millions of times before without fear and sadness," Stoneman Douglas student Florence Yared told a crowd that included thousands of supporters.

### 'My daughter has no voice'

The White House meeting was attended by Stoneman Douglas students, their parents and also the parents of victims of the Columbine, Sandy Hook and other shootings. Andrew Pollack, whose 18-year-old daughter Meadow was among the Stoneman Douglas victims, told Trump he was there "because my daughter has no voice. She was murdered last week."

"We protect airports. We protect concerts, stadiums, embassies," Pollack said, his voice seething with rage. "I can't get on a plane with a bottle of water. But we leave some animal to walk into a school." Justin Gruber, a 15-year-old Stoneman Douglas student, said "there needs to be significant change in this country because this has to never happen again. 'People should be able to feel that when they go to school they can be safe,' Gruber said. Samuel Zeif, who lost a close friend at Stoneman Douglas last Wednesday, said it was important to "be strong for the fallen who don't have a voice to speak anymore." "Let's never let this happen again. Please," he told the president, later adding: "I don't understand why I can still go in a store and buy a weapon of war." Urgent calls for action following the 2012 Sandy Hook massacre, which left 20 children and six teachers dead in Connecticut, failed to break the national deadlock on gun control. — AFP



# 'Some' missing Nigerian schoolgirls rescued after Boko Haram attack

**DAMATURU:** The families of dozens of girls missing for several days after a Boko Haram attack on their school in northeast Nigeria yesterday faced an anxious wait for their return after confirmation some had been rescued. Police said on Wednesday that 111 girls from the state-run boarding school in Dapchi, Yobe state, were unaccounted for following an attack by the jihadists on Monday night.

The disappearance sparked fears of a repeat of the 2014 mass kidnapping of more than 200 girls from a similar school in Chibok, in neighboring Borno state. But Abdullahi Bego, spokesman for Yobe state governor Ibrahim Gaidam, said late Wednesday that "some of the girls... have been rescued by gallant officers and men of the Nigerian Army from the terrorists who abducted them". He added: "The rescued girls are now in the custody of the Nigerian Army."

## 'Mixed feelings'

Bego's statement was the first confirma-

tion the girls were abducted. Initially, the students were reported to have fled with their teachers at the sound of gunfire. Bego did not specify the circumstances in which the girls were rescued nor how many were recovered, and said more details would be released in due course.

A federal government delegation including Nigeria's defense and foreign ministers was due in Dapchi yesterday. Inuwa Mohammed, whose 16-year-old daughter, Falmata, was missing, said he had "mixed feelings of hope and trepidation" about the girls' return. "We don't know how many of our girls have been found and no parent is sure that his daughter is among them," he told AFP.

"We are just waiting for the girls to be brought for physical identification to be carried out by parents... There have been wild guesses as to their number. "We will wait until we see them." Abubakar Shehu said he, too, did not want to celebrate prematurely. "I haven't slept throughout last night. I have been tense since I heard," he

said. "I am just praying that my niece is among those rescued."

## Broken-down vehicle

A student who escaped Monday's attack said some of her classmates had jumped over a perimeter wall at the sound of gunfire, and got into vehicles parked nearby. It was thought the vehicles were then taken by the Islamist militants. A senior military source in the Borno state capital, Maiduguri, told AFP the girls from Dapchi were "found... on the border between Yobe and Borno".

"The girls were abandoned with their vehicle. It had broken down and the terrorists panicked because they were under siege by pursuing soldiers," he added. "The fear is that some of the other girls may have been taken along by the terrorists because the girls were not in a single vehicle. "Only those in the broken down vehicle were lucky."

## Security issue

The attack in Dapchi will again raise questions about the government's grip on

security in remote northeast Nigeria, after nearly nine years of fighting and at least 20,000 deaths. President Muhammadu Buhari was elected in 2015 on a promise to defeat the Islamic State group affiliate and has repeatedly maintained they are now a spent force. But civilians-especially those displaced by the conflict-remain vulnerable to suicide attacks and hit-and-run raids.

The Dapchi attack also calls into question how far pledges to improve security at schools have been implemented nearly four years after Chibok. The Chibok abduction in April 2014 brought sustained international attention to the insurgency for the first time, largely via the hashtag #BringBackOurGirls. A total of 276 girls were seized; 57 escaped in the immediate aftermath; and since May last year, 107 have either escaped or been released as part of a government-brokered deal. Security analysts suggested government ransom payments to secure the release of the Chibok girls could have given the under-pressure group an incentive for financing. —AFP



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# Berlusconi, 81, seeks one last win in Italian elections

## Mogul still hopes to influence the country's political direction

**ROME:** Despite a fraud conviction and sex scandal, Italy's 81-year-old former leader Silvio Berlusconi has one last political victory in his sights in general elections less than two weeks away. Temporarily banned from returning to public office himself, the billionaire media mogul still hopes to influence the country's political direction by leading a right-wing coalition in the March 4 polls.

"I'm pretty confident of the result of the election and going to form a government with our centre-right allies," he told a rally of youth activists from his Forza Italia party in Rome on Wednesday, in a typically outspoken address. "I can tell you how to stay young," he added. "I'll tell you the brand of my suppositories." Berlusconi "wants to win one last time before retiring," his biographer Alan Friedman was quoted as saying by the *Corriere della Sera* newspaper.

The three-time former prime minister heads a coalition made up of Forza Italia and two far-right forces: the League and Brothers of Italy. Recent opinion polls indicate the coalition has about 38 percent support overall—the highest score out of Italy's three major electoral groupings. But it falls short of a majority and surveys suggest millions of voters remain undecided.



### Banned from public office

#### Tax, sex scandals

Berlusconi is banned from public office due to a 2013 tax fraud conviction. He also faces charges that he bribed witnesses to lie at his earlier trial for paying for sex with a minor. In spite of it all, he remains the leading figure of the Italian right almost a quarter of a century after first taking power. His own party has surged by eight points to 18 percent support in the opinion polls in the past year.

Forza Italia's edge in the polls would give Berlusconi the upper hand in naming the coalition's pick for prime minister. He and his coalition partners would field wildly different candidates, as they have little in common apart from a desire to win. Berlusconi

and the League's leader Matteo Salvini "can't stand each other," says Roberto D'Alimonte, director of the political science department at Luiss University in Rome. First the coalition would need to win a working majority. This year's election is the first under a complex electoral law introduced last year. A mix of proportional representation and first-past-the-post, it enables a party or coalition to obtain a majority with around 40 to 45 percent of the vote—which may be just out of the right-wing coalition's reach.



ROME: An election poster for the Fratelli D'Italia (Brothers of Italy) party is seen on the side of a bus. — AFP

#### Economic promises

The coalition spans the range of Italian right-wing politics, from the pro-European conservative moderates within Forza Italia to former northern secessionists the League and Brothers of Italy, which has roots in post-war neo-fascism. Together they form a broad church that is ahead of the anti-establishment Five Star Movement (M5S) and the centre-left coalition led by the ruling centre-left Democratic Party (PD), who are respectively polling at around 28 and 27 percent.

In the tight three-way fight, candidates have made economic promises that have observers scratching their heads given Italy's huge public debt, which at 132 percent of GDP is one of the highest in Europe. The leading parties are promising everything from the repatriation of hundreds of thousands of illegal immigrants to higher pensions and lower taxes. One of the M5S's flagship proposals is a monthly universal basic income of 780 euros for those living in poverty. — AFP

## Amnesty slams 'politics of hate'

**LONDON:** The "politics of demonization" provided fertile ground for human rights abuses in 2017, exemplified by the response of Europe and Donald Trump's US to the refugee-crisis, rights group Amnesty said yesterday in its annual report. The British-based group took particular aim at the US president's "transparently hateful" executive order banning entry to citizens of several Muslim-majority countries.

"Throughout 2017, millions across the world experienced the bitter fruits of a rising politics of demonization," said the report, which was launched this year for the first time in the United States. It accused leaders of wealthy countries of approaching the refugee crisis "with a blend of evasion and outright callousness". "Most European leaders have been unwilling to grapple with the big challenge of regulating migration safely and legally, and have decided that practically nothing is off limits in their efforts to keep refugees away from the continent's shores," it added. Amnesty Secretary-General Salil Shetty singled out Trump for criticism, saying the travel ban "set the scene for a year in which leaders took the politics of hate to its most dangerous conclusion". He also condemned his decision to keep the US camp at Guantanamo Bay on Cuba open, and his ambivalent attitude to waterboarding and other harsh interrogation techniques. — AFP

## Greek MPs launch probe into Novartis scandal

**ATHENS:** Greece's parliament yesterday launched a probe into claims that nearly a dozen senior politicians received bribes from or helped promote Swiss pharmaceutical giant Novartis during their term in office. After an overnight debate, a broad majority from all parties voted in favor of setting up a preliminary commission of inquiry into the issue, a move also requested by the 10 politicians themselves in order to clear their names.

"Is there anybody who doubts this company's opaque practises?" Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras told parliament, arguing that thousands of doctors were illegally paid to prescribe Novartis drugs, that the Swiss giant helped "manipulate" the prices of its products and laundered money through medical congresses of "questionable merit." "After hubris, catharsis is required," Tsipras said. "Justice will be served."

Only parliament has the power to investigate former ministers for actions taken while in power. Among the 10 senior politicians allegedly named by protected witnesses in a mostly US-based investigation are conservative ex-PM Antonis Samaras, EU migration commissioner Dimitris Avramopoulos and central banker Yannis Stournaras. They all deny wrongdoing.

#### 'Mud-slinging'

"I know Tsipras detests me, but you have gone too far. You will be held to account for this frame-up against me," Samaras told parliament, accusing the government of engaging in a "mud-slinging war". The parliamentary commission has a month to recommend prosecution of any confirmed suspects to the chamber. The Swiss giant is suspected of having bribed decision-makers and doctors between 2006 and 2015 to build a commanding position in the Greek health market, as well as secure inflated prices for its products even though cheaper alternatives were available.

Tsipras has pledged to employ "every power afforded by national and international law" to recover billions of euros believed to have been lost to the Greek health system as a result of the scheme. But his opponents say the government is trying to deflect attention from the economy and foreign policy issues.

Critics also note that the allegations—some based on second-hand accounts—are not accompanied by hard evidence and include glaring factual errors.

Avramopoulos, who was Greek health minister in 2006-2009, has sued the witnesses who have allegedly named him in testimony for defamation and perjury, and wants their identities revealed. "In a case file of 2,500 pages there are just two paragraphs mentioning my name... and every single word is untrue," the EU migration chief said in his lawsuit. The alleged testimony, leaked to the press, faults Avramopoulos' handling of a blood screening contract and a large order of avian flu vaccine.

#### 'Foul slander'

Greek central banker Yannis Stournaras, a former finance minister under Samaras, is among those cited in the case file. Stournaras, also named because his wife's PR company organized congresses sponsored by Novartis, dismissed the claims as "idiotic" and "foul slander." The allegations also target the socialist party's parliamentary spokesman, Andreas Loverdos, and the deputy chairman of the main opposition conservative party, Adonis Georgiadis. Novartis' overcharging alone is estimated to have cost the Greek state some three billion euros (\$3.7 billion). — AFP



## International

Friday, February 23, 2018

# In Mexico cartel country, priests have uneasy ties with narcos

## The drug war has unleashed a wave of violence

**ACAPULCO:** When 15 armed men descended on his church last year demanding a blessing, Father Jesus Mendoza asked them to leave their guns outside. “I can’t bless you if you’re armed,” said the Catholic priest, who works in the violent southern state of Guerrero. The drug cartel enforcers agreed to put down their rifles, and Mendoza in turn agreed to pray for them. “God, please touch the hearts of those who forget that we are brothers, and cause suffering and death,” he said.

The story is one of many that show the uneasy relationship between priests and drug traffickers in heavily Catholic Mexico, where some Church officials say they have no choice but to engage with the powerful cartels that have de facto control over the regions where they work. The issue erupted into the headlines again this month when two priests were murdered in Guerrero in a carjacking that had the hallmarks of a drug hit. In all, 21 priests have been murdered in Mexico since President Enrique Peña Nieto took office in 2012, according to Church statistics.

After the latest murders, Salvador Rangel, the bishop of Chilpancingo, Guerrero was vocal in in-

sisting that Church leaders must engage in dialogue with drug traffickers to prevent a repeat of such incidents in the state. “I’m trying to make sure there are no more murders,” he said. That clashes with the stance of the Mexican government, which sent the military into the streets to fight drug cartels in 2006 and has been fighting a bloody war with them ever since. The drug war has unleashed a wave of violence on Mexico. Last year, more than 25,000 people were murdered, setting a new record. Guerrero had the most of any state: 2,318.

“I can’t bless you if you’re armed”

”

### Heavy toll

The Mexican bishops’ conference has publicly backed Rangel. “The bishop is bravely doing his job, and we support him,” the group’s secretary, Father Alfonso Miranda, told AFP. In Guerrero, Father Mendoza has spent more than 20 years dealing with the problem on the ground. He sees Bishop Rangel’s reaction as an “emergency tactic.” “It’s something we have to do, to reduce the level of violence in some areas,” said Mendoza, 65, who served for years at a church in the violent port city of Acapulco before being transferred to a rural congregation outside the city for his own protection. In the two



**GUERRERO:** A man rides a horse at Kilometro 30 community, near Acapulco resort, in Guerrero State, Mexico, on February 14, 2018. Violence in the state of Guerrero claimed the lives of two priests on February 5, 2018. — AFP

decades Mendoza worked in the city, he saw Acapulco go from a quiet resort town to a scene of bloody cartel turf wars with several murders a day. “I started reaching out to families whose loved ones were murdered or missing. It was something

that caught us all by surprise,” said the gray-haired priest, wearing a simple blue shirt that made him blend in with his congregation in the rural community where he works now, known simply as “Kilometer 30.” — AFP

## Far-right conspiracy theorists target shooting survivors

**NEW YORK:** In the wake of the Florida school shooting, survivors like David Hogg and Emma Gonzalez have become faces of the fight for US gun control-and targets for far-right pundits and conspiracy theorists who paint the students as puppets of the political left. In a polarized climate where the most fervent supporters of President Donald Trump are quick to cry “fake news,” the students had barely started calling for action to stop mass shootings when wild theories began swirling on the far-right internet.

At the forefront were websites Infowars and The Gateway Pundit-known for relaying bogus theories including the notion that the shooting of 26 children and teachers at Sandy Hook Elementary School in 2012 was a hoax. “Evidence mounts Florida attack is a giant false flag,” ran the title of one video on Infowars. Gateway Pundit lashed out at “string-pullers” it said were manipulating the students, in support of a “vehemently anti-gun, anti-American, and anti-



**FLORIDA:** Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School student Emma Gonzalez reacts during her speech at a rally for gun control at the Broward County Federal Courthouse in Fort Lauderdale. — AFP

Trump” agenda. The site namely implicated organizers of the “Women’s March”—which has voiced support for a student-led gun control march on Washington on March 24. Hogg, a student journalist and one of the movement’s most

visible faces, and Gonzalez, who called out Donald Trump over his links to the National Rifle Association in an impassioned televised address last weekend, have been on the receiving end of particularly fierce attacks.

Infowars alleged the pair were coached by CNN—the cable network regularly assailed by the American right for its supposed liberal bias—interpreting their ease in front of the camera as evidence they were in reality “crisis actors” working on behalf of the far left. Meanwhile, Hogg’s father’s status as a retired FBI agent—an organization in Trump’s crosshairs over its probe into Russian meddling in his election campaign—served as further conspiracy fodder.

A YouTube video presenting the theory was the site’s most shared footage Tuesday with around 200,000 views—before it was taken down. Similar allegations were circulating on social media under the hashtags #CrisisActors and #ParklandHoax, triggering immediate calls for the accounts to be blocked. Still, another Parkland survivor, Cameron Kasky, who launched the movement’s rallying cry #NeverAgain, said Wednesday he was suspending his Facebook account after receiving death threats from radical supporters of the National Rifle Association.

### ‘Unbelievable’

Conservative anchor Bill O’Reilly—who was fired by Fox News last year over sexual harassment allegations, but still broadcasts on his website and to his 2.6 million Twitter followers—also questioned the movement’s genesis. “The national press believes it is their job to destroy the Trump administration by any means necessary. So if the media has to use kids to do that, they’ll use kids,” he wrote on his website Tuesday. — AFP



# Canada rescinds invitation to militant to dine with Trudeau

## Canada is home to roughly half a million Sikhs

**NEW DELHI:** Canadian officials yesterday admitted a Sikh extremist convicted of attempting to murder an Indian minister had been invited to dinner with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in New Delhi, in the latest controversy to dog the premier's week-long visit to India. A statement confirming Jaspal Atwal's invitation to yesterday's official event had been cancelled comes less than a day after Trudeau sought to quash perceptions his administration was soft on Sikh extremists.

"The High Commission has rescinded Mr Atwal's invitation," the Canadian High Commission in New Delhi told AFP in the statement yesterday. Atwal was convicted for a botched assassination attempt on an Indian minister in Canada in 1986, and was sentenced to 20 years by a Canadian court. He reportedly attended an event in Mumbai on Tuesday, where he was photographed alongside Trudeau's wife Sophie Gregoire, according to Canada's public broadcaster CBC.



**Too cozy**  
The commission would not comment on whether Atwal was part of Trudeau's official delegation, although reports in Canada said Trudeau's office had denied this. "We do not comment on matters relating to the PM's security," the high commission in New Delhi stated. Atwal was a member of the International Sikh Youth Federation, an organization outlawed in India and Canada, among other places, that seeks an independent Sikh state of Khalistan.

**Seeks an independent Sikh state**  
Canada is home to roughly half a million Sikhs and Trudeau's administration has been accused of being too cozy with those agitating for a separate homeland in India's northern Punjab state. Trudeau particularly riled New Delhi last year when he attended a parade in Canada at which Sikh militants were feted as heroes. Tensions over the Khalistan issue have marred Trudeau's visit, and fuelled speculation the prime minister was being snubbed by his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi. — AFP



**NEW DELHI:** Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (C) poses with his wife Sophie Gregoire Trudeau (L), daughter Ella-Grace (2nd R), son Xavier (2nd L) and son Hadrien (R) during a visit to the Jama Masjid, one of India's largest mosques. — AFP

## Billy Graham: The pastor who went in to the North

**SEOUL:** The staunchly anti-communist Billy Graham had a record of engaging with Communist leaders in Asia as he pursued his global evangelistic mission—most notably North Korea's Kim Il Sung. Graham, the influential US pastor who died aged 99 on Wednesday, became one of the first foreign religious leaders to visit the hermit state in 1992, when it was reeling from the collapse of the Soviet bloc. He had a rare audience with its founder—presenting him with a copy of his book "Peace with God"—preached in Pyongyang, and gave a lecture at Kim Il Sung University, the country's most prestigious educational establishment. The North discourages religion, while Graham for decades during and after the Cold War condemned Communism from the pulpit.

"The Communists are not going to compromise, they are not going to change, their objective is to rule the world," he said in one sermon. "Communism is the greatest challenge the church has ever had to face in modern times." But both sides had their own motivations for the visit. Kim was raised under strong Christian influence—his mother and her relatives were devout believers. "In light of Kim Il Sung's personal experience with Christianity, it was not awkward for him to meet Graham," Paik Hak-Soon at the Sejong Institute said.

Graham conveyed a message from then President George Bush to Kim, in a meeting Pyongyang's state media said took place in "a cordial and friendly atmosphere". The evangelist later termed the visit "unquestionably, one of the most memorable events of my life", according to the Billy Graham Evangelist Association website. Afterwards he expressed optimism about the North's future. "I think there's going to be some changes," he was quoted as telling US newspaper Newsday. "They've lost the support of the Soviet Union. I got the impression they're reaching out toward other nations for some friends."

Instead though, the isolated country accelerated its nuclear weapons drive, prompting the Clinton administration to seriously considering bombing its atomic facilities in 1994 - when Graham visited again. That trip paved the way for a crucial visit a few months later by former president Jimmy Carter, who met Kim Il Sung and helped negotiate a deal to defuse the nuclear crisis. "Through Graham, Kim Il Sung was able to convey a message to Washington that he wanted negotiation and Carter took the cue," said professor Yang Moo-Jin of the University of North Korean Studies.

### Different gods

Graham visited China in 1988, also at a transformational time for the Asian giant which was undergoing an economic overhaul under Deng Xiaoping's policy of "opening up". The pastor, whose wife Ruth was born in China as the daughter of missionaries, declared his trip was part of the process of "building bridges" between United States and China, and also between the churches of the two countries.

He was greeted by Premier Li Peng, who according to news reports at the time said: "We don't have the same God but that doesn't matter. It doesn't prevent us from having a good talk together". But barely a year later the army violently suppressed the Tiananmen Square protests, earning Li the nickname "the Butcher of Beijing". Graham's visit appeared to do nothing to make the officially atheist Communist regime more tolerant of religious groups, and to this day it remains wary of any organized movements outside its control.

Just a month after Graham's second visit to North Korea, Kim Il Sung died of a heart attack and was succeeded by his son Kim Jong Il. Graham himself never went back to the North, although his own son and successor Franklin Graham has done so several times. "In person, I found President Kim to be a forceful and charismatic leader, and I could understand why he was held in such high esteem by his fellow citizens," Graham said after Kim's death. "Although he met few Americans, he always expressed the hope for better relations with the United States." — AFP

## Indian investigators seize billionaire jeweler's cars

**MUMBAI:** An Indian financial crime-fighting agency said yesterday it has seized a Rolls Royce Ghost, a Porsche Panamera and some half a dozen more luxury vehicles belonging to billionaire jeweler Nirav Modi and his firms, in a probe into an alleged \$1.8 billion fraud against state-run Punjab National Bank. Modi, his companies, and other firms with links to his uncle Mehul Choksi, are at the heart of the alleged fraud that involved illegally issued letters of undertaking (LOUs) from the second-largest Indian state-run lender that were used to get loans from overseas branches of mostly Indian banks.

In what has been dubbed the biggest fraud in India's banking history, police have so far arrested a dozen people - six from the bank and six more from Modi and Choksi's companies - as they continue the probe. A lawyer for Modi has denied his client was involved in any fraud. Choksi has not commented but his firm, Gitanjali Gems, has also denied involvement in the alleged fraud.

The Enforcement Directorate (ED), an Indian agency focused on foreign exchange and money laundering offences, has been conducting separate searches at homes and offices of Modi. As of last Saturday, it had seized jewelry, gold, diamonds, precious metals and stones that it said were worth 56.74 billion rupees (\$872.5 million). — Reuters



# Germany's far-right AfD to embrace anti-Islam PEGIDA

## Mainstream parties struggle to stop voter drift to AfD

**BERLIN:** A leader of the nationalist Alternative for Germany (AfD) is pushing to overturn the party's ban on members joining rallies by the anti-Islam PEGIDA movement - another sign of the rightward shift of Germany's budding main opposition party. Chancellor Angela Merkel's conservatives and the Social Democrats (SPD) are struggling to stop voters switching to the AfD, which won almost 13 percent in a Sept. election and entered parliament. The latest INSA poll this week showed the AfD on 16 percent - overtaking the SPD for the first time. Keen to ensure it does not alienate voters in the political centre-ground, the AfD has in the past been careful to avoid allying itself with the grassroots PEGIDA movement which holds regular events to protest against "Islamisation".

Crowds at PEGIDA (Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamisation of the West) rallies have dwindled since peaking in early 2015. At that time, some 25,000 supporters joined twilight rallies and marches through Dresden which struck a chord with those op-

posed to an influx of migrants in Germany. "This is about PEGIDA in Dresden," Joerg Meuthen, AfD co-leader, told the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung daily. "We should lift the ban on cooperation that we have," he said.

He wants AfD members to be able to speak at PEGIDA rallies and show party symbols there. The city of Dresden in the formerly communist east of Germany has since become home to a strong far-right movement and fertile ground for PEGIDA. At the marches, PEGIDA supporters hold placards with slogans such as "foreigners out". However, Meuthen acknowledged there could be a problem with any close links to Lutz Bachmann, one of the founders of the Dresden branch of PEGIDA who is widely viewed as a political liability.

Bachmann, who has drugs and burglary convictions, briefly quit as leader of PEGIDA after pictures were printed of him posing with a Hitler moustache and haircut. Meuthen said his main problem with developing closer ties to PEGIDA was Bachmann. — Reuters



**AfD to be biggest opposition party in next parliament**



**BERLIN:** German Chancellor Angela Merkel (left) shares a smile with German Defense Minister Ursula von der Leyen during a session at the Bundestag (lower house of parliament) yesterday in Berlin. — AFP

## Italy's Five Star populists aim for election top spot

**GUIDONIA MONTECELIO:** In the industrial town of Guidonia near Rome, its first Five Star mayor is pulling out all the stops as the populist movement gears up for a shot at national governance. Tall, bespectacled and originally from France, Michel Barbet won the mayoralty last year amid an outpouring of frustration and anger towards mainstream political parties. Although not up for reelection this time round, the man who locals still refer to as "lo straniero" - the foreigner - is again out campaigning for the anti-establishment movement's causes, notably anti-corruption measures, and this time from a position of power.

"We were elected, almost by default, because of the widespread disillusion," says Barbet. The 59-year-old, who made Italy his home four decades ago, won in 2017 partly due to an abstention rate of 50 percent. "I wouldn't be here if the city had been well run," he says. The manner of his victory in Guidonia resonates across Italy. Tired of the scourge of corruption and parliamentary paralysis, voters turned to anti-establishment. Five Star newcomers like Barbet in a last-ditch attempt to bring about positive change in Italian politics.

### 'It can't be worse'

"When you see what we had before, you think that it can't be worse," says Rita, a fishmonger in the city's historic quarter, who didn't want to give her last name. Since their beginnings in 2009, the populists, who support a hotchpotch of policies from across the political spectrum, have surged in popularity. In the 2013 general election, M5S took 25 percent of the vote and the party has since gained representatives at the helm of around 30 cities across the country, including Rome and Turin. The party is especially popular among young voters, lured by its rejection of old-style Italian politics and a promise of a universal basic in-

come. "They say that Guidonia is a small Rome, because the same political problems have produced the same effects," says Barbet, referring to the 2016 election of Rome's first female mayor, Five Star protegee Virginia Raggi.

Aged just 37 at the time of her election, Raggi swept to power with 67 percent of the vote following the "Mafia Capitale" scandal, a vast web of corruption and bribery involving almost every department of Rome's city hall. Inexperienced in politics, the former lawyer campaigned on a platform of transparency and integrity. But as political newcomers, they have been accused of incompetence and political flip-flopping after softening their anti-euro and anti-immigration stance in recent months. Their squeaky-clean image has also been tarnished by the same kind of cronyism and sleaze allegations that undermined other parties.

### Fighting 'Mafia culture'

"I just hope they're there for us, and even more for our children, rather than their careers," says Silvia, a 40-year-old mother from Guidonia, home to nearly 90,000 residents, who would not give her last name. The group is now led by telegenic 31-year-old Luigi Di Maio. He is trying to shift the party away from the rabble-rousing rhetoric of former leader and comedian Beppe Grillo, who has stepped down. Under Di Maio's leadership, polls suggest Five Star is the main challenger to the powerful right-wing coalition led by former prime minister Silvio Berlusconi in the March 4 election. But under the current electoral system which favors coalitions, the party will likely need to make alliances in order to govern.

It has previously refused to ally itself with the traditional parties. "Their ideas on how politics should be done are similar to mine," says 69-year-old Angelo Stazin, a retired air force worker and now a Five Star voter. He says he switched alliances due to frustration with the ruling centre-left Democratic Party. As for Barbet, who is currently working on a budget in a city riddled with debt, he knows his party need to convince more voters from mainstream parties to join them. "It's very slow. It's hard to fight against a mafia culture which is so deeply-rooted in society," he says. "It's true that a lot of people no longer believe in politics, but we study, we work, we talk to citizens and we end up getting results." — AFP

## 4 arrests over Taiwan's 'first' bitcoin robbery

**TAIPEI:** Taiwan police have arrested four men over a bitcoin robbery worth Twd\$5 million (\$170,000) in what they said was the first case of its kind on the island. Bitcoin is a virtual currency created from computer code that allows anonymous transactions and its value has soared since it came into being in 2009. Taiwan police said three men in their early twenties lured a man surnamed Tai to the central city of Taichung, pretending to be interested in buying bitcoins.

After Tai showed proof of his bitcoins on his phone, the scammers assaulted him and his friend, then transferred 18 bitcoins worth Tw\$5 million from Tai's account via his phone. The suspects attempted to pass off the heist as a drunken row by forcing the victim to drink Kaoliang, a strong Taiwanese liquor, Taichung city police said in a statement. Police arrived at the scene after receiving a call about a dispute and one man was detained. The other two had fled.

"The police saw bloodstains at the scene... after further investigation, it was discovered to be a bitcoin virtual currency robbery," the statement released Wednesday said. It described the case, which happened earlier this month, as "the first domestic case of bitcoin robbery". The two other suspects were later arrested, one on the outlying island of Kinmen where he had gone to escape police. The fourth man, surnamed Shih, believed to be the mastermind behind the robbery, was also detained. Britain saw its first Bitcoin armed robbery last month, according to reports, in which a virtual currency trader and his wife were threatened with a gun. — AFP



## International

# ‘Justice will come,’ says jailed critic of Philippines’ Duterte

## ‘She is a symbol of the coming signs of the times’

**MANILA:** A year after being jailed on charges she insists were concocted to silence her, a top critic of Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte says she believes justice is coming. Senator Leila de Lima has been pursuing Duterte for almost a decade, beginning with allegations he directed a death squad against suspected criminals while mayor of the southern city of Davao.

But now that the International Criminal Court has opened an initial probe into the deadly anti-drug war Duterte launched after becoming president 20 months ago, she says she has new reason to hope. “I see the day justice will come. I hope for that day. The preliminary examination will eventually get to an indictment,” De Lima told AFP at national police headquarters in Manila, where she is being held. “I feel this is the start of my vindication, but true vindication comes when I am absolved of the charges,” added the 58-year-old, who was named one of Time magazine’s 100 most influential people of 2017. De Lima’s detention, which began with her arrest on February 24, 2017, stems from allegations she took bribes from imprisoned drug lords while justice secretary from 2010-2015 under then-leader Benigno Aquino. The charges are serious enough that no bail is permitted, and it is common for even minor cases to take years to work their way through the Philippines’ creaking justice system.

De Lima says the allegations were cooked up to stifle her criticism of Duterte, and she has earned the support of international legislators as well as rights watchdogs. Amnesty International

considers De Lima a “prisoner of conscience” and in its annual report released Thursday tagged her as “the most prominent critic of the ‘war on drugs’”.

“She is a symbol of the coming signs of the times where it will be dangerous for any Filipino citizen to speak out against the government,” Amnesty International Philippines country director Jose Noel Olano told AFP. After being elected to the Senate in the same 2016 election that handed Duterte the presidency, De Lima led an inquiry into the thousands of people killed by police in his anti-drugs war. But Duterte’s allies in the Senate shoved her aside from the inquiry and subsequently concluded he was not involved in any wrongdoing.

### ‘A damaged man’

The senator is not being held in the horrific conditions of the Philippines’ jam-packed jails, and is instead in a compound with other high-profile detainees where they have some privileges. She has access to outdoor space where she can exercise, garden and feed stray cats. But continuing with her work has been a challenge. Phones are banned and she does not have internet, so De Lima communicates the old-fashioned way—handwritten statements picked up by her aides. “I have to keep fighting,” she said, smoothing her floral print shirt. “If I keep quiet and fade away into oblivion, people will think I deserve this.”

De Lima started her career as an election lawyer and first tangled with Duterte as the head of a national rights commission in 2009. She in-



**MANILA:** This file photo taken on February 24, 2017 shows Philippine Senator Leila De Lima, a former human rights commissioner who is one of Duterte’s most vocal opponents, waving to her supporters after appearing in court. —AFP

vestigated allegations he used a death squad to kill suspected criminals in Davao, but no charges were brought. “He has never forgotten that and he has never forgiven me,” De Lima said. “This (detention) is his vendetta.”

Duterte and his allies have launched campaigns to sideline other critics, including the anti-graft prosecutor and the Supreme Court chief justice—both of whom are women. “He’s got a dark psychology. He cannot stand strong-willed women. He has a misogynistic character. He is a damaged man,” she said. De Lima fills the hours reading, alternating between “Fire and

Fury”, the incendiary book on US President Donald Trump, and election rival Hillary Clinton’s “What Happened”.

“Duterte and Trump are the epitome of how populism has infected the global order. They are of the same kind except for the propensity to kill.” Nights are lonely, De Lima says, when she misses her sons, two grandchildren and ailing 85-year-old mother. As a guard knocked signaling visiting hours were over, her thoughts turned to Duterte. “If he escapes justice in this world, he cannot escape divine justice.” “No one escapes divine justice.” —AFP

## China probes report of N Korea sanctions breach at sea

**BEIJING:** China said yesterday it is investigating a Japanese report that a Chinese ship may have carried out a ship-to-ship transfer with a North Korean vessel in breach of UN sanctions. Japan said late on Tuesday that its military had spotted a North Korean-flagged tanker lying alongside a small vessel of unknown origin with Chinese characters on it in the East China Sea, indicating it was possibly an oil tanker from the southeastern Chinese province of Fujian.

Japan suspects they were conducting ship-to-ship transfers banned by the UN Security Council and has informed the Security Council and shared the information with other countries, Japan’s Foreign Ministry said. North Korea last year conducted dozens of missile launches and its sixth and largest nuclear test in defiance of UN resolutions as it pursues its goal of

developing a nuclear-armed missile capable of reaching the United States. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said China was paying great attention to Japanese report.

“We are investigating,” he told a daily news briefing. China fully and strictly enforces UN resolutions and shoulders its international responsibilities, Geng added. China had explicitly banned ship-to-ship transfers that run counter to UN resolutions, he said. China has repeatedly said it is fully enforcing all resolutions against North Korea, despite suspicion in Washington, Seoul and Tokyo that loopholes still exist.

A confidential report by independent UN monitors to a UN Security Council sanctions committee, seen by Reuters earlier this month, said they had investigated cases of ship-to-ship transfers of petroleum products in violation of sanctions and that the network behind the vessels was primarily based in Taiwan. The monitors said one country, which they did not name, told them North Korea had carried out such transfers off its ports of Wonsan and Nampo and in international waters between the Yellow Sea and East China Sea between October and January. North Korea will send another high-level delegation to South Korea for the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics closing ceremony, officials said yesterday, including the man blamed for the 2010 sinking of a South Korean navy ship that killed 46 sailors. — Reuters

## Singapore to make jumping bail a crime

**SINGAPORE:** Singapore will criminalize skipping bail following the attempted escape of a man convicted in a high-profile fraud case at a megachurch, a senior government official said yesterday. In a case that gripped the city-state with a heady mix of religion, showbiz and fraud, six leaders from City Harvest Church were convicted in 2015 of pilfering tens of millions of dollars from the place of worship to promote the pop career of the pastor’s wife.

Among them was investment manager Chew Eng Han, who tried to flee Singapore on a motorised fishing boat on Wednesday, a day before he was due to start his sentence of three years and four months. Law and Home Affairs minister K. Shanmugam told reporters

that a bill will be tabled in parliament next week, according to national broadcaster Channel NewsAsia. “It will come as a surprise to many that jumping bail is not in itself an offence,” he said, adding that the changes were not in response to Chew’s attempted escape but part of a wider law review.

Chew had been sentenced in 2015 but his imprisonment had been delayed by a series of appeals. He was out on Sg\$1 million (\$760,000) bail and was to start his sentence on February 22 after the Lunar New Year holiday. But in a bizarre twist, he was caught by police in a small fishing boat off eastern Singapore allegedly trying to flee to Malaysia.

He was charged yesterday with unlawfully attempting to leave the country, an offence that carries a maximum six-month jail term and a fine of Sg\$2,000. The church leaders were convicted of using Sg\$24 million from a church building fund to help advance the music career of the pastor’s wife Ho. They were also found guilty of misappropriating huge sums as they scrambled to cover their tracks. —AFP



# Lifestyle

Friday Times

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2018

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British singer-songwriter Rita Ora poses on the red carpet on arrival for the BRIT Awards 2018 in London on February 21, 2018. — AFP

## Stormzy storms Brits as grime makes mark at pop showpiece





British grime and hip-hop artist Stormzy collects the award for British album of the year for 'Gang Signs & Prayer' during the BRIT Awards 2018 ceremony and live show in London. — AFP photos



British grime and hip-hop artist Stormzy collects the award for British male solo artist.



British singer-songwriter Dua Lipa (left) introduces her young brother and sister to the audience as she accepts the award for British breakthrough act during the BRIT Awards 2018 ceremony and live show in London.

# STORMZY STORMS BRITS AS GRIME MAKES MARK AT POP SHOWPIECE



British grime and hip-hop artist Stormzy performs during the BRIT Awards 2018 ceremony and live show in London.



British actress and model Millie Bobby Brown (left) and Australian singer Kylie Minogue look on as British singer-songwriter Dua Lipa (right) collects the award for British female solo artist.



British singer-songwriter Dua Lipa poses on the red carpet on arrival for the BRIT Awards 2018.

Grime star Stormzy was the big winner at the Brit Awards in London on Wednesday, which included an emotional tribute from Oasis star Liam Gallagher to the victims of the Manchester terror attack. The south London rapper, who closed out the show with a water-soaked performance, beat off competition from folk-pop phenomenon Ed Sheeran to win the best male solo award and best album for “Gang Signs & Prayer”. “My mum and all my family are here, we done it!” he said on picking up his second award.

Rising British star Dua Lipa also claimed two awards for best female solo artist and best breakthrough artist, as Sheeran had an unexpectedly disappointing night. US singer Ariana Grande

was set to perform in honour of the 22 victims who died in a May terror attack at her Manchester show, but was forced to pull out due to illness. Manchester rock icon Gallagher instead stepped in, performing a stirring rendition of Oasis classic “Live Forever”, with the cavernous O2 Arena lit up by thousands of mobile phone torches.

Kendrick Lamar was named best international male artist, receiving his award from football star Harry Kane, while Foo Fighters won the best international group category. The US rapper later performed live, standing on top of a huge box containing a sports car, which was smashed to pieces as the song went on.



British singer-songwriter Rita Ora performs on stage.



British singer-songwriter Dua Lipa (center) performs on stage.



New Zealand singer-songwriter Ella Marija Lani Yelich-O'Connor, known as Lorde, appears on video-link to accept the award for International female solo artist during the BRIT Awards 2018.



US rock band 'Foo Fighters' perform during the BRIT Awards 2018 ceremony and live show in London.



## Lifestyle | Awards



British singer-songwriter Rag'n'Bone Man (center left) performs with British singer Jorja Smith (center right).

### White roses in solidarity

The Brits have often been a magnet for controversy-Pulp singer Jarvis Cocker invaded a performance by Michael Jackson in 1996 and then-deputy prime minister John Prescott was doused by a bucket of ice water in 1998. The stars were on their best behavior this year, although Gorillaz frontman Damon Alban was cut off short when it appeared he was about to wax political during his acceptance speech for best British group. "This country is a lovely place, its part of a beautiful world, but don't let it become isolated," he said.

But the entire ceremony had a political edge, with many stars wearing badges of small white roses to highlight sexual harassment in the industry and show solidarity with its victims. "I think it's brilliant that it's come to the fore now," said Paloma Faith, who arrived holding real white roses. "But I just think I've not met a single woman in my entire life that hasn't experienced some kind of sexism or sexual harassment of any kind."

Singer-guitarist Sheeran, 27, was awarded the "global success" award, given to him by Rolling Stones guitarist Ronnie Wood who praised his talent and his ability to keep "his feet on the ground". His latest album "Divide" has smashed many



US singer-songwriter and rapper Kendrick Lamar (up) performs on stage.

records, including on streaming App Spotify, where it received 57 million listens on the day of its release.

Dua Lipa, 22, is the latest artist to break through on YouTube, and her single "New Rules" has surpassed one billion views on the video-sharing platform. Born in London to Kosovo-Albanian parents, she tried modeling as a teenager before launching her musical career with a series of covers. Her eponymous debut album, released in mid-2017, received rave reviews, with influential magazine NME praising her voice and a sound mature beyond her years. "Thankyou for starting my night off so magically," she said as she picked up the award from Australian pop royalty Kylie Minogue.

When she was named British breakthrough act, she took her younger sister and brother on stage with her, declaring: "I told them to believe in magic because it's real." The Brit Awards have recognized the cream of British pop music since they were first held in 1977, but in recent years have been criticized for failing to be bold. — AFP



US rock band 'Foo Fighters' perform during the BRIT Awards 2018 ceremony and live show in London.



Damon Albarn (center) and British band 'Gorillaz' collect their award for British group.

## Winners of the 2018 Brit Awards

**G**rime star Stormzy and rising pop singer Dua Lipa dominated the 2018 Brit Awards in London on Wednesday. Here are the main winners: British album of the year-'Gang Signs & Prayer' by Stormzy British male solo artist-Stormzy. British female solo artist-Dua Lipa. British breakthrough act-Dua Lipa. British group-Gorillaz. British single-'Human' by Rag'n'Bone Man. International male solo artist-Kendrick Lamar. International female solo artist-Lorde. International group-Foo Fighters. British artist video-Harry Styles. Global Success award-Ed Sheeran — AFP



British singer-songwriter Rag'n'Bone Man celebrates with the award for British single for 'Human'.



US rock band 'Foo Fighters', Dave Grohl (third right), Nate Mendel, Pat Smear, Taylor Hawkins, Chris Shiflett and Rami Jaffee celebrate on stage after receiving the award for International group.



British singer-songwriter Ed Sheeran speaks as he collects his Global Success award.



US singer-songwriter and rapper Kendrick Lamar collects the award for International male solo artist.



US singer-songwriter Justin Timberlake (center) performs on stage.





A male hairdresser cutting the hair of a customer at a men's salon in Islamabad.



A male hairdresser applying colour on the moustache of a customer at a men's salon in Islamabad.

“ If I don't look good, my wife wouldn't like me ”



A male hairdresser blow-drying a customer's hair at a men's salon in Islamabad.



A male hairdresser working with a customer at a men's salon in Islamabad.



Photo shows male hairdressers working with their customers at a men's salon in Islamabad. — AFP photos

# PAKISTANI MEN ASSERT THEIR RIGHT TO BE GROOMED AS MALE BEAUTY BOOMS

**N**ails are buffed, blackheads scrubbed and coffee sipped to the sound of clipping scissors inside the “Men’s” salon in Pakistan’s capital Islamabad, where a growing number of male patrons are set on revamping their style. Deeply conservative Pakistan has strict notions of masculinity where men are often expected to be austere and flamboyant styling is to be avoided. But savvy entrepreneurs in urban centers have latched on to a new metrosexual trend: male beauty salons.

While women in urban Pakistan have long enjoyed access to the care of beauticians and stylists, expensive facials and manicures for men are becoming more common as disposable incomes in the nation’s swelling middle class grow—per capita income jumped by 6.4 percent in 2017. A vibrant social media culture has also fuelled the desire to be selfie-ready at any time, with influencers like Adnan Malik and Osman Khalid Butt attracting hundreds of thousands of followers online with their fashion-conscious posts.

At Tauseeq Haider’s “Men’s” salon, customers usually fork out a minimum of 1,400 rupees (\$12.60) for a visit—a far cry from the 200 rupees spent at traditional barber shops. “Men have equal right to be groomed and times have changed. It’s no more just getting your haircut,” says Haider. “Senior citizens, bureaucrats, they don’t feel ashamed of saying that I need a facial, massage, my nails need to be done, please suggest what should I get,” he adds.

In rural Pakistan, men have traditionally taken their fashion tips from Islamic dictates, with the Koran specifying the length of beard and moustache along with hygiene guidelines. And in the cities, Bollywood and Western entertainment have long driven fashion trends for conscientious groomers. But times are changing fast in the rapidly developing South Asian nation, with social media setting and wrecking trends in urban centers at the speed of a swipe.

**‘More metrosexual’**

According to Lebanese salon owner Michael Kanaan, who has been based in Pakistan for more than a decade, rising wages and greater exposure to global culture is fanning the burgeoning demand. “The Pakistan male is becoming more metrosexual. It is all due to the internet and the age of satellites and TVs,” says Kanaan. Economist Minhajul Haque agrees, saying Pakistani men are also subjected to a new slew of online advertising campaigns that have reinforced the trend.

“There is this whole lot of clever marketing of male beauty products which is spurring demand,” he explains. Humayun Khan, 49, says he is fine with spending more money to look good and his wife is supportive of the new passion. “I... get my nails done, get my haircut, get my facial and I am done for the day and after two weeks I come again,” he says.

“If I don’t look good, my wife wouldn’t like me,” he laughs. Stylist Ghulfam Ghori says Pakistani men are also now more concerned with skincare, opting for blackhead removal, acne treatments and even the occasional brush with makeup before major events like weddings. “Men are very conscious about their skin now... and consider it essential to get facials. Previously it was not common, but now the trend is increasing among men to get themselves groomed,” says Ghori.

But it’s not just the salons that are cashing in on Pakistani men’s blossoming cosmopolitan predilections. Zafar Bakhtawari, chairman of the D. Watson Group, one of Pakistan’s biggest pharmacy chains, explains: “I can say there is a revolution coming up in Pakistan in the male psyche that they are becoming very much conscious about their beauty, about their face, about their hair, about their dress and it’s a great revolution.” — AFP



# Muslim designer's 'pride hijab' to spread message of love at gay Mardi Gras



A Muslim designer who created a rainbow "pride hijab" hopes it will become a symbol of inclusivity and spur more gay and transgender people to embrace their identity ahead of Australia's 40th Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras. The headscarf, created as part of a campaign to push for same-sex marriage in Australia, sold out days after it was launched in October, Australian-Sri Lankan Azahn Munas told the Thomson Reuters Foundation by phone.

The designer said he was relaunching it for the Australian city's famous festival on March 3 to "celebrate life and love", and highlight the struggles of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people. "We have had such a great response including from countries in the Middle East and East Asia. People were so happy that we acknowledged their identity but not in a negative way," said Munas, who founded the Melbourne-based label MOGA in 2016.

"They live in fear and persecution, they can't live a free life because of where they live - we want to do this as a way to support them." Australia legalized same-sex unions in December after a national postal

survey overwhelmingly endorsed marriage equality.

A growing number of businesses and brands around the world are stepping up to promote diversity and LGBT rights. Munas, a Muslim born in Sri Lanka who moved to Australia as a child, said he hoped the design could help spark discussion on LGBT issues, even among conservative followers of Islam. "It's unfair to say every Muslim is anti-LGBT or homophobic ... We didn't want to hurt or offend anyone, we want to start a conversation," the 24-year-old said. Munas said he had received orders for the 45 British pound (\$63) pride hijab from Australia and abroad but declined to divulge the number sold.

The brand has previously used its designs to highlight social issues including a 2017 headscarf made from raw meat to protest the objectification of women, with a share of profits going to charities that empower rural women and girls. Munas said his designs will go black in his next collection in June to support the anti-sexual harassment #MeToo movement. British luxury brand Burberry said earlier this month it was dedicating its next collection to the LGBT community, giving the



Australian fashion label MOGA released a headscarf design in 2017 made entirely out of raw meat to protest the objectification of women. — Reuters

brand's signature checks a colourful makeover.

"There has never been a more important time to say that in our diversity lies our strength, and our creativity," its outgoing head Christopher Bailey said

in an earlier statement. Despite gains, advocacy groups say gay and transgender people struggle with persecution and discrimination in many parts of the world. — Reuters

## Biopic explores secret scandal behind 'Pippi Longstocking'

A dark secret long held by Swedish author Astrid Lindgren led her to create one of the most beloved heroines of children's literature, Pippi Longstocking, according to a new biopic at the Berlin film festival. "Becoming Astrid" by Danish filmmaker Pernille Fischer Christensen exposes the little-known backstory behind one of the world's most enduring girl characters, with her gravity-defying red plaits, abundant freckles and superhuman strength.

While still a teenager in conservative Sweden in the 1920s, the then Astrid Ericsson had an affair

with her boss, the married editor-in-chief of the local newspaper, and fell pregnant. The film examines the wrenching choices she was forced to make as a result, and the life lessons she drew. "What happened here in this story made Astrid a really, really strong person," Fischer Christensen said. "One of the things she might have learned from this is you have to think for yourself."

"(Enlightenment philosopher Immanuel) Kant also said this but Astrid Lindgren says these things in a very, very simple way that just enters you when you are a child." Fischer Christensen,

48, who called Lindgren "one of the most innovative and influential artists of our time", said Lindgren and her characters set an example for generations of people. "I would not be the same person if I had not had Pippi," she said.

### Cast out

The movie, which drew enthusiastic applause and a lot of tears at a press preview, introduces Astrid as a teenager living on her family's farm in a close-knit but judgmental tiny community. Taken with her writing talent and independent streak, the editor, Blomberg, offers her a job but quickly falls in love with her and they begin a discreet affair. When she becomes pregnant, Blomberg insists he wants to marry her, but his wife refuses to give him a divorce and threatens to press adultery charges. Meanwhile the parents' land in the southern province of Smaland belongs to the Protestant church, leading them to fear they could be cast out if Astrid's out-of-wedlock pregnancy comes to light.

She flees to Copenhagen to give birth to her son, Lasse, in secrecy, and then bids a painful goodbye to him as she leaves him with a Danish foster mother, Marie. The separation is agonizing for Astrid, and although she makes frequent visits, the toddler calls Marie "Mama" when he begins to speak. But when Marie falls ill, Astrid has to take custody of three-year-old Lasse as a single mother struggling to get by in Stockholm on a secretary's salary.

### 'Rebel'

After Lasse contracts whooping cough while Astrid is trying to juggle motherhood and her full-time job, the film imagines that she begins to invent fanciful tales to comfort him. The bedtime stories, telling of people who only drink soda and say "good morning" to each other all day long, form the foundation of the massive body of work about Pippi, among the most translated books in children's literature. As told in the film, based in part on a groundbreaking 2015 biography by Jens Andersen, Astrid's traumatic experience left its scars. But it also liberated her from many of the oppressive conventions of her time, making her an early trailblazer for gender equality.

Only decades after she became a literary superstar and a national icon, in the 1970s, did Lindgren first tell the story to a female journalist. Danish actress Alba August, daughter of Oscar-winning director Bille August, said she was drawn to the role of Astrid because she was a "rebel". "To start with she was just a role model for every girl her age where she lived," she said. "And she ended up being a hero in Sweden and a mom to every child in the world—a very powerful, brave and sensitive woman who affected all of us who have read her books." Lindgren only began writing down the tales in the 1940s, during World War II, and they were first published in 1945. —AFP



(From left) Maria Dahlin, Danish actress Alba August, Danish film director Pernille Fischer Christensen, Norwegian actor Henrik Rafaelsen, Danish author and Screenwriter Kim Fupz Aakeson and Anna Anthony pose during the photo call for the film "Becoming Astrid" (Unga Astrid) presented in the "Berlinale special gala" category during the 68th edition of the Berlinale film festival in Berlin. — AFP





# MILAN FASHION WEEK

## OPENS WITH METOO MOMENT OF REFLECTION

Milan Fashion Week got underway Wednesday with a moment's pause to put focus on women who have come forward as victims of sexual misconduct. Ambra Battilana Gutierrez, who accused Harvey Weinstein of groping her in 2015 and worked with investigators on a sting targeting the producer, walked the runway for Rocco Barocco. She told reporters afterward, "Finally something positive. I am happy to be returning to my craft." The Humans of Fashion Foundation non-governmental organization was also in Milan, where it plans to launch its global initiative connecting people in the fashion industry who have experienced sexual harassment or assault with a support network, including legal and emotional. Here are some highlights from the first full day of womenswear previews for next fall and winter, with a smattering of shows combining menswear with womenswear:

### Surgical GUCCI

Alessandro Michele fully covers his models from the top of elaborate headpieces to the tips of their bejeweled toes in a seeming effort to hide the person in order to reveal a character.

And there was a full range of new characters in his show combining menswear and womenswear for the next cold weather season. The cast included a masked Inuit in a furry lined jacket, a Renaissance woman in a long velvet dress, Victorian characters in layers of pleats, a blue turbaned man in tan leisure suit, and Middle Eastern woman in beaded head covers and long, flowered robes.

Backstage, the creative director said he wanted to explore "the codes that constrain us." "All of this I robbed from others, in the sense that I imagined in the passe partout of the codes that ranged from the bourgeois to the thing that I put on in the morning to go to the bank, or all the suits that my father bought to go to work for Alitalia," Michele said.

Michele set the show in a mock operating room, complete with (unused) surgical tables and overhead lamps. The reference, he said, was to the surgical precision with which he approaches his craft. In a spookier surgical/Frankenstein reference, two models carried replicas of their own heads in their hands. So it was perhaps a warm, fuzzy moment when a man in a long black skirt and jacket covered with crystals, carried a pet dragon, of plastic.



Models presents a creation by Gucci during the women's Fall/Winter 2018/2019 collection fashion show in Milan. — AFP photos





Mod Moschino

While some fashion houses really do design airline uniforms, Jeremy Scott created a retro-futuristic array of looks for an alien starship crew. Models sporting Jackie Kennedy-style bobs strutted through Star Trek blue-lit gangways, wearing bright colors of the same assortment found in the non-edible box of sugar candies that came with the Moschino invitation. For the alien affect, some had blue-, or orange-, or green-colored skin - all very Deep Space Nine.

The silhouette stuck to clean lines of 1960s women's suits or uniforms, with neat zippers down one side, or dark patent leather trim, or reverse pleats. Skirts were mini and worn with matching color pumps. Pants were long and trim, elongated even more by vertical stripes.

Headwear included stewardess caps or berets. And the real accessories of the season were a series of detachable collars, including a black patent leather with a pointy collar and rounded back. Other Moschino touches: peace sign earrings, clear colored plastic belts with the brand name spelled out in hanging letters and Crazy Fruit candy backpacks and pyramid-shaped clutches. The collection closed with a series of evening dresses, including mermaid skirt in a shimmery purple contrasting with silk chiffon. — AP



Models presents a creation by Moschino during the women's Fall/Winter 2018/2019 collection fashion show in Milan.



# 'Black Panther'



By Aakash Bakaya

After 18 films and several more planned in the pipeline, the Marvel steam engine continues to roll on. 'Black Panther' was the 13th Marvel feature I've watched in this particular cinematic universe and to be honest, I've never watched the 13th of anything. Of course 'Panther' wasn't a direct sequel, even though the story picks up directly after 'Civil War' but I'm far from the first

to say that Marvel has created a certain formula for their films - a formula that works even if it stumbles at times. So where does this film place itself in a giant pantheon of movies it finds itself in? I would say it lands on the upper echelons, but just by a small margin.

There was a deafening hype and a trumpet call of achievements that preceded 'Black Panther's release. Most were completely blown out of proportion and actually hinders it as the only entity benefitting from such bombastic

claims is the 'Disney' corporations bottom-line. The fact of the matter is the end product is actually much more humble in its execution than its marketing department made it out to be. It's not trying to be Spike Lee's 'Malcolm X' and even though it sprouts its ideals from time to time, it never sheds the comic book shackles Marvel places on all its movies. For all its great and far-reaching themes, the safe approach gradually weighs it down just as it was on the verge of truly taking flight.

## This time it's Africa



It's a story of prince that becomes king, an uncle that turns traitor and spurned outsiders vying for power, influence or both. Set it in the fictional kingdom of 'Wakanda' and painting the background and aesthetics in African-inspired folklore and art lays the groundwork for an insightful story that takes place in a truly unique location. Director Ryan Coogler nails the world-building aspect and produces a set up without meandering too much. He keeps the focus on our main characters and juggles the action, humor and drama well. But after a truly enjoyable first hour - the second hour starts to creak under the pressure of adhering to the standard formula that plagues most 'middle-of-the-road' Marvel features. An obscure change (and disposing) of antagonists, our main character stuck with zero character development and a severely under-utilized world are just some of these issues.

I'm pretty indecisive on T'Challa (Chadwick Boseman) as the titular 'Black Panther'. He seemed to have more vigor and motivation in his first outing in 'Civil War' than he does here. He ascends to the throne right from the get-go but his responsibilities and burdens are never mentioned. A passive observer in most cases, he never really asserts himself and this makes him seem like more a side-character

rather than the person the movie is titled after. 'Wakanda' has a kingdom has an interesting background and a varied tribal structure but that too is barely explored beyond the surface. It makes the film feel small and unimportant and what could have been an interesting origin story for both the mythos behind the Black Panther and the realm that created it devolves into a paint-by-numbers plot to "change the world". How boring.

Special mention must be given Michael B Jordan's 'Killmonger' and Andy Serkis sans his iconic motion capture suit. Serkis is delightfully crazy while Jordan's arrogant swagger serves as a nice contrast to T'Challa's calm and cool demeanor. They both bring an interesting dynamic to the 'Wakanda' situation IE shouldn't a country with immense wealth and technological prowess share those riches with nations that are in desperate need of it. It's a topic with real-world parallels even though the entire concept of 'Wakanda' is flimsy at best. 'Killmonger' himself is a conundrum who confidently throws himself into every situation with military-like precision and his background satisfyingly connects back to T'Challa. His motivation is a bit out there but far from outlandish. It's actually quite believable and a major step above most of Marvel's previous villains.



## Good vibraniums

There's a whole bunch of side characters but their mileage with the audience will vary. 'Okoye' is a warrior-General who leads one of Wakanda's major security forces. A force made entirely up of women is an effective fighting squad but nothing more while 'Okoye's own development is as deep as a puddle. 'Nakia' as T'Challa's ex-lover and played by Oscar winner Lupita Nyong'o starts off on an interesting note as one of the few outside spies Wakanda deploys around the world but her story-line ends up going nowhere. The princess 'Shuri' who leads the main technological lab acts as both an expositor on the magical properties of vibranium as well supply all the latest tech our action scenes hinge on.

On that note, I couldn't help but note the many inspirations taken from franchises like

'James Bond' and 'Mission Impossible'. The first mission starts is basically an espionage operation in South Korea with our cast undercover but not in disguise. It's a fun, entertaining action sequence that somehow makes your ordinary car-chase exciting because of the additions vibranium brings to the scene.

'Black Panther' has been given a number of accolades and claims of 'first' even before it was officially released but now that's it unleashed on the public, I expect that response to die down quickly. The strict adherence to the 'Universe' it belongs to mixed with a sloppy script and mediocre CGI leads to a film bursting with interesting ideas but unable to portray those ideas convincingly. It is no doubt a commendable movie and a fun ride at the cinema but one that deserves an equal amount of praise and criticism alike.



# To get fish on the dinner table, think of using a pouch

By Melissa D'arabian

The health benefits of eating fish two or three times a week are well-documented. So, as a mom of four kiddos, I'm always looking for creative ways to add fish into our weekly menu. I love Alaskan cod especially this time of year because it's in season, it's loaded with omegas and lean protein, and my girls all love the mild flavor. But any mild white fish will work for today's recipe, Cod with Pomegranate and Zucchini en Papillote. My kids love the pretty color play between the bright green lime and rich-ruby pomegranate, while I love the fact that I can make a fantastic dinner that isn't loaded down with extra fat or empty calories.

I use the papillote method, which is simply loading up a sheet of parchment

with fish, aromatics and some quick-cooking veggies and sealing them up into a pouch and baking. Cooking in the cozy, moist heat of the parchment pouch means the fish stays tender as it bathes gently in the steam created by the vegetables. The result is fish that is almost impossible to overcook, giving a busy weeknight cook a forgiving window of time for serving dinner. Cooking in a papillote also means you can cook with no additional fat, making fish-en-papillote a super strategy for anyone watching their caloric intake.

If you feel like living it up a little, add a drizzle of olive oil or a tiny pat of butter - you'll be amazed by how even a tiny bit of fat can make the rest of the ingredients sing. Make a large papillote to eat family-style, or make smaller, individual papillotes for a dinner party - either way, you'll feel like dinner is a tiny bit special.



## COD WITH POMEGRANATE AND ZUCCHINI EN PAPILOTE

### Ingredients

Servings: 4  
Start to finish: 25 minutes  
1 1/2 pounds cod, or other mild white fish, cut into 4 portions, or kept in one large portion  
1 1/2 cups thinly sliced zucchini, about two small zucchini  
2 large shallots, thinly sliced  
1 lime, thinly sliced, seeds removed  
1/4 cup pomegranate arils (seeds)  
Special equipment: parchment paper

### Preparation

Preheat the oven to 400 F. Lightly salt and pepper the cod fillet and set aside. Cut a sheet of parchment paper that is a couple of inches longer than the length of the fish, and a little more than twice the width. Use one large piece of parchment if fillet is whole; or four individual pieces of parchment if you've cut the fish into individual portions. Place the sliced shallots along the middle of the parchment paper, and layer the zucchini on top of the shallots - this is the bed where you'll place the cod. Sprinkle with a little salt and pepper.

Place the fish on top of the zucchini. Top the fish with the sliced lime, pomegranate arils, and a little salt and pepper. Close the parchment paper by folding the paper in half over the fish. Create a closed pouch by starting at one corner, and folding the paper into small triangles, tightly pinching them closed as you go around the edges. The result will be a semi-circle shaped sealed pouch. Place the pouch on a baking sheet and bake for 13-15 minutes, or a few minutes less if fish is thin. Remove from the oven, carefully cut open the pouch and serve.

**Chef's Note:** Recipe can also be made in a baking dish: simply layer, cover and bake.



COOKING ON DEADLINE:

SLOW COOKER BARBECUE BEEF STEW

By Katie Workman

Let's just start by saying that the words beef and barbecue in a recipe title don't make my husband sad. When browning beef for a stew (whether you're making it in a slow cooker, or a regular old pot or Dutch oven), it's less important to get all the sides of the cubes of beef barely browned than it is to get a couple of sides nicely caramelized. Getting all six sides of a cube-ish piece of meat is a bit painstaking, and I'm absolving you from the task.

I actually read about a cool browning technique recently that helps if you are making a large amount of stew. Instead of browning all of the beef that's been cut into small pieces, just buy the stew

meat in a whole piece and cut it into steaks, or buy the meat in steak form. Heat a little oil in a pan until it's quite hot and then sear the steaks on both sides, until nicely browned. Then cut the meat into 1 1/2-inch pieces. A nice deep browning on a couple of sides trumps barely browning on multiple sides. If you didn't have time to brown the beef at all, you would still end up with a flavorful beef stew, but it's really worth it. Parsnips look like pale carrots, beige in color, with a wider bottom near the root. They have a wonderful nutty sweetness. Look for smooth, hard parsnips with no sprouting. You could also use all carrots, or mix in potatoes or other root vegetables instead.

Ingredients

- Serves 4 to 6  
Start to finish: 6 1/2 hours (includes six hours in the slow cooker)  
3 pounds beef stew meat, cut into 1 1/2-inch cubes  
1 teaspoon garlic powder  
2 teaspoons olive or vegetable oil  
1 1/2 cups chopped onion  
1 cup barbecue sauce, homemade or store-bought  
1 cup beef broth  
2 tablespoons honey  
  
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard  
1 cup 1/2-inch pieces peeled parsnips  
1 cup 1/2 inch pieces peeled carrots  
1 pound egg noodles

Preparation

Season the beef evenly with salt, pepper and the garlic powder. Heat the oil in a large pan over medium high heat. Working in batches, brown the meat until it is browned, about 8 minutes for each batch. Don't crowd the beef cubes in the pan. Set the meat aside. Pour off all but 2 teaspoons of fat from the pan and add the onions. Saute them for 3 minutes, until lightly browned, and add them to the slow cooker. In the slow cooker, mix together the barbecue sauce, beef broth, honey and mustard. Add the parsnips, carrots and browned beef to the slow cooker and stir to combine. Cook on low for six to eight hours, until the meat is tender. When the stew is ready, prepare the egg noodles according to package directions. Serve the stew hot with noodles.





## Lifestyle | Food

# For a LUXURIOUS LETTUCE SALAD, all you need is 3 things

By Elizabeth Karmel

How often have you tossed the dinner salad? And, I am not talking about tossing it with dressing! If I had a nickel for every time that I've seen the salad bowl, left untouched and droopy at the end of the night tossed into the trash can, I would have a lot of nickels. This fact is understandable as it is difficult to make a dinner salad that is as appealing as the main course. (And, I'm not talking about the delicious main-course salads and decadent wedges dressed with rich blue cheese and crisp bacon bits that are enthusiastically eaten.)

My solution to this common problem is to make a simple salad that compliments the other dishes instead of making a salad that is an afterthought and misses the mark. My recipe is tied to my long-standing love affair with the simple French "salade verte" (green salad). Whenever I am in France, I order a salade verte with everything that I eat. It is a simple salad traditionally made with butter lettuce sometimes called Boston lettuce and a mustard-rich perfectly emulsified vinaigrette dressing. The perfect emulsion makes it creamy and it clings lightly to the lettuce, accenting the sweet delicate leaves with just the right amount of tang.

I can't get enough of the soft sweet lettuce and the perfectly emulsified dressing. It sounds weird, but this is a salad that I actually crave. The only downside is that the dressing is difficult to duplicate and sadly, these days even in France there are cafes using bottled dressing instead of the homemade vinaigrette. Luckily, my version of this green salad doesn't rely on making a perfect vinaigrette to dress it.

Before I created my Luxurious Lettuce Salad, I spent years perfecting my vinaigrette so that I could make my favorite French salad at home. But more often than I care to admit, my salads fell short of my memory of the great salade verte. Then one day I spotted a favorite bottle of olive oil and it helped me, quite accidentally, create my perfect dinner salad. I was in my local grocery store perusing the shelves to see if anything new had been added and I recognized one of my favorite olive oils from Italy. It had previously not been available in the US I immediately bought a bottle and took it home.

Even though I really wanted to drink the fruity, green, fragrant oil directly from the bottle, I decided to make a simple salad instead. I washed and dried Boston lettuce, sprinkled the leaves with fleur de sel coarse sea salt and drizzled it with a few teaspoons of my new olive oil. I tossed the salad, and came back a few minutes later ready to add some vinegar, but I greedily tasted it first. Oh, my! It was perfect! No vinegar necessary. Fresh, clean and luxurious... thus the name.

And, the rest is history. I have been making this three-ingredient salad to go with everything from steak to beer-can chicken to omelets, stews and soups ever since that day. My Luxurious Lettuce Salad is deceptively simple but relies on the absolute best ingredients for it to be a success. That is, fresh butter lettuce I like the living lettuce or farmers market lettuce fleur de sel and your favorite first-press extra-virgin olive oil.



## Ingredients

Servings: 2  
Start to finish: 10 minutes  
1 head Boston or Butter lettuce, washed and dried  
Fleur de Sel (a few pinches)  
Best quality extra-virgin olive oil  
Fresh ground pepper

## Preparation

The method is very simple. Place the lettuce leaves in a large bowl, sprinkle with about 2 pinches of fleur de sel or coarse sea salt. Toss. Drizzle with 1-2 teaspoons (or more to taste) of olive oil, toss very well to coat all the leaves. Let sit for 5 minutes and toss again. Add a little more oil if the leaves are not coated but be careful not to use too much oil, otherwise the salad will be heavy and the lettuce will get soggy. Add freshly ground pepper if desired.



# STEAMED MUSSELS ARE A PERFECT CHOICE FOR A WEEKNIGHT MEAL

By Sara Moulton

Mussels are the perfect choice for a weeknight meal. They're a terrific source of low-fat protein, they're inexpensive, they cook up quickly, and as they cook, they automatically generate tasty juices to whichever sauce you're making. Also, farmed mussels are pretty easy to clean. You just toss them briefly in several changes of fresh water and pull off any strings (also known as "beards") hanging from the hinge of the shell. Finally, bonus, if you buy farmed mussels - the most common variety available at stores today - you'll have chosen a

sustainable seafood. Here I've dressed the mussels in green for St. Patrick's Day with a garnish of chopped scallions and cilantro. Coloring aside, the flavoring of this dish, consisting of just six ingredients, is Thai. The key actors are coconut milk and Thai curry paste, which are combined. (Don't confuse coconut milk with cream of coconut, which has lots of sugar added.) I suggest using light coconut milk because it's lighter in calories, but you're welcome to opt for the full-fat version. Thai curry paste, now available in the international aisle of most supermarkets, is totally unrelated to the curry spice mix that you find in Indian or Pakistani food. It is, as advertised, a

mixture of typical Thai ingredients: lemon grass, galangal (similar to ginger), chiles and makrut lime leaves. When added to a liquid, it makes an instant flavorful sauce. Once the jar is opened it needs to be kept in the refrigerator, but it lasts a long time and you can use it as the base of a sauce for other seafood dishes or for chicken or meat. So how about trying this six-ingredient recipe the next time you want to mix it up a bit on a weeknight? You'll have a delicious dinner on the table in just 30 minutes. And don't forget to put some bread on the side. It's just the thing to sop up all those juices.



Steamed  
Mussels in  
Spicy Coconut  
Broth

Ingredients

- Start to finish: 30 minutes
- Servings: 4
- 1/4 cup Thai green curry paste
- One 13.5-ounce can light coconut milk
- 3 pounds farmed mussels, scrubbed
- 1 to 2 tablespoons fresh lime juice or to taste
- 1/3 cup thinly sliced scallions
- 1/3 cup chopped fresh cilantro

Preparation

In a large saucepan or stockpot whisk together the curry paste and coconut milk. Add the mussels, cover tightly and bring the liquid to a boil over high heat. Stir often. After a few minutes, the mussels should start to open. Remove them as they open and transfer them to a large bowl. If any mussels do not open, discard them. Add the lime juice to the saucepan and return all of the opened mussels to the saucepan and cook for a minute or two, stirring, to reheat them. To serve, transfer the mussels to each of four soup plates. Pour one-fourth of the cooking liquid over each portion and sprinkle one-fourth of the scallions and cilantro over each one.



Comic

WORD SEARCH

Old TV Shows 2

Find and circle all of the old TV shows that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell the name of an additional old TV show.

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

- A-TEAM

ALF

AIRWOLF

BARETTA

BARNABY JONES

BENSON

BIG VALLEY

BONANZA

CHEERS

COACH

DALLAS
- DOCTOR WHO

DYNASTY

EQUALIZER

FALCON CREST

FAME

FANTASY ISLAND

FISH

FLINTSTONES

FULL HOUSE

GROWING PAINS

HAWAII FIVE-O
- HEE HAW

HUNTER

JEFFERSONS

KNIGHT RIDER

MACGYVER

MAVERICK

MAYBERRY R.F.D.

MISTER ED

MUNSTERS

NANNY
- NEWHART

NIGHT COURT

OUTER LIMITS

PRISONER

S.W.A.T.

SILVER SPOONS

T.J. HOOKER

TWILIGHT ZONE

VIRGINIAN

WEBSTER

Yesterday's Solution

Old TV Shows 1

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

- ALICE

BEN CASEY

BEVERLY HILLBILLIES

CHIPS

CANNON

CAPTAIN KANGAROO

DOBBIE GILLIS

DONNA REED

DR. KILDARE

EMERGENCY

FLIPPER
- FLYING NUN

FUGITIVE

GOMER PYLE

GOOD TIMES

GREEN ACRES

GREEN HORNET

HOWDY DOODY

I SPY

IRONSIDE

JETSONS

KOJAK
- L.A. LAW

LASSIE

LOVE BOAT

MAD ABOUT YOU

MAUDE

MEDICAL CENTER

MIAMI VICE

MOO SQUAD

MOONLIGHTING

MURPHY BROWN

WALTONS
- ODD COUPLE

PEYTON PLACE

RAWHIDE

RIFLEMAN

SEN TEN TIN

SOAP

ST. ELSEWHERE

TAXI

THREE'S COMPANY

WALTONS

The hidden TV show is: THE MARY TYLER MOORE SHOW

CROSSWORD 1843



ACROSS

1. An operating system that is on a disk.
4. Difficult to penetrate.
12. (sports) The chief official (as in boxing or American football) who is expected to ensure fair play.
15. A federal agency established to coordinate programs aimed at reducing pollution and protecting the environment.
16. A person who gathers.
17. An extension at the end and at right angles to the main building.
18. (in Scotland or Ireland) A mountain or tall hill.
19. Away from the mouth or oral region.
20. Lower in esteem.
22. Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
24. German industrialist who was the first in Germany to use an assembly line in manufacturing automobiles (1871-1948).
26. On or toward the lee.
27. A monosaccharide sugar that contains the aldehyde group or is hemiacetal.
30. A soft silvery metallic element of the rare earth group.
32. (Akkadian) God of wisdom.
33. A trivial lie.
36. Author of satirical attacks on medieval scholasticism (1494-1553).
40. A metallic element having four allotropic forms.
41. A Loloish language.
43. Any of various small terrestrial or aquatic crustaceans with seven pairs of legs adapted for crawling.
44. A federal agency that supervises carriers that transport goods and people between states.
45. A signal transmitted along a narrow

path.

46. Any of numerous hairy-bodied insects including social and solitary species.
47. A doctor's degree in dental surgery.
48. Fermented alcoholic beverage similar to but heavier than beer.
50. A vehicle carrying many passengers.
51. A Buddhist who has attained nirvana.
54. Make an etching of.
56. Backache affecting the lumbar region or lower back.
60. A way of access consisting of a set of steps.
62. According to the Old Testament he was a pagan king of Israel and husband of Jezebel (9th century BC).
64. The site of three famous battles among Greek city-states.
67. Type genus of the Alaudidae.
71. The content of cognition.
72. cause to accept or become hardened to.
75. A Chad language spoken in northern Nigeria and closely related to Hausa.
76. A sock with a separation for the big toe.
77. A tricycle (usually propelled by pedalling).
79. Being two more than fifty.
80. Any place of complete bliss and delight and peace.
81. A genus of Stromateidae.
82. The United Nations agency concerned with the interests of labor.

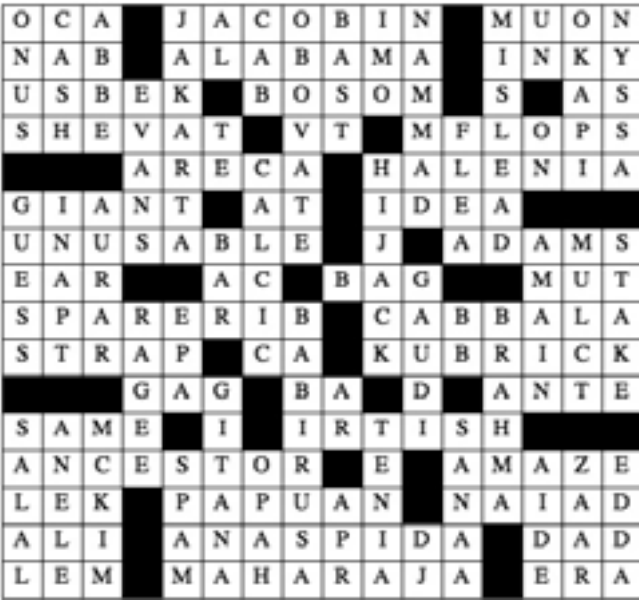
DOWN

1. United States labor organizer who ran for President as a socialist (1855-1926).
2. An organization of countries formed in

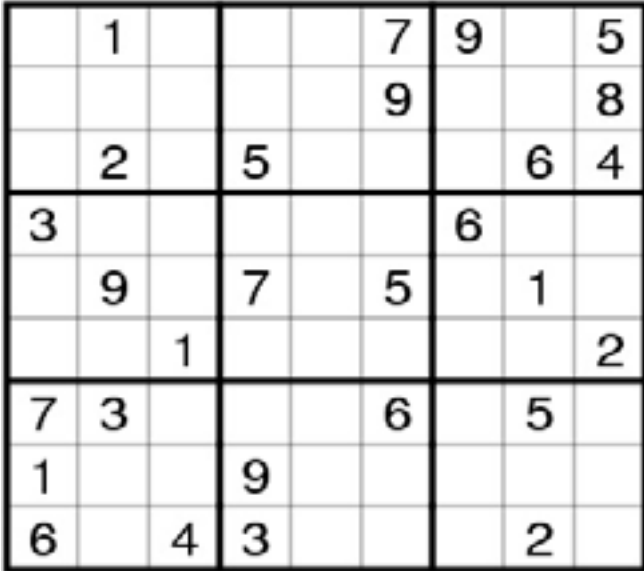
- 1961 to agree on a common policy for the sale of petroleum.
3. The capital and largest city of Yemen.
4. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
5. Used as a Hindi courtesy title.
6. A gambling card game in which chips are placed on the ace and king and queen and jack of separate suits (taken from a separate deck).
7. Being one more than two.
8. Being or occurring in fact or actuality.
9. Goddess of fate.
10. A toxic nonmetallic element related to sulfur and tellurium.
11. A period marked by distinctive character or reckoned from a fixed point or event.
12. A domain in which something is dominant.
13. Other than what is under consideration or implied.
14. To run away.
21. African tree having an exceedingly thick trunk and fruit that resembles a gourd and has an edible pulp called monkey bread.
23. A short high tone produced as a signal or warning.
25. English writer and a central member of the Fabian Society (1858-1943).
28. Herb of the Pacific islands grown throughout the tropics for its edible root and in temperate areas as an ornamental for its large glossy leaves.
29. Gregarious burrowing rodent larger than the chinchillas.
31. The capital of Lesotho.
34. Crested screamers.
35. A young unmarried woman.
37. German mystic and theosophist who founded modern theosophy.

38. A condition (mostly in boys) characterized by behavioral and learning disorders.
39. The cardinal number that is the sum of five and one.
42. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
49. A gonadotropic hormone that is secreted by the anterior pituitary.
52. Refrain from voting.
53. French filmmaker (1908-1982).
55. Hungarian choreographer who developed Labanotation (1879-1958).
57. Any tree of the genus Genipa bearing yellow flowers and edible fruit with a thick rind.
58. The first event in a series.
59. West Indian tree having racemes of fragrant white flowers and yielding a durable timber and resinous juice.
61. Of or relating to Saudi Arabia or its people.
63. (astronomy) The angular distance of a celestial point measured westward along the celestial equator from the zenith crossing.
65. (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.
66. The compass point that is one point east of northeast.
68. Large sweet juicy hybrid between tangerine and grapefruit having a thick wrinkled skin.
69. The lower house of the parliament of the Republic of Ireland.
70. A genus of European owls.
73. The former capital and 2nd largest city of Brazil.
74. Electronic warfare undertaken to prevent or reduce an enemy's effective use of the electromagnetic spectrum.
78. Before noon.

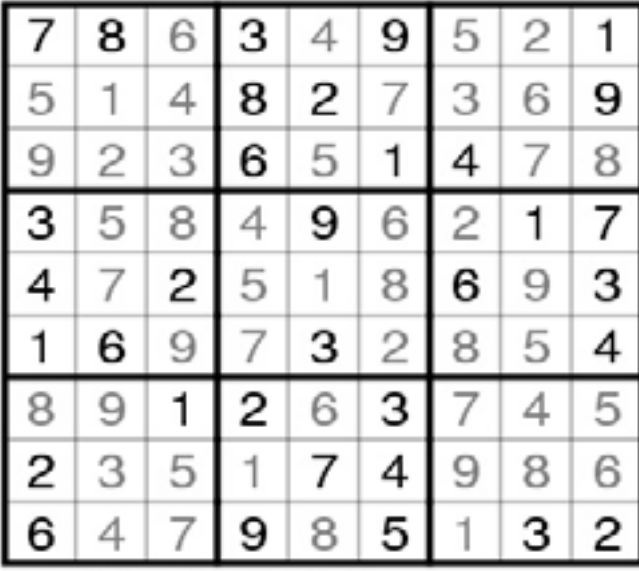
Yesterday's Solution



Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution





## TV Listings



01:25 Knight And Day  
03:35 The Viral Factor  
05:45 Iron Man 2  
07:50 Invasion Day  
09:25 Knight And Day  
11:25 Resident Evil: Vendetta  
13:05 Iron Man 2  
15:15 The Core  
17:30 Face/Off  
19:50 Iron Man 3  
22:05 Revenge Of The Green Dragons  
23:45 Beyond Valkyrie: Dawn Of The Fourth Reich



00:50 Untamed & Uncut  
01:45 Treehouse Masters  
02:40 Cats 101  
03:35 Dark Days In Monkey City  
04:00 Dark Days In Monkey City  
04:25 Whale Wars  
05:15 North Woods Law  
06:02 Bahama Blue  
06:49 Untamed & Uncut  
07:36 Meet The Penguins  
08:00 Meet The Penguins  
08:25 Dark Days In Monkey City  
08:50 Dark Days In Monkey City  
09:15 Treehouse Masters  
10:10 Cats 101  
11:05 Bahama Blue  
12:00 Dark Days In Monkey City  
12:28 Dark Days In Monkey City  
12:55 Whale Wars  
13:50 North Woods Law  
14:45 Cats 101  
15:40 Bahama Blue  
16:35 Untamed & Uncut  
17:30 Treehouse Masters  
18:25 The Bronx Zoo  
19:20 Life On Earth: A New Prehistory  
20:15 Cats 101  
21:10 Dark Days In Monkey City  
21:38 Dark Days In Monkey City  
22:05 The Bronx Zoo  
23:00 Life On Earth: A New Prehistory  
23:55 Bahama Blue



00:30 The Coroner  
01:05 Holby City  
02:10 Doctors  
02:40 Eastenders  
03:10 Eastenders  
03:40 Benidorm  
04:25 Benidorm  
05:15 The Coroner  
06:00 Doctors  
06:30 Casualty  
07:20 Holby City  
08:15 Doctors  
11:15 Casualty  
12:05 Holby City  
13:00 Eastenders  
15:05 Casualty  
16:00 Doctors  
16:30 Doctors  
17:00 Doctors  
17:30 Doctors  
18:30 Friday Night Dinner  
19:00 The Coroner  
20:00 Father Brown  
20:55 Death In Paradise  
21:55 Poldark  
22:50 Doctors  
23:20 Friday Night Dinner  
23:50 The Coroner



00:00 The First 48  
01:00 The First 48  
02:00 Britain's Darkest Taboos  
03:00 Fred Dineage: Murder Casebook  
04:00 The First 48  
05:00 The First 48

06:00 Britain's Darkest Taboos  
07:00 It Takes A Killer  
08:00 The First 48  
09:00 Leah Remini: Scientology And The Aftermath  
11:00 Robbie Coltrane's Critical Evidence  
12:00 Nightmare In Suburbia  
13:00 The First 48  
14:00 Crimes That Shook Britain  
15:00 Robbie Coltrane's Critical Evidence  
16:00 Nightmare In Suburbia  
17:00 Homicide Hunter  
18:00 Crimes That Shook Britain  
19:00 It Takes A Killer  
20:00 The Menendez Murders: Erik Tells All  
21:00 The Menendez Murders: Erik Tells All  
22:00 The Jersey Slayings  
23:00 O.J.: Guilty In Vegas



00:30 Destroyed In Seconds  
00:55 Destroyed In Seconds  
01:20 Strip The Cosmos  
02:10 Freaks Of Nature  
02:35 Freaks Of Nature  
03:00 Out Of Egypt  
03:50 Ultimate Survival  
04:40 Tanked  
05:30 How It's Made  
05:55 How It's Made  
06:20 Destroyed In Seconds  
06:40 Destroyed In Seconds  
07:00 Ultimate Survival  
07:50 How It's Made  
08:15 How It's Made  
08:40 Destroyed In Seconds  
09:05 Destroyed In Seconds  
09:30 Tanked  
10:20 Out Of Egypt  
11:10 Don't Blink  
11:35 Don't Blink  
12:00 Deception With Keith Barry  
12:50 How It's Made  
13:15 How It's Made  
13:40 Destroyed In Seconds  
14:05 Destroyed In Seconds  
14:30 Tanked  
15:20 Ultimate Survival  
16:10 Out Of Egypt  
17:00 Don't Blink  
17:25 Don't Blink  
17:50 Deception With Keith Barry  
18:40 Destroyed In Seconds  
19:05 Destroyed In Seconds  
19:30 How It's Made  
19:55 How It's Made  
20:20 Tanked  
21:10 Don't Blink  
21:35 Don't Blink  
22:50 Deception With Keith Barry  
23:40 Ultimate Survival



00:50 Marked For Murder: People Magazine Investigates  
01:45 How (Not) To Kill Your Husband  
02:40 The Perfect Suspect  
03:35 Murder Book  
04:30 Marked For Murder: People Magazine Investigates  
05:25 Momsters: When Moms Go Bad  
05:50 Momsters: When Moms Go Bad  
06:20 I Almost Got Away With It  
07:10 Evil Online  
08:00 Momsters: When Moms Go Bad  
08:25 True Crime With Aphrodite Jones  
09:15 Momsters: When Moms Go Bad  
09:40 Momsters: When Moms Go Bad  
10:10 Evil Online  
11:05 Dead On Arrival  
12:00 Married With Secrets  
12:55 True Crime With Aphrodite Jones  
13:50 I Almost Got Away With It  
14:45 Evil Online  
15:40 Dead On Arrival

16:35 Reasonable Doubt  
17:30 True Crime With Aphrodite Jones  
18:25 Momsters: When Moms Go Bad  
18:50 Momsters: When Moms Go Bad  
19:20 I Almost Got Away With It  
20:15 Evil Online  
21:10 Dead On Arrival  
22:05 Grave Secrets  
23:00 Murder Online  
23:55 Forbidden: Dying For Love



00:10 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch  
00:35 Binny And The Ghost  
01:00 Hank Zipzer  
01:25 Alex & Co.  
01:45 Disney Mickey Mouse  
01:50 Evermoor Chronicles  
02:15 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 Jessie  
07:25 Tangled: The Series  
07:50 Tsum Tsum Shorts  
07:55 Hotel Transylvania: The Series  
08:20 Elena Of Avalor  
08:45 Bunk'd  
09:10 Stuck In The Middle  
09:35 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir  
10:25 Lolirock  
11:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch  
12:05 Hank Zipzer  
12:30 Alex & Co.  
13:20 Lolirock  
13:45 Lolirock  
14:10 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir  
15:00 The Zhuzhus  
15:15 Jessie  
15:40 Bunk'd  
16:05 Tangled: Short Cuts  
16:10 Elena Of Avalor  
16:35 Bizaardvark  
17:00 Tangled: The Series  
17:25 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir  
17:50 Stuck In The Middle  
18:15 K.C. Undercover  
18:40 Hotel Transylvania: The Series  
19:05 Bunk'd  
19:30 Austin & Ally  
19:55 Descendants Wicked World  
20:00 Liv And Maddie  
20:25 Jessie  
20:50 Tangled: The Series  
21:15 Disney Mickey Mouse  
21:20 K.C. Undercover  
21:45 Hotel Transylvania: The Series  
22:10 Bizaardvark  
22:35 Girl Meets World  
23:00 Star Wars Forces Of Destiny  
23:05 Rolling With The Ronks  
23:20 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir  
23:45 Lolirock



00:00 PJ Masks  
00:30 PJ Masks  
01:00 PJ Masks  
01:30 Art Attack  
01:55 Henry Hugglemonster  
02:05 Loopdidoo  
02:20 Henry Hugglemonster

02:35 Calimero  
02:50 Henry Hugglemonster  
03:05 Art Attack  
03:30 The Hive  
03:40 Loopdidoo  
03:55 Henry Hugglemonster  
04:10 Art Attack  
04:35 Loopdidoo  
04:50 Calimero  
05:05 Art Attack  
05:30 Henry Hugglemonster  
05:45 Henry Hugglemonster  
06:00 Art Attack  
06:30 Henry Hugglemonster  
06:45 Loopdidoo  
07:00 Henry Hugglemonster  
07:15 Calimero  
07:30 PJ Masks  
08:00 P-King Duckling  
08:25 Jungle Junction  
08:40 Special Agent Oso  
09:00 Handy Manny  
09:15 PJ Masks  
09:30 Puppy Dog Pals  
10:00 Mickey And The Roadster Racers  
10:25 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse  
10:55 Sheriff Callie's Wild West  
11:20 Sheriff Callie's Wild West  
11:50 The Lion Guard  
12:15 The Lion Guard  
12:45 Sofia The First  
13:10 Sofia The First  
13:35 PJ Masks  
14:00 PJ Masks  
14:30 Doc McStuffins  
14:55 P-King Duckling  
15:20 Vampirina  
15:45 Sofia The First  
16:10 Puppy Dog Pals  
16:40 Mickey And The Roadster Racers  
17:10 PJ Masks  
17:35 Miles From Tomorrow  
18:00 The Lion Guard  
18:30 Puppy Dog Pals  
19:00 Sofia The First  
19:30 Mickey And The Roadster Racers  
20:00 The Lion Guard  
20:30 P-King Duckling  
21:00 Vampirina  
21:30 PJ Masks  
22:00 PJ Masks  
22:30 Sofia The First  
23:00 P-King Duckling  
23:30 Puppy Dog Pals



00:15 Yukon Men  
01:05 Kings Of The Wild  
01:50 Bear Grylls: Breaking Point  
02:35 Man v Expert  
03:20 Street Outlaws  
04:05 Alaska: Battle On The Bay  
04:50 Dirty Jobs  
05:35 How Do They Do It?  
06:00 Backroad Bounty  
06:45 Backroad Bounty  
07:35 Alaska: Battle On The Bay  
08:20 Backroad Bounty  
09:10 Dirty Jobs  
09:55 Alaska: Battle On The Bay  
10:45 Dirty Jobs  
11:30 Yukon Men  
12:20 Backroad Bounty  
13:05 How Do They Do It?  
13:30 How Do They Do It?  
13:55 Dirty Jobs  
14:40 Yukon Men  
15:30 Kings Of The Wild  
16:15 Bear Grylls: Breaking Point  
17:05 Man v Expert  
17:50 Blowing Up History  
18:40 Tesla's Death Ray: A Murder Declassified  
19:25 Yukon Men  
20:15 Street Outlaws  
21:00 Diesel Brothers  
21:50 Gear Dogs  
22:40 Jesse James Outlaw Garage  
23:30 Gold Rush



06:00 Marvel's Spider-Man  
06:25 Milo Murphy's Law  
06:50 Right Now Kapow  
07:15 Mech-X4

07:40 Disney Mickey Mouse  
07:45 Walk The Prank  
08:35 Right Now Kapow  
09:25 Mighty Med  
10:20 Star Wars: The Freemaker Adventures  
10:45 Star Wars: The Freemaker Adventures  
11:10 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything  
11:35 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything  
12:00 Kid vs. Kat  
12:25 Two More Eggs  
12:30 Kid vs. Kat  
12:55 Kirby Buckets  
13:20 Kirby Buckets  
13:45 Supa Strikas  
14:10 Disney Mickey Mouse  
14:15 Supa Strikas  
14:40 Right Now Kapow  
15:30 Milo Murphy's Law  
15:55 Two More Eggs  
16:00 The Suite Life Of Zack & Cody  
16:25 Lab Rats Elite Force  
16:50 Lab Rats Elite Force  
17:15 Mech-X4  
17:40 Marvel's Spider-Man  
18:05 Supa Strikas  
18:30 Marvel's Ant-Man  
18:35 Walk The Prank  
19:00 Gravity Falls  
19:25 Milo Murphy's Law  
19:50 Marvel's Rocket And Groot  
19:55 Mech-X4  
20:20 Penn Zero: Part Time Hero  
20:45 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything  
21:10 Kid vs. Kat  
21:35 Marvel's Rocket And Groot  
21:40 Disney Mickey Mouse  
21:45 Lab Rats  
22:10 Lab Rats  
22:35 Phineas And Ferb  
23:00 Programmes Start At 6:00am



00:10 WAGs LA  
01:00 WAGs LA  
01:50 E! News  
02:50 Botched  
03:40 Botched  
04:35 Botched  
05:30 Celebrity Style Story  
06:00 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian  
06:55 E! News Middle East  
07:10 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian  
08:10 E! News: Daily Pop  
09:10 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry  
10:10 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry  
11:05 Model Squad  
12:00 E! News Middle East  
12:15 WAGs Atlanta  
13:10 WAGs Atlanta  
14:05 WAGs Atlanta  
15:00 E! News Middle East  
15:15 E! News: Daily Pop  
16:15 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry  
17:10 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry  
18:05 Model Squad  
19:00 E! News  
20:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians  
21:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians  
22:00 WAGs LA  
23:00 E! News Middle East  
23:15 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry



00:10 The Chase  
01:00 Emmerdale  
01:30 Coronation Street  
02:00 Coronation Street  
02:30 Couples Come Dine With Me  
03:25 Doc Martin  
04:20 The Jonathan Ross Show  
05:15 Don't Tell The Bride  
06:15 The Chase  
07:10 Couples Come Dine With Me

08:05 Doc Martin  
09:00 The Jonathan Ross Show  
09:55 Don't Tell The Bride  
11:00 The Chase  
11:50 Couples Come Dine With Me  
12:45 Emmerdale  
13:45 Coronation Street  
14:15 The Chase  
15:10 Couples Come Dine With Me  
16:00 Dancing On Ice  
17:50 Don't Tell The Bride  
18:50 Emmerdale  
19:15 Emmerdale  
19:45 Coronation Street  
20:10 Couples Come Dine With Me  
21:00 Dancing On Ice  
22:50 Emmerdale  
23:15 Emmerdale  
23:40 Coronation Street



00:00 How 2 Win  
01:00 In Search Of Aliens  
03:00 America's Book Of Secrets  
03:50 Ancient Aliens  
04:40 Clash Of The Gods  
05:30 How 2 Win  
06:20 In Search Of Aliens  
07:10 Ancient Impossible  
08:00 Cities Of The Underworld  
09:00 America's Book Of Secrets  
10:00 Ancient Aliens  
11:00 Clash Of The Gods  
12:00 How 2 Win  
13:00 Cities Of The Underworld  
14:00 In Search Of Aliens  
15:00 America's Book Of Secrets  
16:00 Ancient Aliens  
17:00 Clash Of The Gods  
18:00 Ancient Impossible  
19:00 Cities Of The Underworld  
20:00 In Search Of Aliens  
21:00 America's Book Of Secrets  
22:00 Ancient Aliens  
23:00 What Really Happened



00:20 Swamp People  
01:10 Swamp People  
02:00 American Pickers  
02:50 The Curse Of Oak Island  
03:40 Pirate Treasure Of The Knights Templar  
04:30 Swamp People  
05:15 Swamp People  
06:00 Duck Dynasty  
06:25 Duck Dynasty  
06:50 Duck Dynasty  
07:15 Duck Dynasty  
07:40 Duck Dynasty  
08:05 Duck Dynasty  
08:30 Duck Dynasty  
08:55 Duck Dynasty  
09:20 Duck Dynasty  
09:45 Duck Dynasty  
10:10 Mountain Men  
11:00 Mountain Men  
11:50 Mountain Men  
12:40 Mountain Men  
13:30 Mountain Men  
14:20 Duck Dynasty  
15:10 Duck Dynasty  
15:35 Duck Dynasty  
16:00 Duck Dynasty  
16:25 Duck Dynasty  
16:50 Duck Dynasty  
18:30 Ultimate Wheels  
19:20 Counting Cars  
19:45 Car Hunters  
20:10 Fifth Gear  
21:00 American Pickers  
21:50 Pawn Stars  
22:15 Storage Wars  
22:40 Forged In Fire  
23:30 Ultimate Wheels



00:15 Places We Go  
00:45 Miguel's Tropical Kitchen  
01:10 Glamour Puds  
01:40 Places We Go  
02:05 Places We Go  
02:35 My Pacific Quest  
03:30 Raw Travel



## TV Listings

03:55 Raw Travel  
04:25 Exploring Macau  
05:20 Testing The Menu  
05:45 Tripping Out With Alie & Georgia  
06:15 Jose Andres: Dinner In Haiti  
07:10 Places We Go  
07:35 Places We Go  
08:05 My Pacific Quest  
09:00 Raw Travel  
09:25 Raw Travel  
09:55 Exploring Macau  
10:50 Testing The Menu  
11:15 Tripping Out With Alie & Georgia

11:45 Jose Andres: Dinner In Haiti  
12:40 Eat: The Story Of Food  
13:35 Confucius Was A Foodie  
14:30 Raw Travel  
14:55 Raw Travel  
15:25 Restoration Man  
16:20 Carnival Eats  
16:45 Carnival Eats  
17:15 Fearless Chef  
18:10 Eat: The Story Of Food  
19:05 Confucius Was A Foodie  
20:00 Carnival Eats  
20:30 Carnival Eats  
21:00 Restoration Man  
22:00 Raw Travel  
22:25 Raw Travel  
22:55 Fearless Chef  
23:50 Eat: The Story Of Food



00:10 Nazi Megastructures Compilations  
01:00 Mega Factories  
02:00 Chain Of Command  
03:00 Science Of Stupid  
03:30 Science Of Stupid  
04:00 Nazi Megastructures Compilations  
05:00 Cesar To The Rescue Asia  
06:00 Supercar Megabuild  
07:00 Origins: The Journey Of Humankind  
08:00 The Witch Doctor  
09:00 Going Deep With David Rees  
09:30 Going Deep With David Rees  
10:00 Inside  
11:00 Chain Of Command  
12:00 Jeju: Island Of A Thousand Faces  
13:00 Mega Factories  
14:00 The Witch Doctor  
15:00 Origins: The Journey Of Humankind  
16:00 Counterterror Nyc: Special Forces  
17:00 Chain Of Command  
18:00 Heroin Explosion  
19:00 Origins: The Journey Of Humankind  
20:00 Counterterror Nyc: Special Forces  
20:50 Chain Of Command  
21:40 Heroin Explosion  
22:30 Origins: The Journey Of Humankind  
23:20 Money Meltdown  
23:45 Money Meltdown



00:20 Dark Side Of Crocs  
01:10 Spine Chillers: Scorpions  
02:00 Crococalypse  
02:50 World's Deadliest Killers  
03:45 Wild 24  
04:40 The Invaders  
05:35 Crococalypse  
06:30 World's Deadliest Killers  
07:25 Wild 24  
08:20 The Invaders  
09:15 Snakes In The City  
10:10 South America Untamed  
11:05 Gardeners Of Eden  
12:00 Sea Strikers  
12:55 Cougars: Ninja Of Jackson Hole  
13:50 World's Deadliest Killers  
14:45 Wild 24  
15:40 The Invaders  
16:35 Viper Queens  
17:30 Wild 24

18:25 Dino Bird  
19:20 Wild 24  
20:10 The Invaders  
21:00 Viper Queens  
21:50 Wild 24  
22:40 Dino Bird  
23:30 Sea Strikers



00:12 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles  
00:36 Rabbids Invasion  
01:00 Rabbids Invasion  
01:24 Sanjay And Craig  
01:48 Sanjay And Craig  
02:12 Winx Club  
02:36 Winx Club  
03:00 Harvey Beaks  
03:24 Harvey Beaks  
03:48 The Loud House  
04:12 The Loud House  
04:36 Breadwinners  
05:00 Breadwinners  
05:24 Get Blake  
05:48 SpongeBob SquarePants  
06:12 SpongeBob SquarePants  
06:36 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles  
07:00 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles  
07:24 Rabbids Invasion  
07:48 Get Blake  
08:12 Harvey Beaks  
08:36 Sanjay And Craig  
09:00 SpongeBob SquarePants  
09:24 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles  
09:48 Henry Danger  
10:12 Game Shakers  
10:36 Regal Academy  
11:00 Winx Club  
11:24 SpongeBob SquarePants  
11:48 SpongeBob SquarePants  
12:12 SpongeBob SquarePants  
12:36 SpongeBob SquarePants  
13:00 SpongeBob SquarePants  
13:24 Massive Monster Mayhem  
13:48 Hunter Street  
14:12 I Am Frankie  
14:36 The Thundermans  
15:00 Rabbids Invasion  
15:24 School Of Rock  
15:48 SpongeBob SquarePants  
16:12 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles  
16:36 The Loud House  
17:00 Massive Monster Mayhem  
17:24 I Am Frankie  
17:48 Hunter Street  
18:12 Henry Danger  
18:36 Rabbids Invasion  
19:00 School Of Rock  
19:24 Game Shakers  
19:48 The Thundermans  
20:12 Regal Academy  
20:36 SpongeBob SquarePants  
21:00 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles  
21:24 Sanjay And Craig  
21:48 Rabbids Invasion  
22:12 Breadwinners  
22:36 Harvey Beaks  
23:00 SpongeBob SquarePants  
23:24 SpongeBob SquarePants  
23:48 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles



00:15 Kid-E-Cats  
00:21 Shimmer And Shine  
00:44 Sunny Day  
01:06 Max & Ruby  
01:29 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom  
01:40 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom  
01:50 The Day Henry Met  
01:56 Blaze And The Monster Machines  
02:18 Blaze And The Monster Machines  
02:41 Paw Patrol  
02:53 Kid-E-Cats  
03:03 Shimmer And Shine  
03:26 Nella The Princess Knight  
03:37 Paw Patrol  
04:00 The Day Henry Met  
04:06 Max & Ruby  
04:29 Dora The Explorer  
04:51 Sunny Day  
05:13 Nella The Princess Knight  
05:35 Shimmer And Shine  
05:59 Wallykazam!  
06:21 Zack & Quack  
06:32 The Day Henry Met  
06:38 Blaze And The Monster Machines

07:00 Rusty Rivets  
07:13 Paw Patrol  
07:37 Dora The Explorer  
08:00 Nella The Princess Knight  
08:11 Kid-E-Cats  
08:16 Kid-E-Cats  
08:21 Bubble Guppies  
08:45 Blaze And The Monster Machines  
09:07 Paw Patrol  
09:30 Shimmer And Shine  
09:53 Nella The Princess Knight  
10:15 The Day Henry Met  
10:21 Paw Patrol  
10:43 Rusty Rivets  
11:06 Wallykazam!  
11:29 Bubble Guppies  
11:53 Team Umizoomi  
12:15 Kid-E-Cats  
12:20 Shimmer And Shine  
12:43 Sunny Day  
13:05 Max & Ruby  
13:29 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom  
13:39 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom  
13:50 The Day Henry Met  
13:55 Blaze And The Monster Machines  
14:18 Blaze And The Monster Machines

14:40 Paw Patrol  
14:52 Kid-E-Cats  
14:57 Kid-E-Cats  
15:03 Shimmer And Shine  
15:25 Nella The Princess Knight  
15:37 Paw Patrol  
15:59 The Day Henry Met  
16:06 Max & Ruby  
16:28 Dora The Explorer  
16:51 Sunny Day  
17:13 Nella The Princess Knight  
17:35 Shimmer And Shine  
17:58 Wallykazam!  
18:21 Zack & Quack  
18:32 The Day Henry Met  
18:38 Blaze And The Monster Machines  
19:00 Rusty Rivets  
19:13 Paw Patrol  
19:37 Dora The Explorer  
20:00 Nella The Princess Knight  
20:11 Kid-E-Cats  
20:16 Kid-E-Cats  
20:21 Bubble Guppies  
20:44 Blaze And The Monster Machines  
21:07 Paw Patrol  
21:30 Shimmer And Shine  
21:53 Nella The Princess Knight  
22:15 The Day Henry Met  
22:21 Paw Patrol  
22:43 Rusty Rivets  
23:06 Wallykazam!  
23:30 Bubble Guppies  
23:53 Team Umizoomi



01:15 The Adventure Club  
02:45 Step Dogs  
04:15 Deck The Halls  
05:50 Jem And The Holograms  
07:50 The Adventure Club  
09:20 Beethoven's Second  
10:50 Step Dogs  
12:20 Scooby-Doo! And WWE: Curse Of Speed Demon  
13:45 The Great Gilly Hopkins  
15:25 The Flintstones  
17:00 The Amazing Wizard Of Paws  
18:45 Ratchet And Clank  
20:20 Scooby-Doo! And WWE: Curse Of Speed Demon  
21:45 The Great Gilly Hopkins  
23:25 The Amazing Wizard Of Paws



01:20 Cooties  
02:50 They Came Together  
04:20 Kindergarten Cop 2  
06:10 Down With Love  
07:55 Ghost Town  
09:40 Who Gets The Dog?  
11:20 Kindergarten Cop 2  
13:05 Down With Love  
14:50 Big  
16:40 Big Momma's House

18:25 Are We Done Yet?  
20:05 What's Your Number?  
22:00 Ted 2



01:40 Memoria  
03:00 Christine  
05:00 The Shamer's Daughter  
06:40 My Sister  
08:40 Christine  
10:50 Days Of Heaven  
12:25 Me Before You  
14:25 Meru  
16:10 Tumbledown  
18:10 The Dressmaker  
20:20 Reds  
23:45 The Conversation



01:15 Amila's Secret  
02:30 Hocus Pocus Alfie Atkins  
03:50 Nur And The Dragon's Temple  
05:05 Song Of The Sea  
06:45 Rainbow Valley Heroes  
08:25 Operation Arctic  
10:05 Elias And The Royal Yacht  
11:30 Rock Dog  
13:10 Hocus Pocus Alfie Atkins  
14:30 Nur And The Dragon's Temple  
15:45 Bunny Tales  
17:05 Elias And The Royal Yacht  
18:30 Ozzy  
20:10 Funny Little Cars  
21:15 Bunny Tales  
22:35 Operation Arctic



00:25 Trainwreck  
02:40 It's Complicated  
04:45 I'll See You In My Dreams  
06:30 Beverly Hills Cop 3  
08:20 Baby Mama  
10:00 The Finest Hours  
12:00 It's Complicated  
14:05 Die Hard  
16:20 Bottle Rocket  
17:55 We Bought A Zoo  
20:00 Fences  
22:20 Goodfellas



00:40 Mythbusters  
01:30 How Do They Do It?  
01:55 Food Factory  
02:20 Mysteries Of The Missing  
03:10 Uncovering Aliens  
04:00 Superhuman Showdown  
04:48 Mythbusters  
05:36 How Do They Do It?  
06:00 Food Factory  
06:24 Mysteries Of The Missing  
07:12 Uncovering Aliens  
08:00 How Do They Do It?  
08:26 Superhuman Showdown  
09:14 Mythbusters  
10:02 Uncovering Aliens  
10:50 How Do They Do It?  
11:14 Food Factory  
11:38 Mysteries Of The Missing  
12:26 Superhuman Showdown  
13:14 Mythbusters  
14:02 How Do They Do It?  
14:26 Food Factory  
14:50 Uncovering Aliens  
15:38 Superhuman Showdown  
16:26 Mysteries Of The Missing  
17:14 Mythbusters  
18:02 Uncovering Aliens  
18:50 The Big Brain Theory  
19:40 Mythbusters  
20:30 Strip The Cosmos  
21:20 How Do They Do It?  
21:45 Food Factory  
22:10 The Strangest UFO Stories Of All Time



01:00 P.S. I Love You  
03:00 Queen Of Earth  
04:30 Face The Music

06:15 Shall We Dance ?  
08:00 Touchy Feely  
09:30 Grace Of Monaco  
11:15 Malena  
12:45 Everybody's Fine  
14:30 A Walk To Remember  
16:15 P.S. I Love You  
18:15 Drowning Mona  
20:00 Zero Dark Thirty  
22:30 The Air I Breathe



01:00 Married At First Sight  
02:00 Making Mr. Right  
03:00 Victoria's Secret Fashion Show 2017  
04:00 Three  
05:00 Mom vs. Matchmaker  
05:30 Mom vs. Matchmaker  
05:54 Married At First Sight  
07:29 Married At First Sight  
08:30 Making Mr. Right  
09:15 Victoria's Secret Fashion Show 2017  
10:00 Three  
11:00 Mom vs. Matchmaker  
11:30 Mom vs. Matchmaker  
11:54 Married At First Sight  
13:30 Married At First Sight  
14:30 Making Mr. Right  
15:11 Fashion Star  
16:00 Three  
17:00 Mistresses  
18:00 Devious Maids  
19:00 Devious Maids  
20:00 Project Runway All Stars  
21:00 Fashion Star  
22:00 Fashion Star  
23:00 Making Mr. Right



00:20 Say Yes To The Dress  
01:05 90 Days To Wed  
01:50 90 Days To Wed: Before The 90 Days  
02:35 Oprah: Where Are They Now?  
03:20 Sister Wives  
04:05 Toddlers & Tiaras: Coach Wars  
04:50 Outdaughtered: Busby Quints  
05:35 Say Yes To The Dress  
06:00 Sister Wives  
06:45 Sister Wives  
07:30 Sister Wives  
08:15 Say Yes To The Dress  
09:00 Cake Boss  
09:25 Say Yes To The Dress UK  
13:10 Oprah: Where Are They Now?  
13:55 Oprah: Where Are They Now?  
14:40 Cake Boss  
15:02 Cake Boss  
15:25 Cake Boss  
15:47 Cake Boss  
16:10 Cake Boss  
16:35 Cake Boss  
17:00 This Is Life With Carissa Cupido  
17:50 Cake Boss  
18:20 Cake Boss  
18:50 Kate Plus 8  
19:40 Cake Boss  
20:10 Say Yes To The Dress  
20:35 Say Yes To The Dress  
21:00 Kate Plus 8  
21:50 Little People, Big World  
22:40 Extraordinary Pregnancies  
23:30 Return To Amish



00:05 Detroiters  
00:30 Chris Ramsey Stand Up Central  
00:55 Tosh.0  
01:20 Tosh.0  
01:45 Tosh.0  
02:10 The Opposition With Jordan Klepper  
02:35 Real Husbands Of Hollywood  
03:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah


03:23 Comedy Central Presents Comedy 3alvagef  
03:50 The Opposition With Jordan Klepper  
04:15 Ridiculousness Arabia  
04:40 Workaholics  
05:05 Workaholics  
05:30 Workaholics  
05:55 Workaholics  
06:20 Workaholics  
06:50 The Jim Gaffigan Show  
07:15 The Jim Gaffigan Show  
07:40 The Jim Gaffigan Show  
08:05 The Jim Gaffigan Show  
08:30 The Jim Gaffigan Show  
08:55 The Dude Perfect Show  
09:20 The Dude Perfect Show  
09:45 I Live With Models  
10:10 I Live With Models  
10:35 I Live With Models  
11:00 Kroll Show  
11:25 Kroll Show  
11:50 Kroll Show  
12:15 Kroll Show  
12:40 Kroll Show  
13:05 Disaster Date  
13:30 Disaster Date  
13:55 Lip Sync Battle  
14:20 Lip Sync Battle  
14:45 Ridiculousness Arabia  
15:15 Ridiculousness Arabia  
15:37 Ridiculousness Arabia  
16:00 Brotherhood  
16:30 Brotherhood  
16:55 Lip Sync Battle  
17:20 Lip Sync Battle  
17:45 Friends  
18:09 Friends  
18:33 Friends  
18:57 Friends  
19:21 Friends  
19:45 Workaholics  
20:07 Comedy Central Presents Comedy 3alvagef  
20:35 Ridiculousness Arabia  
21:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah  
21:30 The Opposition With Jordan Klepper  
21:55 Dara O Briain - Crowd Ticker  
22:50 Comedy Central Presents Comedy 3alvagef  
23:17 Ridiculousness Arabia  
23:40 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah



00:15 The Drew Carey Show  
00:40 The Drew Carey Show  
01:05 The Middle  
01:30 The Middle  
01:55 Gary Unmarried  
02:20 Malcolm In The Middle  
02:45 Powerless  
03:10 Late Night With Seth Meyers  
04:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon  
04:50 The Ellen DeGeneres Show  
05:40 Malcolm In The Middle  
06:05 Gary Unmarried  
06:30 Powerless  
06:55 Baby Daddy  
07:20 Late Night With Seth Meyers  
08:10 The Ellen DeGeneres Show  
09:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon  
09:50 The Simpsons  
10:15 The Last Man On Earth  
10:40 Malcolm In The Middle  
11:05 Gary Unmarried  
11:30 The Ellen DeGeneres Show  
12:20 Powerless  
12:45 Baby Daddy  
13:10 The Drew Carey Show  
13:35 The Drew Carey Show  
14:00 The Middle  
14:25 The Middle  
14:50 Malcolm In The Middle  
15:15 The Simpsons  
15:40 The Last Man On Earth  
16:05 The Ellen DeGeneres Show  
17:00 Powerless  
17:30 Angie Tribeca  
18:00 The Drew Carey Show  
18:30 The Drew Carey Show  
19:00 The Middle  
19:30 The Middle  
20:00 Grown-ish  
20:30 Fresh Off The Boat  
21:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon




Stars




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

Aries, your care taking tendencies are strong and unyielding; you could find yourself volunteering at an animal shelter or even adopting a pet of your own. Your emotions experience a sense of tug-of-war as you see both sides of a conflict; decisions are more than difficult for you could lose in either direction you choose. Someone asks for your assistance and offers to help you in a certain area you could use help with; one hand washes the other, so to speak. Your thoughts are quick regarding how to repair a project the easiest and most effective way. Spending time near water seems indicated for recharging your spirit. Staying to yourself and reviewing troublesome circumstances could reveal your part in them; remember we're all here to learn and grow, Aries.




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

Taurus, you continue the quest to widen your reach for spiritual and educational growth and understanding. You get straight to the heart of things as you manage to complete task after task. Your mind is sharp and clear when searching for information or answers. High energy levels are with you as you start new projects and planning. You're in the mood for love and if you're single stay alert as you may just find someone to your liking; if you're attached, active sexual activity is strongly indicated. You're in a position to make new discoveries or to create a new way to do a certain chore. You're at your best this evening when someone shows up for an unexpected visit; you're an inspiration to this person who enjoys the unique qualities of your personality, Taurus.




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

Gemini, an opportunity for more education appeals to you as you enjoy being a student! You deal with trouble making a decision; both options look good and you can't determine which is best for you. Enjoyment of trying new foods and flavors is present now and into the year. You love being on the newest phase of changes and using different methods. You may be challenged on your views; someone else admires and supports you. A neighbor or friend in need truly appreciates your help in a domestic situation that's approaching a boiling point. You feel quiet, removed from the limelight and happy about it! Time to read or enjoy a movie could present itself this evening after a visit from a friend or relative; you rest very peacefully tonight, Gemini.



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

Cancer, the finishing touches on some plans you have are all that's needed to actually get started on the project. Perfect timing for making clear, correct decisions. Support for your thoughts and actions is high in your environment. You've entered a period of time that's happy and fulfilling. Enjoy this for all it's worth! Your appearance is one of health and vitality and others say so throughout the rest of this month. You hesitate when asked to join in an effort that you don't really feel good about; there's a good reason you're not fond of this and you should listen to your intuition. During a social function, you could discover something new that gets your definite attention; art or some other type of design. You know your truest wishes; follow them, Cancer.




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

Leo, you're fearless in your studies of eternity and the process of living and dying. You attend a function relating to new beliefs and methods regarding health or spirituality. Seeking justice and balance in your world and in the universe on the whole is highlighted; you strive to see the big picture. Your opinions take opposite directions than before; your skills of debate and persuasion play a strong role in this situation. Keep your sometimes hotheaded nature under control for better communications. You lock horns with someone younger and far less experienced than you in the ways of the world. Remember, we're sometimes the only book some people read and that's an important responsibility! Understand you've entered a period of vast emotional change, Leo.



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

Virgo, your emotions are on a rollercoaster ride as you respond to the strong energy of sensitive change that's at hand. This could indicate a new romantic partner or simply the way you feel about everyone and everything. Change also surrounds your habits; make sure you make your new habits healthy, productive ones as they could be in play for a long time. Confusion raises its ugly head when you're presented with two different options that are both appealing; take your time choosing. Your desire to learn and teach could be acknowledged and put into practice; your reputation shines in this area. Your skills of persuasion are sharp and at the ready when you're called upon to serve in a volunteer capacity; you're a giver in the best possible ways, Virgo.




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

Libra, you could feel driven to dig deeper, even when it verges on breaking someone's privacy! A need to look inside at your inner workings is called for; pull peace and patience to you through prayer and meditation. Being hard-headed could cause problems down the road that you might not do well with; thinking of the future is a good thing to do where this is concerned. Your temper is close to the surface and you fight the urge to blow up. There's trouble making a decision when you can see both sides of the coin; you wonder if it's possible for both sides to be right. Your habits shift as do your tastes; you enjoy changing like the seasons, going with the flow whenever you can. You make plans for a fun weekend with friends you love, Libra.




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

Scorpio, a period of emotional change has opened to you and you're feeling the vibrations of transition; your attitude and choices are all that matter now, make sure they're positive. Being open-minded causes confusion as you're able to see two sides of the same story. Staying informed about trends and new ideas feeds a curiosity or intellectual need. You could lock horns with those you spend time with regarding new ways to do things. You might experience problems staying on target or keeping your belongings together. A new special friend pays a surprise visit with a treat! There could be some who get excited about a new project. A nice neighborhood gathering brings people together to discuss safety and beautification, Scorpio.




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

Sagittarius, the new phase you have entered encourages looking at yourself in the most intimate way; moments of truth can be painful, but most helpful in growing away from certain habits or behaviors. You're determined to work through the hardest things first, then on to the less difficult. Try to reign in your fiery passions as you go through this time. You answer the call to get up and move your body; stretching, walking or jogging could be indicated here. The door has opened for working with clean slates; new beginnings can be exciting but sometimes challenging for many reasons. Your emotions go from happy to sad to neutral. Excuses come easily from someone you'd rather not deal with; seriously consider cutting ties with this person, Sagittarius.




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

Capricorn, your business or work goals are a priority you're more than serious about. You prepare to do whatever is necessary to succeed. An opportunity to extend your education is tempting. You present plans and strategies that gain approval from superiors. A client or customer pulls at your heartstrings and you make a commitment to donate or help on a volunteer basis. Wisdom seems much more important than knowledge when it comes to a sensitive situation involving a dear friend. Engaging in a deep discussion is indicated. Your ability to scrutinize a surprising situation makes a huge difference in outcomes. A surprise visitor from out of town shows up for a nice dinner and an interesting exchange of information, Capricorn.



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

Aquarius, feelings of accomplishment come when you're praised by superiors for a job well done. You instinctively know you can overcome any obstacles that pop up suddenly; enjoy this time as you make enormous progress! If decisions need to be made, this is the best time to do make good ones. Writing things down could be important; do you keep a journal or diary when certain thoughts or ideas pop into your head, it's much easier to remember them when written down. An amorous union could be at hand or this could mean the reigniting of a relationship that has grown cool; either way, you're romantically involved! You embrace life and find joy each day. You uncover facts that help you understand a certain painful situation; rest and heal, Aquarius.



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

Pisces, you may find that you have difficulty expressing your thoughts when someone repeatedly cuts you off in conversations. A feeling of being trapped or leaden or slow could shadow you throughout the day. If you feel empty or frightened, remember that this is for a very short time only. Your ideas continue to form but it is best to keep them to yourself just now. Your artistic abilities are in the spotlight as you finish a painting or perhaps an article that's published online or in a magazine. Your good common sense helps avoid an unpleasant situation. Reaching for, and achieving, your goals drives your direction and methods. Step outside and enjoy the heavens this evening and contemplate the moon, stars and planets in their most natural form, Pisces.

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	Macao	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	Niger	00227
Cuba	0053	Nigeria	00234
Cyprus	00357	Niue	00683
Cyprus (Northern)	0090392	Norfolk Island	00672
Czech Republic	00420	Northern Ireland (UK)	0044
Denmark	0045	North Korea	00850
Diego Garcia	00246	Norway	0047
Djibouti	00253	Oman	00968
Dominica	001767	Pakistan	0092
Dominican Republic	001809	Palau	00680
Ecuador	00593	Panama	00507
Egypt	0020	Papua New Guinea	00675
El Salvador	00503	Paraguay	00595
England (UK)	0044	Peru	0051
Equatorial Guinea	00240	Philippines	0063
Eritrea	00291	Poland	0048
Estonia	00372	Portugal	00351
Ethiopia	00251	Puerto Rico	001787
Falkland Islands	00500	Qatar	00974
Faroe Islands	00298	Romania	0040
Fiji	00679	Russian Federation	007
Finland	00358	Rwanda	00250
France	0033	Saint Helena	00290
French Guiana	00594	Saint Kitts	001869
French Polynesia	00689	Saint Lucia	001758
Gabon	00241	Saint Pierre	00508
Gambia	00220	Saint Vincent	001784
Georgia	00995	Samoa US	00684
Germany	0049	Samoa West	00685
Ghana	00233	San Marino	00378
Gibraltar	00350	Sao Tome	00239
Greece	0030	Saudi Arabia	00966
Greenland	00299	Scotland (UK)	0044
Grenada	001473	Senegal	00221
Guadeloupe	00590	Seychelles	00284
Guam	001671	Sierra Leone	00232
Guatemala	00502	Singapore	0065
Guinea	00224	Slovakia	00421
Guyana	00592	Slovenia	00386
Haiti	00509	Solomon Islands	00677
Holland (Netherlands)	0031	Somalia	00252
Honduras	00504	South Africa	0027
Hong Kong	00852	South Korea	0082
Hungary	0036	Spain	0034
Ibiza (Spain)	0034	Sri Lanka	0094
Iceland	00354	Sudan	00249
India	0091	Suriname	00597
Indian Ocean	00873	Swaziland	00268
Indonesia	0062	Sweden	0046
Iran	0098	Switzerland	0041
Iraq	00964	Syria	00963
Ireland	00353	Taiwan	00886
Italy	0039	Tanzania	00255
Ivory Coast	00225	Thailand	0066
Jamaica	001876	Toga	00228
Japan	0081	Tonga	00676



## Health

# Indian surgeons remove 'heaviest recorded' brain tumor

**MUMBAI:** Indian surgeons who removed a massive brain tumor in a marathon seven-hour procedure said yesterday it could be the heaviest ever recorded. Santlal Pal, a 31-year-old shopkeeper, had been carrying around a tumor weighing nearly two kilos before the surgery on February 14. Doctors at Mumbai's BYL Nair hospital where he

was treated said the tumor was so large that "it appeared as if he had two heads mounted on top of each other".

"It was an extremely daunting and complex surgery," the hospital's head of neurosurgery Trimurti Nadkarni told AFP. He said the operation took seven hours to complete and the patient required 11 units of blood. "After the pa-

tient regained consciousness, we researched and concluded this was the world's heaviest tumor to be reported so far," he added. The tumor weighed 1.87 kilos (four pounds), making it the heaviest ever to be successfully removed from a surviving patient, according to a hospital statement.

"It was a rare operation and the pa-

tient has survived. Before the surgery, he had minimal vision, which may improve now," Nadkarni said. The hospital said the patient had made a good recovery and was now walking and eating normally. The previous heaviest tumor to be successfully excised from a patient who survived the procedure was 1.4 kilos, it said. —AFP

## CLINIC PAGE



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THE LEADING INDEPENDENT DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF

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Flight Schedule

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

DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Friday 23/2/2018				Departure Flights on Friday 23/2/2018			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
MSC	501	Alexandria	00:01	KAC	285	Dhaka	00:01
JAI	572	Mumbai	00:05	JZR	604	Ahmedabad	00:05
JZR	607	Kochi	00:10	AIC	982	Ahmedabad/Chennai	00:05
KAC	504	Beirut	00:30	MSC	406	Sohag	00:30
PIA	205	Lahore	00:40	JAI	573	Mumbai	00:30
KAC	102	London	00:50	FDB	072	Dubai	00:35
JZR	539	Cairo	00:50	MSC	502	Alexandria	01:00
PGT	858	Istanbul	00:55	JAI	571	Mumbai	01:05
THY	772	Istanbul	00:55	BBC	044	Dhaka	01:30
RJA	642	Amman	01:05	PIA	206	Lahore	01:40
DLH	625	Bahrain	01:45	JZR	142	Doha	01:45
UAE	853	Dubai	01:45	KAC	677	Dubai	01:55
THY	764	Istanbul	01:50	KAC	417	Manila	02:00
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	KAC	363	Colombo	02:00
JZR	555	Alexandria	02:15	PGT	859	Istanbul	02:30
QTR	1086	Doha	02:20	THY	773	Istanbul	02:30
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30	DLH	625	Frankfurt	02:45
KLM	446	Bahrain	02:30	ETH	621	Addis Ababa	03:05
JZR	185	Dubai	02:40	UAE	854	Dubai	03:40
OMA	643	Muscat	02:55	QTR	1087	Doha	03:40
KKK	1268	Istanbul	02:55	KLM	446	Amsterdam	03:55
PGT	860	Istanbul	03:05	KKK	1269	Istanbul	03:55
KAC	414	Bangkok	03:05	OMA	644	Muscat	03:55
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:10	THY	765	Istanbul	04:00
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	PGT	861	Istanbul	04:00
QTR	1076	Doha	03:50	ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	04:05
FEG	931	Alexandria	04:00	MSR	613	Cairo	04:15
THY	6536	Istanbul	04:15	KAC	103	London	05:00
KAC	382	Delhi	04:15	FEG	954	Asyut	05:00
KAC	418	Manila	04:25	QTR	1077	Doha	05:30
KAC	1544	Cairo	04:25	KAC	303	Mumbai	05:30
UAE	873	Dubai	04:25	THY	6536	Dhaka/Istanbul	05:45
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:35	FDB	070	Dubai	05:45
KAC	284	Dhaka	04:50	UAE	874	Dubai	06:15
FDB	069	Dubai	04:55	JZR	560	Sohag	06:25
JZR	609	Hyderabad	05:10	THY	771	Istanbul	06:50
JZR	267	Beirut	05:15	JZR	164	Dubai	06:55
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:20	RJA	643	Amman	07:05
JZR	143	Doha	05:25	GFA	212	Bahrain	07:15
THY	770	Istanbul	05:25	GEL	701	Baku	08:00
GEL	700	Baku	05:30	KAC	501	Beirut	08:00
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:40	KAC	171	Frankfurt	08:00
KAC	344	Chennai	05:50	KAC	165	Rome	08:15
KAC	302	Mumbai	06:10	KAC	161	Geneva	08:20
KAC	678	Dubai	06:25	KAC	791	Madinah	08:35
WAN	338	Alexandria	06:40	FDB	054	Dubai	08:35
KAC	206	Islamabad	06:50	KAC	787	Jeddah	08:40
BAW	157	London	07:10	BAW	156	London	08:55
KAC	204	Lahore	07:10	KAC	613	Bahrain	08:55
KAC	354	Bengaluru	07:35	KAC	117	New York	09:00
FDB	053	Dubai	07:35	JZR	534	Cairo	09:10
KAC	358	Kochi	07:40	KAC	561	Amman	09:40
KAC	384	Delhi	08:00	ABY	126	Sharjah	09:45
UAE	855	Dubai	08:35	KAC	671	Dubai	09:45
JZR	605	Ahmedabad	08:45	UAE	856	Dubai	10:00
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	09:05	KAC	541	Cairo	10:00
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:05	JZR	482	Istanbul	10:05
QTR	1070	Doha	09:10	ETD	302	Abu Dhabi	10:10
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	KAC	773	Riyadh	10:10
IRA	675	Lar	10:00	KAC	617	Doha	10:15
WAN	342	Sohag	10:15	QTR	1071	Doha	10:20
MSC	415	Sohag	10:15	KAC	155	Istanbul	10:25
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	KAC	661	Abu Dhabi	10:30
WAN	114	Bahrain	11:00	FDB	056	Dubai	10:35
AXB	890	Mangalore/Bahrain	11:10	JZR	778	Jeddah	10:40
QTR	1074	Doha	11:20	ZAV	4101	IQA	11:00
JZR	165	Dubai	11:30	IRA	674	Lar	11:00
WAN	134	Doha	11:55	KAC	101	London	11:05
MEA	404	Beirut	11:55	MSC	416	Sohag	11:15
KAC	614	Bahrain	12:10	GFA	214	Bahrain	11:25
RBG	553	Alexandria	12:15	JZR	786	Riyadh	11:55
SAW	701	Damascus	12:30	JZR	776	Jeddah	12:00
KAC	286	Dhaka	12:35				
JZR	561	Sohag	12:45				
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00				



## Business

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2018

**39** Saudis to spend billions on Western-style entertainment**40** Funding evaporates for Nicaragua \$50 billion ocean-to-ocean canal**41** Soul-searching as symbol of '70s S'pore faces demolition

AMMAN: A picture taken on Jan 16, 2018 shows a three-year-old child Ruwayd using her new prosthetic arm to play at the Doctors Without Borders (MSF) reconstructive surgery hospital in the Jordanian capital. —AFP

# Jordan 3D lab prints limbs

## War wounded, disabled kids benefit from clinic

**AMMAN:** Iraqi soldier Abdullah lost his left hand fighting the Islamic State group but now he has a prosthetic one - thanks to a 3D printing lab in Jordan. Abdullah was wounded in a mine blast as Iraqi forces battled to oust the militants from Iraq's second city Mosul last year. His right hand was also seriously wounded. The 22-year-old is one of a group of Iraqi, Syrian and Yemeni amputees to benefit from a 3D-printing prosthetics clinic at a hospital run by the medical charity Doctors Without Borders (MSF).

"It's not easy to replace a hand, but at least the new device gives me some autonomy and means I don't rely too much on my brother to eat," said Abdullah, who asked not to use his real name. Wearing jeans and a dark green shirt, he said he had been transferred from Mosul to a hospital in the Iraqi Kurdish regional capital Arbil before heading to Jordan. "Now I feel better," he said, managing a small smile. "I hope I can heal my right hand too."

The 3D printing technique allows the team to create simple upper limbs without moving parts, slashing the costs of manufacturing advanced, custom-made prosthetic limbs, according to MSF. The MSF Foundation, a wing of the charity dedicated to research and development, set up a prosthetics production center in Jordan's Irbid last June. A team of medics and technicians use the technique to help people born with genetic deformations as well as war wounded from across the region.

Doctors start by taking photos and measurements and sending them to the laboratory in Irbid, 100 km north of Amman. The data is entered into a system that designers use to create a virtual model of the limb, which is then printed and sent to MSF's Al-Mowasah hospital in Amman for fitting. Several organizations have developed 3D printing for amputees in recent years, but MSF says its project is a first in

the Middle East. The clinic aims to give orthopaedic care to as many people as possible affected by the region's conflicts.

Project coordinator Pierre Moreau said it had treated 15 Syrians, Iraqis, Yemenis, Palestinians and Jordanians since its launch. "We chose Jordan because we have one of the biggest hospitals and most advanced, and it is a stable place in the middle of a war region so we have access to patients from Syria, Iraq and Yemen," he said in English.

### Back to school, back to work

It has also benefitted people born with deformities, such as seven-year-old Palestinian refugee Asil Abu Ayada from the Gaza camp northwest of Amman. She lives with five brothers and her parents in a mud house, and was born without a right hand. With her new prosthetic hand, she can now go to a normal school and

even sketch drawings. Too shy to speak to reporters, she sat manicuring her artificial fingers with the help of her sister Ines.

The 3D devices range in cost from \$20 and \$50 - a fraction of the cost of conventional prosthetic devices, which can cost thousands of dollars. "You can design something that can suit this patient and is very specific to the activity of the patient," Moreau said. The new technique was developed by MSF in collaboration with "Fab Lab", a digital manufacturing laboratory in Jordan.

Another beneficiary was Ibrahim al Mahamid, from Daraa in southern Syria, who suffered injuries to his left hand in a bombing raid in 2013. A 33-year-old taxi driver, he had the hand amputated at a field hospital in Syria before moving to Jordan. "The new prosthesis has given me hope to be able to go back to work and take care of family expenses," he said. —AFP



## Business

# Ruling on diesel bans for German cities delayed

## Decision could affect 9.4 million vehicles

**LEIPZIG:** German judges yesterday pushed back a decision on whether German cities can ban old diesel cars to reduce air pollution, with potentially dramatic consequences for a key industry and transport policy in Europe's largest economy. The court "wants to deliberate very thoroughly" on the question, presiding judge Andreas Korbmayer said, adding that the ruling will be announced on Tuesday. While a decision from the Federal Administrative Court in Leipzig in favor of anti-pollution plaintiffs would not order any vehicles off the road, it could open the way for cities to do so in zones where the air is particularly contaminated by diesel exhausts.

Since Volkswagen admitted in 2015 to installing software to fool

regulatory emissions tests in millions of cars worldwide - the so-called "dieselgate" scandal - nitrogen oxide (NOx) and fine particle emissions from diesel motors have been the top priority for German environmentalists. And the nation's automakers have been eyeing the courts nervously, as bans could affect 9.4 million vehicles not meeting the latest Euro 6 standards.

State governments in Baden-Wuerttemberg capital Stuttgart and North Rhine-Westphalia capital Duesseldorf have appealed the case to the highest court after losing in lower tribunals. "If we lose, we'll be in deep trouble," Baden-Wuerttemberg state premier Winfried Kretschmann told news agency DPA Tuesday.

## German business morale falls as exporters fret

**BERLIN:** German business confidence fell more than expected in February while remaining at a high level, a survey showed yesterday, suggesting that Europe's biggest economy is set for solid growth despite a stronger euro clouding the outlook of exporters. The Munich-based Ifo economic institute said its business climate index, based on a monthly survey of some 7,000 firms, fell to a 5-month low of 115.4 from 117.6 in January. The February reading undershot expectations in a Reuters consensus forecast of analysts who had forecast a dip to 117.0.

Ifo chief Clemens Fuest said companies were less satisfied with their current business situation, but the indicator still was at its second-highest level since 1991. "This signals economic growth of 0.7 percent in the first quarter," Fuest said. In the

### Clean air by Christmas?

A court decision for bans would "allow people in German cities to breathe clean air by the end of the year," said Juergen Resch, head of NGO Deutsche Umwelthilfe (DUH), which brought the original case. Germany and other air quality sinners like France or Italy have for years been in the European Commission's sights for possible legal action over contaminated air. Fine particle pollution and NOx contribute to as many as 400,000 premature deaths from respiratory and cardiovascular disease per year in the European Union.

Some 70 cities in Germany suffered from average annual nitrogen dioxide levels above EU thresholds

last year, with Munich, Stuttgart and Cologne the worst offenders. To fend off bans and protect the keystone auto industry with its 800,000 jobs, Berlin has offered a cascade of initiatives, including a billion-euro (\$1.2 billion) fund - partly paid for by carmakers - for cities to upgrade public transport and buy electric vehicles.

Ministers even suggested to the European Commission they could offer free public transport to cut down on urban car use, although without a detailed plan or budget. The Leipzig court could signal an end to such piecemeal measures by allowing diesel bans in principle. State leaders insist the federal government would then be on the hook to help

final three months of 2017, the economy expanded by 0.6 percent on the quarter. This upbeat growth outlook was also mirrored in the finance ministry's monthly report released earlier yesterday which said recent data was pointing to a continuation of the economic upswing at the beginning of the year. In another sign of the overall robust state of the euro zone economy, French industry morale in February edged down only slightly from a more than 17-year high reached in the previous month, data showed on Thursday. The drop in the German headline figure was mainly caused by managers scaling back their business expectations for the next six months, with the respective sub-index falling to a 10-month low.

"The export euphoria is flattening out a bit," Ifo economist Klaus Wohlrabe told Reuters. He said some exporters were more concerned now about the stronger euro exchange rate which makes German products more expensive for clients outside the bloc. Wohlrabe added that the fall in the business sentiment index did not mark the beginning of a fundamental shift. "I would not yet speak of a change in the underlying trend, the German economy is still doing very well, but some of the steam has been let off," Wohlrabe said. —Reuters



**LEIPZIG:** Judges and lawyers sit at the beginning of the hearing in a hall of the Federal Administrative Court yesterday. — AFP

them avoid bans if possible or to help enforce them if necessary. Such nationwide action could include the introduction of a so-called "blue badge" to identify the least polluting vehicles - so far firmly rejected by Berlin. Meanwhile, DUH chief Resch suggests that "a decision in favor of driving bans would greatly speed up modernization" of Germany's diesel fleet. Car companies have resisted hardware refits of older diesels to slash emissions, instead offering updates to engine control software and trade-in programs for newer, less polluting models.

New catalytic converters "would not be much more effective" and "would take a lot of time" to install, Audi chief executive Rupert Stadler told business daily Handelsblatt

Wednesday. A refit would cost at least 7.6 billion euros, a study by analysts at Evercore bank cited by Handelsblatt found. Nevertheless, even car diehards the German Automobile Association (ADAC) came out in favour of the measure Tuesday in a study of their own.

Diesel's bad image and the prospect of bans have already pushed sales of the German-invented motors into a deep slump, from 48 percent of new cars sold in 2015 to 39 percent last year. Such reputational damage has pressured carmakers into stepping up plans to introduce more electric models in coming years. But after repeated delays from industry and government, the case "could be the one that changes the country, its mobility and its industry" for good, daily Sueddeutsche Zeitung summed up. —AFP

## UK economy grows less than expected on Brexit unease

**LONDON:** Britain's economy expanded last year less than first thought, official data revealed yesterday, adding to concerns that Brexit uncertainty was impacting growth. Gross domestic product growth stood at 1.7 percent in 2017, the Office for National Statistics said in a revised estimate. The ONS originally had GDP growth at 1.8 percent last year, compared with 1.9 percent in 2016. Last year's figure remains the lowest

level of UK annual growth since 2012. The ONS also revised down the estimate for growth in the final three months of 2017, saying that the UK economy expanded by 0.4 percent during the period, slower than an initial reading of 0.5 percent.

The data come one day after Britain revealed a first rise in its unemployment rate since late 2016. "Higher inflation was the reason that we have not seen the UK's economy expanding more than the previous estimates," noted Naeem Aslam, analyst at Think Markets. "Brexit is the biggest elephant in the room and this dominates all stories. The longer the uncertainty remains around this issue, the worst the effect... on the economy," he said. British inflation meanwhile shot higher last year as a drop in the pound following the 2016 referendum vote in favor of the UK exiting the European Union resulted in higher import costs. —AFP



## Business

# Saudis to spend billions on Western-style entertainment

## More than 5,000 events planned for coming year

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia announced plans yesterday to spend billions on building new venues and flying in Western acts, in a total overhaul of its entertainment sector that would be unthinkable not long ago. Long known for its ultraconservative mores, the kingdom has embarked on a wide-ranging program of social and economic reforms driven by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. At a glitzy press conference in Riyadh, General Entertainment Authority chief Ahmad bin Aqeel Al-Khatib told reporters the kingdom is set to invest \$64 billion in its entertainment sector over the coming decade.

"We are already building the infrastructure," Khatib said, adding that ground had been broken for an opera house. "God willing, you will see a real change by 2020," Khatib said, adding that more than 5,000 events were

planned for the coming year. Behind him, a screen teased the names of international acts like Maroon 5, Andrea Bocelli and Cirque du Soleil. Neither a breakdown of how the money would be spent or a schedule for the cultural program were provided.

But it follows a series of events in recent months including concerts, a Comic-Con festival and a mixed-gender national day celebration that saw people dancing in the streets to thumping electronic music for the first time. Authorities have

also announced plans to lift a decades-old ban on cinemas this year, with some 300 expected to open by 2030.

### 'Don't travel'

The newfound openness, which includes plans to allow women to drive from June this year, has been hailed by some as a crucial liberalization of Saudi society. Critics have pointed to continued restrictions however, especially on women who remain under a strict "guardianship" system that gives male relatives significant control over their lives. The reforms are part of Prince Mohammed's ambitious "Vision 2030" program, which seeks to diversify the Saudi economy as it reels from a slump in energy prices, with the entertainment sector seen as a key potential source of growth.

### Move part of a wider campaign 'Don't travel'

Saudis splurge billions annually on movies and visits to amusement parks in the neighboring tourist hubs of Dubai and Bahrain, which is accessible by a land causeway. Khatib vowed turn around that trend. "I went to Bahrain. The bridge is being reversed," he said, adding that Bahraini nationals were now coming to Saudi Arabia for events - accounting for 10 percent of ticket sales in recent months.

The goal to keep Saudis - more than half of



RIYADH: Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman gestures as he attends a graduation ceremony for the 93rd class of cadets of the King Faisal Air Academy in the capital on Wednesday. —AFP

whom are under 25 - spending their disposable income at home is part of a wider campaign called "Don't travel". Saudi Arabia, the world's top oil exporter, has been struggling to cope with persistent budget deficits that began in 2014 when crude prices plummeted. The kingdom withdrew around \$250 billion from its financial reserves in the past four years.

Authorities have also increased fuel prices, introduced a value-added tax and cut subsidies in an effort to reduce costs and boost non-oil revenues. The shift has been a painful one for many Saudis accustomed to a generous welfare system. In December, the government announced a budget with record spending as it seeks to stimulate growth. —AFP

## Chad and Glencore agree to restructure \$1 billion oil loan

N'DJAMENA: Chad announced Wednesday it had struck a deal with Swiss mining giant Glencore to restructure debt of more than \$1 billion from a cash-for-crude-oil loan. The poverty-stricken west African nation's state oil company loaned nearly \$1.45 billion (1.18 billion euros) from Glencore in 2014, with the backing of four banks. The loan was to be repaid with crude oil assets, but Chad's economy has since been badly hit by a downturn in the price of oil exports. The two sides finally signed a renegotiated agreement on Wednesday, Chad's finance ministry said in a statement.

The deal includes a "two-year grace period" for the country to repay its debt, a 12-year extension of debt maturity and a reduction of the interest rate from 7.5 percent to two percent. It will also involve the total supply from the country's refinery near the capital N'Djamena. A source close to the matter said Chad negotiated for seven months to restructure the debt, which N'Djamena says now stands at \$1.36 billion. The same source said the agreement was a "necessity" for Chad to continue receiving funds from a stabilisation program by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which opened up a \$312 million credit line last June. —AFP

## Algeria consumers, firms feel pinch of import bans

ALGIERS: Mansour and Nassima used to buy Swiss chocolate for their daughter. But in the past few days it has disappeared from the shelves as Algeria's government implements a ban on imports of hundreds of products in an effort to cut the trade deficit. The restrictions will encourage domestic production, shielding it from foreign competition, officials say. But local firms including drinks producers and potters say shortages of raw materials are putting their businesses at risk. Algeria's non-energy sector remains undeveloped, meaning most goods consumed by its 40 million-strong people are shipped from abroad. Oil and gas account for 60 percent of the state budget.

At the start of this year, authorities banned the import of 851 products including foodstuffs and some raw materials in a bid to address a gaping trade deficit that widened as energy earnings almost halved since mid-2014. "Several products have disappeared. We're talking about luxury products," said

Mansour, as he browsed the Ardis mall in the capital Algiers with his wife and six-year-old daughter. "Most prices have gone up, even those of national products, due to the lack of competition," he said. "Today, I can't see some of the goods I used to buy on the shelves, including good quality chocolate for my daughter," said Nassima.

Ardis, which opened its doors in 2012 and is the largest mall in the country, attracts flocks of consumers every day because of the wide range of local and imported consumer goods it stocks. That range has now been reduced, though Walid Allouni, the mall's store manager, played down the change. "The import suspension is a problem for us, but this measure has affected only about 20 percent of the products we sell here," he said. "Some prices have risen because demand exceeds supply. I think this is a good opportunity to strengthen and encourage domestic output."

### Restrictions

In the past two years Algeria imposed a licensing system to reduce its imports bill, but that measure fell short of expectations. The value of purchases from abroad stood at \$45.95 billion in 2017, down just 2.4 percent from the previous year. China, which has boosted its economic presence across North

Africa, is Algeria's main supplier, followed by France and Italy. Despite past promises to support economic diversification, local firms have struggled, hampered by bureaucracy and insufficient foreign investment that deprived them of much-needed technology.

The restrictions may only add to pressure on some firms, with managers voicing concern about a possible collapse of their business because of declining stocks of raw materials. On Sunday, the Association of Algerian Ceramists published an open letter to Prime Minister Ahmed Ouyahia, urging him to ease limits on the import of the two main materials used in the industry. Domestic ceramics production falls short of demand, with products imported mainly from Spain and China filling the gap.

The situation, it warned, could "cripple the sector." Shortages of raw materials risk spreading to other sectors unless the government finds alternatives to the import suspension, businessmen say. "Some of our companies import 30 percent of their input needs," said Ali Hamani, the head of Algerian Association for Drinks Producers, which includes 40 firms. "There are firms that risk closing." Trade minister Mohamed Benmeradi said firms affected by the ban were "totally protected", state news agency APS said. He did not elaborate. —Reuters



## Business

# Funding evaporates for Nicaragua \$50 billion ocean-to-ocean canal

## Chinese investor has cut a low profile

**MANAGUA:** Nicaragua's ambitious dream of building a canal to rival Panama's famous waterway looks in peril as doubts pile up over whether its Chinese investor can cough up the \$50 billion needed, analysts say. The project "has remained completely unfinanced because it doesn't meet reliability requirements," said Eliseo Nunez, a former opposition lawmaker who is now a university professor. The Chinese billionaire who came forward to bankroll the project is Wang Jing, through his HKND (HK Nicaragua Canal Development) Group.

Five years ago, he won the contract given by the government of President Daniel Ortega to build and run a 276-km canal that would slice across the country, linking the Pacific and Atlantic oceans. The deal made world headlines, both for its sheer scale but also as a sign of growing Chinese involvement in a region once considered the United States' backyard. If seen through, it has the potential to change the fortunes of Nicaragua, one of the poorest nations in Latin America.

Panama earns nearly \$2 billion a year in tolls from ships using its waterway, built by France and the US and opened a century ago. Wang said in 2014, as he inaugurated the start of the project, that he wanted to see Nicaragua become one of the richest countries in the region.

“Nicaragua fell into a sort of international scam”

### Stalled work

But a year later, the Chinese telecoms tycoon lost a big chunk of his fortune, which was estimated at \$10 billion by the financial news agency Bloomberg. Since then, he has cut a low profile. "He's a ghost. We haven't seen him since," said Monica Lopez, a lawyer specialized in the environment who wrote a book on the proposed canal. Feasibility studies have been carried out but never published. Other countries interested in the project, such as Iran, no longer talk about it. Excavations started in 2016 have stopped, as has construction of freeways giving access to the canal.

When contacted by AFP, Nicaragua's Canal Authority denied work had halted. "It's true there have been delays, but this company (HKND) is still working on it. It's a very big project. It's going ahead slowly but normally," the authority's chief, Manuel Coronel Kautz, said. Observers are skeptical. The canal "lost its interest once the Chinese investor got weaker, and the Nicaraguan government doesn't have the capacity to move the project along by itself," said Victor Campos, director of the environmental Humboldt Center.

There's another factor posing a challenge: Panama dropping relations with Taiwan to establish diplomatic ties with China last June. "China is going to invest \$25 billion (per year) in different Latin



LA FONSECA, Nicaragua: In this file photo taken on Aug 15, 2017 peasants on horseback arrive to join a march against the construction of an interoceanic major canal in this remote village along the proposed canal route that would be destroyed by the project. —AFP

American countries, but Nicaragua isn't on its radar," said a former diplomat, Mauricio Diaz.

### Expropriation anxiety

Monica Lopez said there was always suspicion that the Chinese government was behind Wang's investment. "But the 19 trade accords China signed last year with Panama show that its interest is focused" on Panama, a wealthier nation with an already functioning canal, she said. Eliseo Nunez noted that Wang's investment was described as a

private initiative. "I'm not sure that China was behind the canal. It seems that Wang was acting alone" and "Nicaragua fell into a sort of international scam," he said, highlighting legal uncertainties that have dogged the project.

If the project ends up being scrapped, it would remove "a sword of Damocles" hanging over the heads of thousands of poor rural landowners across Nicaragua at risk of having their properties expropriated to make way for the canal, said Violeta Granera, an opposition leader. —AFP

## US joblessness remains near 45-year low

**WASHINGTON:** New claims for US unemployment benefits dropped last week, remaining near their lowest level in 45 years as employers struggle to fill open positions, according to government data released yesterday. Though the weekly figures are volatile, the data is consistent with reports from the Federal Reserve and business groups indicating the supply of available workers is drying up as the unemployment rate reaches historic lows.

The result also pointed to another strong month of job creation in February as the data were collected during the survey week for the Labor Department's closely-watched monthly employment report which will be released March 9. For the week ended Feb 17, new jobless claims fell by 7,000 from the prior week to 222,000, close to the 45-year low of 216,000 recorded in the middle of last month. The result undershot a consensus forecast, which called for an increase to 233,000 claims for the week. The less volatile four-week moving average also fell 2,250 to 226,000. —AFP

## US Fed says tax cuts could boost economy more than expected

**WASHINGTON:** US central bankers said the recent tax cuts could juice the economy more than expected in the near term, meaning further interest rate hikes likely will be needed, according to meeting minutes released Wednesday. But the minutes also revealed a split on the Federal Reserve's policy-setting committee, with some officials saying the central bank can afford to be patient in raising the benchmark lending rate, according to the minutes of the Jan 30-31 meeting.

The Fed did not increase the key interest rate at last month's meeting, and indicated three rate hikes are expected this year. However, that was before the strong January employment report spooked markets due to the fear the Fed will have to raise rates faster to head off inflation. Many economists now expect four moves in 2018. The language in the minutes spooked markets again, as Wall Street, which was in

positive territory most of the day, tumbled after the report was released.

Participants in the policy-setting Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) meeting pointed to the tax cuts and the improved global economic outlook as factors supporting US growth this year, and many upgraded their forecasts, even while cautioning that the impact of the tax cuts is not yet clear. A number of members noted that "the effects of the recently enacted tax changes - while still uncertain - might be somewhat larger in the near term than previously thought," the minutes said. As a result, the "stronger outlook for economic growth raised the likelihood that further gradual upward policy firming would be appropriate."

### Patience?

The use of the term "further" was the subject of intense debate among economists, with some doubting whether the term indicates the Fed will continue as it has, or speed up the pace of rate hikes. However, the minutes explain that the central bankers purposely used the term to "update" their description of the likely path of the rate used to set all kinds of lending from car loans to mortgages.

The first rate increase of the year is expected at the March FOMC meeting, which will be the first led by newly-installed Fed

Chair Jerome Powell, and will be followed by his first press conference. The Fed offered an upbeat outlook for the economy "suggesting full steam ahead for a rate hike next month," Joe Manimbo of Western Union Business Solutions said in a research note. "While the minutes stopped a bit short of introducing the risk of a faster pace of rate hikes this year, they didn't quash that view either," he said.

There continue to be skeptics on the FOMC as "some participants" cautioned that inflation, stubbornly low last year despite solid economic growth and falling unemployment, could continue to fall short of the Fed's two percent goal. They noted the absence of "significant wage or inflation pressures," and said the central bank "could afford to be patient in deciding whether to increase" the benchmark interest rate.

That would "allow participants to assess whether incoming information on inflation showed that it was solidly on track toward the committee's objective". But a number of Fed members noted that the continued strength in hiring "was likely to translate into faster wage increases at some point." In fact the January job report included a 10-year record in wage gains after months of only tepid increases, further boosting the sense on markets that the central bank will have to be more aggressive. —AFP



## Business

# Soul-searching as symbol of '70s S'pore faces demolition

## Pearl Bank reminder of development after independence

**SINGAPORE:** The looming demolition of a horse-shoe-shaped tower block that symbolized Singapore's growth from a port town to an affluent city-state has sparked soul-searching about whether enough is being done to protect the country's recent history. Pearl Bank Apartments, on the edge of the business district, was groundbreaking when it was completed in 1976 - at the time it was the tallest residential building in Singapore, and became a model for high-rise living in the country and across cities in Southeast Asia.

It was a turning point for the city-state's Chinatown, as it was the first skyscraper in an area dotted with low-rise buildings. But the 37-storey, 280-apartment block has seen better days, with residents now complaining of leaking pipes and ageing lifts. Earlier this month it was sold for Sg\$728 million (\$550 million) to a developer, who plans to construct a modern, high-rise residential building on the site.

The block was constructed in a 1970s style that has now fallen out of fashion, and lacks the colonial-era charm of buildings from British rule, many of which enjoy official protection. But Pearl Bank and

other buildings from the era are held dear by some Singaporeans as they are a reminder of the country's blistering development after independence in 1965. "The buildings that were built just after independence were a reflection of the aspirations and hopes of a new nation," said photographer Darren Soh, who has been documenting Pearl Bank and other buildings from the same period. "If we tear all these down, there will be nothing to remind us of the era."

Some publicly-owned buildings from that era, including a town hall and a conference hall, have been listed as national monuments, which should

protect them from the wrecking ball. But Ho Weng Hin, from architectural conservation consultancy Studio Lapis, said there were no cases of privately-owned residential blocks from that period being conserved and there was a "real threat" to such buildings. However residents

**Residents say conservation not practical due to high costs**

of Pearl Bank who backed the sale said that conservation was not practical due to the high cost. "A lot of the people calling for conservation are outsiders looking in but if you lived here yourself, you'll understand the difficulties," said resident Marie Lim, a 68-year-old retiree. —AFP



**SINGAPORE:** This photograph taken on Feb 13, 2018 shows the Pearl Bank Apartments on the edge of the business district. —AFP

## Train shortage, power demand to drive India's coal imports

**BAMBOLIM, India:** Caught between logistical bottlenecks and surging demand from power plants, India will likely increase coal imports in 2018, industry executives said, in what would be a setback to the government's plans to cut the country's dependence on foreign supplies. The projected higher coal demand, which would reverse two years of declines, will be a boon for international miners such as Indonesia's Adaro Energy, Australia's Whitehaven Coal or global commodity merchant Glencore.

But, the country's power plants and cement makers, the source of the resurgent demand, will end up eating the cost of the higher-priced imports. State-owned Coal India, the world's second-biggest coal miner by production, is grappling with a shortage of trains to carry the fuel from its mines to the country's power plants, according to the minutes of government meeting held on a Jan. 22 and reviewed by Reuters.

India's thermal coal imports may rise as much as 4 percent this year, with a steady 3 percent to 5 percent of growth expected over the next five years, a senior executive at Adani Enterprises, the country's biggest coal trader, told Reuters. "They (power plants) are not going to get the coal from

Coal India as they were promised because of limitations on the infrastructure side," said Rajendra Singh, Adani's chief operating officer for coal trading. "Now, either you shut down, or you absorb the price (of imports)" he said.

The train shortage in India has left about 10 power stations without spare coal supplies and 45 other plants with stockpiles that are less than seven days of consumption, the government meeting minutes showed. In a statement, Coal India said that the company was given a target of 288 trains of coal per day for the fiscal year ending March 2019. In February, the company is averaging 264.2 trains per day and reached a peak of 286 on a single day.

The company also said that the start-up of two new railway lines should add between eight to 10 trains. India needs a total of 332 coal trains per day to meet end-user demand, according to the Jan 22 meeting minutes. The stretched supply chains and higher costs for imports are worrying Indian power companies. "The question is, how far do you stretch a rubber band? Today, it is pretty stretched," said Vipul Tuli, chief executive officer of power company Sembcorp's India unit, referring to the rising costs of imported coal.

After years without significant imports, state-run utilities in the states of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Gujarat, have ordered several cargoes of Indonesian coal over the last month, Adani's Singh said on the sidelines of an industry event in Bambolim in India's Goa state last week. The utilities did not respond to calls for comment. The surge in imports has created a traffic jam of about 200 ships outside Indian ports, shipping data in Thomson Reuters Eikon showed. —Reuters

## Europe stocks slide on Fed rate-rise fears

**LONDON:** European stock markets slid yesterday after Federal Reserve minutes fanned expectations that US interest rates would rise further and faster than previously thought. Wall Street opened higher, paring its previous day's losses seen on the Fed news which also pushed Asian markets deep into the red. London's benchmark FTSE 100 index underperformed its European peers as investors also grappled with a raft of company results and a slight downgrading of 2017 UK growth.

The much-anticipated notes from the Fed's January policy meeting showed the board thought Donald Trump's sweeping tax cuts would fire up the already humming economy, pushing inflation higher. Analysts speculated that the Fed would lift interest rates at its next meeting in March, but there is debate about whether it will now carry out four increases this year in light of the recent spate of strong data, instead of the three that many have been predicting.

"Our take is that the minutes reflect events prior to the jump in hourly earnings seen in the January jobs report and also prior to the extra spending bill passed by Congress early in February," said Rodrigo Catril, forex strategist at National Australia Bank. "This would suggest that there is a good

chance that the current FOMC thinking has evolved towards a more hawkish tone since."

### Cheap credit

In London, stocks of energy provider Centrica were the big risers, helping to bolster the market after delivering results that were not as bad as feared. Despite reporting a hefty loss, banking giant Barclays also rose as investors bet on it increasing its dividend this year and conducting more share buybacks. The news from the Fed on Wednesday pushed the key 10-year US Treasury yield to a four-year high and boosted the dollar but sent US equities into reverse with all three main indices ending in negative territory.

Investors have been on edge since the start of this month when global markets were sent spinning by a strong US jobs and wages report that fuelled talk of tighter borrowing costs. Equities around the world have surged to all-time highs thanks to a years-long rally built on cheap credit from crisis-era stimulus. But with economies globally improving, central banks are beginning to wind those policies in.

In Asia, Tokyo ended 1.1 percent lower and Hong Kong fell 1.5 percent but Shanghai jumped more than two percent as mainland traders returned from a week-long break for the Lunar New Year celebrations. The dollar, which had been recovering against its major peers in previous sessions, paused Thursday, when it lost ground against the euro and the yen, which is considered a safe-haven asset in times of volatility and uncertainty. —AFP



## Sports

# Israeli youth handball teams in Qatar spark social media outcry

## Doha accused of trying to normalize ties with Israel

**DOHA:** The presence of Israeli teams at a youth handball tournament in Doha which started yesterday, has sparked calls on social media for Qataris to withdraw their children from the competition. Israel sent a boys' team and a girls' team to the Handball World School Championship, a biannual international tournament for students aged 15 to 18, played since the early 1970s.

It is not the first time Israeli athletes have competed in Qatar, but their participation has brought renewed scrutiny to Doha's foreign policy eight months into a diplomatic crisis with its Arab neighbors. On Twitter, users claiming to be Qataris accused Doha of trying to normalize relations with Israel. "I ask all parents to withdraw their children and prevent them from participating in this normalization of relations," one user wrote in Arabic. "Now it is the time to speak to your children about Palestine."

Another tweeted that the tournament was "recognition of an occupier". The Twitter account QAYON (Qatar Youth Opposed to Normalization) for its part launched the hashtag: "Students of Qatar against normalization", gaining coverage from Doha's own Al-Jazeera Arabic satellite network. The campaign even

garnered praise from a prominent Emirati professor tweeting from the rival United Arab Emirates—where expressions of sympathy toward Qatar can be a punishable offence. It is not known whether the tweets critical of Doha actually originated from Qatar.

### 'Very, very difficult'

The presence of the Israeli handball players was always likely to be sensitive. Earlier this year Israeli tennis player Dudi Sela took part in the Qatar Open, leading to demands on social

media for an apology from Qatar's tennis federation, whose president is Paris Saint-Germain chief Nasser Al-Khelaifi. And in 2016, two Israeli competitors—Ariel Hilma and Sean Faiga—took part in a Doha volleyball tournament. Again, there was online fury, with one

Twitter user calling on Qatari airport staff not to stamp the volleyball stars' passports.

Ahead of the handball competition, one local newspaper listed every country participating, except for Israel. The opening ceremony will not feature an Israeli flag, according to the International School Sport Federation (ISF) organizers. But there is no question of Israel not participating among the more than 20 nations who sent teams to Doha—the first non-

European capital to host the tournament. "These teams have qualified to participate," said a media manager for the competition, pointing out that the same rule will apply when it comes to the World Cup, which Qatar is scheduled to host in 2022.

"This is a worldwide tournament," he said, speaking on condition of anonymity due to the sensitivity of the issue. Tom Christensen, a senior ISF official, told AFP that Israel was originally planning to send only one team, "but they

decided four or five months ago to send a girls' team" as well. Qatar has a complex relationship with Israel. The emirate provides sanctuary for the former Hamas leadership. In the weeks following the start of the Gulf crisis between Qatar and its Arab neighbors, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said he wanted Al-Jazeera's Israel offices closed down. At the same time, Qatar has committed itself to welcoming Israel's football team—and fans—should they qualify for the 2022 World Cup. —AFP



### No Israeli flag at the opening ceremony



**DOHA:** A woman looks at trees planted at the Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy Tree Nursery in Doha. The nursery is growing trees and turf that are to be planted in the areas surrounding the 2022 FIFA World Cup Qatar stadiums. —AFP

## Srikanth predicts golden era for Indian stars

**NEW DELHI:** Indian badminton is entering a golden era with an army of new stars aiming for Commonwealth Games and Asian Games success this year, the country's top-ranked star Kidambi Srikanth has warned rivals. With Srikanth ranked three in the world, HS Prannoy 11th and Sai Praneeth 14th, India have as many men in the world top 15 as traditional powerhouse China. For the women, PV Sindhu is ranked four and Saina Nehwal 11th—and they are both Olympic medal winners. "We have five or six very good men's singles players and with Saina and Sindhu doing extremely well and doubles players adding to it, it is a very good pool we have," Srikanth told AFP in an interview in New Delhi. "Probably we have the best set of players in the last 10 years or so," he said.

India have had individual badminton heroes such as Prakash Padukone, the first Indian to win the All England men's title in 1980, and national coach Pullela Gopichand, but never such a large group of talent at the same time. Srikanth last year became the first Indian to win four SuperSeries

world tour titles in a year and jumped to a career-best second in men's rankings before suffering a leg injury. The 24-year-old recovered in time to compete in the India Open this month but surprisingly lost in the second round to Malaysian qualifier Iskander Zulkarnain.

### Olympic dream

Srikanth shot to prominence by defeating Chinese great Lin Dan to win the China Open in 2014. Lin beat the Indian in the quarter-finals of the Rio Olympics two years later. Srikanth still has his sights set on an Olympic medal though. The 25-year-old, who was introduced to badminton by his elder brother K Nandagopal knows he must first focus on the Commonwealth Games in Australia in April and the Asian Games in Indonesia in August. "Obviously winning the Olympic medal is my biggest dream. But I really don't want to think too much about 2020 right now," said Srikanth. "It's more about the next couple of months and next couple of tournaments that I am playing. 'It's really important for us to be consistent with events and those big medals.'"

That means staying fit in the demanding SuperSeries world tour. "Last year I won SuperSeries events got injured and came back to win SuperSeries events, so this year at least I want to stay fit and keep playing many more tournaments than last year." —AFP

## Qatar to plant 16,000 trees to spruce up World Cup venues

**DOHA:** Desert country Qatar will plant at least 16,000 trees in a bid to "beautify" its eight planned 2022 World Cup stadiums, tournament organizers said yesterday. The trees, a mixture of local specimens and other varieties imported from China, Spain and Thailand, will be grown in a vast nursery outside capital city Doha before being planted around the venues. The 880,000-square metre site was officially opened yesterday by the head of Qatar's Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy, the local body responsible for the World Cup.

Many of the trees from Qatar will be those uprooted elsewhere to make way for large-scale infrastructure projects as the Gulf state is transformed for the tournament at an eye-watering cost of \$500-million-a-week. "Our target was 16,000 trees," said Yasser Abdulla Al-Mulla, a landscape and sport turf senior manager. "If we need more we can get more, why not?" Grass that will be planted around the stadiums will also be grown at the nursery that is staffed by 50 workers.

The trees and turf will be grown using recycled water, said organizers, though no cost for the project was given.

Organization committee boss Hassan Al-Thawadi said the nursery was "a great example of how the state is achieving self-sufficiency", in an apparent nod to the ongoing political crisis in the Gulf which has seen Qatar isolated by a bloc of Saudi-led countries. Qatar has come under intense criticism since being awarded the World Cup for the treatment of its migrant workforce, numbering around two million. Figures from the Supreme Committee this week, showed there were almost 20,000 workers on World Cup stadium sites. FIFA is expected to decide later this year if Qatar needs eight or nine stadiums for the 2022 World Cup. —AFP



**DOHA:** An employee works at the Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy Tree Nursery in Doha. —AFP



## Sports

# Iraq urges FIFA to lift ban on hosting internationals

## Basra to host a friendly between Iraq, Saudi Arabia

**NAJAF:** Iraq hopes that hosting Gulf football friendlies, renovating its stadiums and outlawing weapons at matches will have persuaded FIFA to lift a ban on home competitive internationals, its sports minister said. The country has not played full internationals on home turf for almost three decades, ever since its 1990 invasion of Kuwait that sparked an international embargo. FIFA's ban, covering all but local matches, stayed in place after the American-led invasion of 2003 that toppled dictator Saddam Hussein. The ban was briefly lifted in 2012, but a power outage during an Iraq-Jordan match in the Iraqi Kurdish capital Arbil led world's football's governing body promptly to reinstate it.

Iraq is now allowed to host international friendlies at stadiums in Arbil, the southern port city of Basra and the shrine city of Karbala.

On February 28, Basra will host a friendly between Iraq and Saudi Arabia—the first Saudi national team to play on Iraqi soil in four decades. “Politics is present in every domain, and Saudi Arabia has major political weight,” Sports and Youth Minister Abdulhussein Abttan told AFP in an interview at the international stadium of Najaf, south of Baghdad. “The presence of the Saudi team in Iraq means a lot to us.”

Years of insecurity following the US-led invasion and the Islamic State group's occupation of a swathes of northern and western Iraq turned

hosting sports events into a major challenge. But Iraq in December declared victory over the jihadists following a three-year battle, and FIFA finally relaxed the ban. Now, Abttan wants the sport's governing body to lift it entirely. “I hope that this (Saudi) match will inspire other national teams to visit Iraq, which will help support our case for a total lifting of FIFA's ban on matches in our stadiums,” Abttan said. “We are also counting on the teams of Bahrain, Qatar and Iran, all of which also have political influence in sports.”

Next week's friendly marks a warming of ties between Baghdad and Riyadh after decades of tension under Saddam as well as under Nuri Al-Maliki, who was prime minister from 2006–2014. Maliki's successor Haider Al-Abadi visited Riyadh in June and October 2016, and the two countries have since ex-

changed several trade delegations. The detente is now extending into the realm of football. But politics has also mixed with sport in the Gulf diplomatic crisis pitting a Saudi-led Arab bloc against Qatar, the host of the World Cup 2022. The Gulf crisis forced organizers to move the eight-nation Gulf Cup from host Qatar to Kuwait. Doha agreed on condition that it would host the next Gulf tournament, in 2019. While Abttan's efforts to bring football tournaments back to Iraqi soil appear to be bearing fruit, he faces challenges persuading other sports teams to visit the coun-

United's rich tradition of attacking football, most recently during Alex Ferguson's trophy-laden 27 years in charge. “The next time I see David Beckham, I'm going to ask him ‘David, when you were playing right wing in Manchester United, when the left-back attacked, do you stay looking at the stands or you come back with the guy?’” said Mourinho. “Now it looks like all the good players, they have to play free... which I think is such a stupid thing to say,” he added. “The winning teams, the top teams in the world now, not 10 years ago, or 20 or 30, now, the top teams, everybody works, everybody has tactical discipline,” he said.

### Pogba focus

Mourinho was also irritated at the focus on the absence of Pogba from his starting line-up. “In my pre-match interview I had four questions and three were about Paul, and Paul was not even playing,” he said. “That's a bit strange.” The United manager even hugged a TV reporter who asked him a question about McTominay, relieved it was not another about the French midfielder. Sevilla, who conceded more goals than any other side that reached the last 16 of the Champions League, did not have their defensive weaknesses exposed by a cautious United team. “Mourinho, look how hard it is to win when you don't want to,” Spanish sports daily Marca headlined its match report, in a withering criticism of the former Real Madrid coach's tactics.

It was a performance thrown into an even harsher light by the free-flowing attacking intent showed by Liverpool, Manchester City and Tottenham Hotspur on the road in the Champions League last week. “Compared to other teams in our league in this competition they are not as pleasing on the eye,” said former United defender Rio Ferdinand. “But they grind out results and in Europe I would be very satisfied with that and think ‘we will beat them at home’.”

“Sometimes it can't be pretty and it can't always be free-flowing.



**NAJAF:** Photo shows a general view of the Najaf International Stadium in the central shrine city. — AFP

He criticized Lebanon's Al-Riyadi basketball club for refusing to play in Iraq in March, on security grounds. “It's unfortunate to find an Arab basketball club that refuses to play in Iraq for security reasons while there are Arab football clubs that are ready to come and play here,” he said. “But it will not affect our efforts to lift the FIFA ban.” He said that while some sports stadiums were faulty, such as in Arbil, “a lot of work has been done... and a lot of money has been spent” to bring them up to standard.

He said he is also determined to tackle the problem of armed men in stadiums. In January, a

supporter of a local team opened fire on the bus of the opposing club, although nobody was wounded in the incident. Later the same month, Iraq's Police club, owned by the interior ministry, was banned from playing in Baghdad's main football ground following a brawl between police and stadium guards. Military officers have been known to bring both cars and weapons into stadiums. “Nobody could stop them because they are high ranking,” Abttan said. “But now it is different, and in coordination with the interior ministry, we put an end to this situation, which was in total contradiction with FIFA rules.”—AFP

## Mourinho's cautious Man United tactics win few admirers

**LONDON:** Manchester United manager Jose Mourinho left Spain with a precious clean sheet but few admirers after an uninspiring 0-0 Champions League draw with Sevilla that featured a limp attacking display. It could have been a bleak night for Mourinho and United but for the heroics of goalkeeper David de Gea, who produced a dazzling display on Wednesday.

The Spaniard was forced into eight saves, including one remarkable stop from a point-blank Luis Muriel header just before half-time that was so spectacular the Colombian striker congratulated United's number one as they left the field at the break. However, the result did not spare Mourinho from criticism, after he set his stall out from the start by leaving Paul Pogba on the bench for a workmanlike midfield three of Nemanja Matic, Ander Herrera and 21-year-old Scott McTominay. Injury to Herrera forced Mourinho to introduce Pogba after just 17 minutes but even the French midfielder's talents, for which United paid Juventus £89 million (\$124 million) 18 months ago, failed to inspire a visiting side playing to strict instructions. A team also containing the attacking talents of Alexis Sanchez and Romelu Lukaku had just one shot on target all evening at the Sanchez Pizjuan stadium and even that was a tame McTominay strike from outside the box that was easily beaten away by Sergio Rico.

But Mourinho reacted angrily when asked whether he is betraying

There have been times this season United have played well but they aren't as consistent in those performances of other teams.” However, the tactics were in keeping with Mourinho's cautious approach against the stronger sides away from home this season. In trips to Chelsea, Liverpool, Spurs and Sevilla, United have managed zero goals and a total of just seven shots on target. That heaps the pressure on Mourinho to be far more daring with Chelsea and Liverpool visiting Old Trafford in the Premier League before the second leg against Sevilla on March 13 as he seeks to ensure qualification for next season's Champions League.— AFP



### Matches on TV (Local Timings)

SPANISH LEAGUE	
Deportivo v Espanyol	23:00
beIN SPORTS HD 3	
GERMAN BUNDESLIGA	
FSV Mainz v Wolfsburg	22:30
beIN SPORTS HD 5	
FRENCH LEAGUE	
Strasbourg v Montpellier	22:45
beIN SPORTS HD 6	



## Sports

# Good night and good morning; Muguruza wins late Dubai duel

## Champion Svitolina books semi-finals

**DUBAI:** Defending champion and top seed Elina Svitolina toiled for more than two hours to reach the Dubai quarter-finals while second seed Garbine Muguruza had to wait until 2 am to complete her opening victory. Play ran exceptionally late at the event, with lengthy, slow-moving matches to blame. Svitolina took two and a quarter hours to overcome stubborn resistance from China's Wang Qiang 6-1, 5-7, 6-2.

Muguruza, the runner-up in Qatar last weekend, had to wait out a three-hour epic as Daria Kasatkina beat British seventh seed Johanna Konta 4-6, 7-6 (8/6), 6-2 before the Spanish second seed got on court in the early hours of yesterday. But Muguruza at least then picked up the pace to defeat American CiCi Bellis 6-3, 7-5, a match which took one and three-quarter hours and ended just before 2 am.

Svitolina had to save nine of 11 break points against world number 46 Wang who entered the field after the withdrawal of Petra Kvitová, the Qatar champion. "I was a little bit angry at myself that I didn't bring my best game in the end of the second set. I had to accept and bounce back," Svitolina said. "But I was very happy the way I was playing. In the end, the win is the win."

Konta, the first ever British woman to win a round in Dubai, was unable to get past Russian Kasatkina. "I can only really look back on this match, and take the good things. I did do a lot of good things, (and I can) then learn from the things and try to do better," Konta said. Karolina Pliskova and Angelique Kerber advanced to set up a battle of ex-world number ones in the last eight. Czech Pliskova, the third seed, beat Carla Suarez Navarro 5-7, 6-2, 6-4, while Germany's

Kerber dispatched Italian qualifier Sara Errani 6-4, 6-2. Sixth seed Kerber, who won the Sydney title in January before reaching the Australian Open semi-finals, leads the series with her Czech opponent 6-3, winning their last two matches.

### Kasatkina beat British 7th seed Johanna Konta



"It was a tricky match, especially because she was playing well," Kerber said after taking the win over Errani on a secondary showcourt at the Aviation Club. "I don't care which court I play on. It's always important now to win the matches and focus more on my opponent, on my game, on the next round." Japan's Naomi Osaka, the next opponent for Svitolina, beat Anett Kontaveit of Estonia 6-2, 7-6 (7/5), while French fifth seed Caroline Garcia put out Ekaterina Makarova 6-4, 6-2.



**DUBAI:** Elina Svitolina of Ukraine serves the ball to Naomi Osaka of Japan during the quarter-final tennis match in the WTA Dubai Duty Free Tennis Championship yesterday. — AFP

Russian Elena Vesnina upset Roland Garros champion and fourth seed Jelena Ostapenko 6-1, 7-6 (8/6). "It was a weird match. At the beginning, everything was going my way. I was playing very clean. Jelena was missing a lot of shots," Vesnina said. "In the second set, she got back. She is a top 10 player, she is a Grand Slam champion. Of course, she will rebound, she will

change something in her game." Pliskova, who headed the rankings from mid-July to mid-September, needed a fightback against Suarez Navarro after losing the opening set to her 27th-ranked opponent. "I was not playing the best tennis today, we were both a little bit struggling," Pliskova said after finishing with 11 aces, six double-faults and losing her serve five times.—AFP

## Sock, Isner, Raonic bundled out of the Delray Beach Open

**FLORIDA:** Top seed Jack Sock was "served off the court" while John Isner and Milos Raonic also exited on a day of upsets at the Delray Beach Open in Florida on Wednesday. Two months after clinching his first Masters 1000 title in Paris, Sock was in less stellar form, beaten 4-6 7-5 6-3 by fellow American Reilly Opelka 4-6 7-5 6-3 in the second round. The 6-foot-11-inch Opelka used his height and power to fire down 17 aces, though the 20-year-old was not really happy with his biggest weapon.

"I didn't serve as well as I'd have liked to or as well as I usually do," the world number 228 said after the biggest win of his career. "I was really pleased with how I played from the baseline though. I thought I hit my forehand great and made it really tough for him to be offensive, which is his game." World number eight Sock spoke of the difficulty of playing against someone of Opelka's height. "You're not really ever in control against a seven-foot guy who can serve you off the court," he said. "Even after winning the first set it's still 50-50 with his style of play." Isner came out on the wrong end of three consecutive tiebreaks against German Peter Gojowczyk, who prevailed 7-6(3) 6-7(4) 7-6(5). —Reuters

## Jerusalem club fans fed up with racism form a new outfit

**JERUSALEM:** A group of Jerusalem soccer supporters who were fed up with the behavior of their fellow fans have turned their backs on the club they followed and set up a friendlier, more tolerant outfit. Around 4,000 fans who were previously loyal to Beitar Jerusalem, one of Israel's biggest and best supported clubs, have broken away to follow Betar Nordia, which was formed by a small group of them four years ago.

Beitar Jerusalem are a bastion of Israel's political right-wing and a group of their supporters known as "La Familia" has been openly hostile and violent towards fellow fans. Israel's Arab minority has been the main object of their hatred. While Beitar's players have worked to deliver success on the pitch, the club's "La Familia" supporters have often frustrated those efforts through their misconduct. The club has faced disciplinary action, including fines and points deductions, and even had to play matches behind closed doors for offences including fan violence, the use of flares, pitch invasions and racist chanting.

Unlike almost all other Israeli soccer clubs, Beitar have never employed an Arab player. Nordia, who have adopted the same yellow and black strip and the same team emblem, have a completely opposite attitude and have fielded four Arab players since they were founded and even have Arab fans. Team captain Tzion Zaken, a former Beitar player, said the Nordia setup was unique because of its drive against racism and violence. "Betar Nordia is

the only Israeli club I know that has formed to fight racism. Elsewhere, fans have rebelled because they didn't like the way their team was run but Nordia is unique," he told Reuters.

### Third division minnows

Now making a bigger effort to curb the fan violence, after another incident last month, Beitar ordered the east stand at Jerusalem's Teddy Kollek Stadium, where the most fanatical supporters sit, to be closed until further notice. "The club feels disgusted by the violence, and even more so, by the racism and from now on it will battle those fans who wantonly harm the club," said part of a Beitar statement after their 4-2 home victory over Israeli-Arab outfit Bnei Sakhnin. Aviv Sharfstein, a member of Nordia's management, said the new club hope one day to persuade the violent Beitar fans to abandon their militancy so that the two clubs could perhaps merge. This appears unlikely in the short term, however, as Beitar have a far larger fan base and are Premier League high flyers while Nordia are relative upstarts and third division midtable minnows. Sharfstein said Nordia's supporters felt alienated because of the Beitar fans and the only course open to them was to form a separate club. "We could no longer agree to hear the club narrative when fans used violence and displayed their racism by shouting 'death to Arabs'," he said.

"We felt we were going to matches alongside criminal organisations, they even used violence against us, the ordinary fans." Taer Zaro, a resident of the Palestinian neighborhood of Beit Hanina in East Jerusalem, who is studying physical education at Israel's Wingate Sports Institute, said he was happy to support Nordia and had found conviviality among his fellow fans. "I was a supporter of Beitar Jerusalem when I was a boy and I only cared about the play on the pitch, I was not interested with what the racist fans were saying but I moved to support Nordia because I didn't want any part of the racism," Zaro said.—Reuters



## Sports



# US women claim gold to end Canada's reign

## Canada's four-gold medal streak ends

**GANGNEUNG:** She's practiced the 'Oops, I did it again' thousands of times in training, and yesterday her signature trick was worth its weight in Olympic gold as American Jocelyne Lamoureux-Davidson's shootout winner broke a Canadian 16-year stranglehold on the women's ice hockey title. It was the perfect jaw-dropping finale to a game that was billed as a grudge match but swiftly developed into a classic for the ages at the Pyeongchang Winter Games.

At the same time as dashing Canada's dreams of a fifth straight gold, Lamoureux-Davidson's moment of magic secured the US its first title since 1998 and avenged a heart-breaking and similarly dramatic loss last time out in Sochi. The two titans of the ice are the only countries to have won gold in women's ice hockey since it made its Olympic debut 20 years ago in Nagano. After a see-saw clash in regulation, the sides entered overtime locked at 2-2 but could not be separated.

It was just as tight in the shootout up until sudden-death when US coach Robb Stauber tapped Lamoureux-Davidson to take the next US shot. She weaved in on twice gold medal winner Shannon Szabados, moved to her left with a backhand that drew the Canadian goaltender toward her and then pulled the puck to her forehead and slid it in behind her. "I've done

that thousands of times around tyres just set out on open ice," Lamoureux-Davidson said. "It's called 'Oops, I did it again' and I'm just thrilled beyond words. 'I've butchered it a thousand times, ran into tyres, tripped over tyres just working on my hands. Just glad it worked out this time,'" the 28-year-old said.

With the medal now on the line, the Canadians sent veteran Meghan Agosta out for a second shot, having notched her first attempt moments earlier. The 31-year-old's plan had been to set up American goaltender Maddie Rooney with a move that would allow her to score through her legs, but Rooney didn't bite, her save sealing a magnificent win for the Americans. Within seconds she was at the bottom of a pile of blue-jerseys as her screaming and delirious American team mates celebrated their victory.

"Before she (Agosta) came down, I just looked over at the bench and saw my team mates like pointing at me, just one more and to have their support made it a whole lot easier," Rooney said. "I just reacted to her and everything kind of went into a blur." As exhilarating and redeeming a victory it was for the Americans, it was devastating for four-time gold medal winners Canada. In Sochi four years ago, it was they who spoiled the Americans' late lead and snatched



**GANGNEUNG:** The US team poses with their gold medals after the medal ceremony at the Pyeongchang 2018 Winter Olympic Games yesterday. — AFP

the win in overtime. "I don't think we had any regrets, but this medal really hurt," said Canadian forward Melodie Daoust, pointing at the silver

medal hanging around her neck as she spoke to reporters. "And we're going to have to move forward from now, but it's painful." — Reuters

## Gutsy Gasser goes for glory, bags big air gold

**YEONGCHANG:** Anna Gasser stood at the top of the big air ramp yesterday, caught in two minds ahead of her crucial final run. In the end, the Austrian snowboarder changed her planned trick and was rewarded with the first Olympic gold medal in the event. Gasser, who finished 15th in the slopestyle event last week, put down a 96.00 with the final run of the day to snatch gold away from American Jamie Anderson. The Austrian's combined score of 185.00 from her two best runs relegated slopestyle champion Anderson into silver with a 177.25 total, while New Zealand's Zoi Sadowski-Synnott took the bronze with a combined 157.50. Gasser said deciding to go with something different for her third run had been key. "I was standing up there and I knew I had the silver and I only could win and I was like, 'No, I'm going to go full risk and if it works out then I deserve this medal,'" she said. "Thankfully it worked out."

The gold will go some way to making up for the Austrian's disappointment in the

slopestyle, where high winds prevented any of the riders from laying down two clean runs. Gasser said the slopestyle should have been postponed and that Anderson was the only one who wanted it to go ahead. The big air event is making its Olympic debut in Pyeongchang and sees snowboarders hurtle down a ramp standing at 49 meters with a maximum slope angle of 40 degrees and perform spins and tricks to impress the judges.

The women's final was brought forward to yesterday as high winds are forecast for today, with the men's final scheduled for tomorrow. Anderson, who became the first woman to win two snowboarding medals at a single Olympics, said she was happier to win the big air silver medal than she was defending the slopestyle title she had won in Sochi four years ago. "It feels better because we have great conditions and everyone was able to ride their best, so it feels rewarding," she said.

Sadowski-Synnott was another who took a risk with her final jump and while she could not pull it off perfectly, she was satisfied that she had given it a go. "I've never done that trick before, but it's the Olympics, so I wanted to do something crazy," said the 16-year-old, who won New Zealand's second ever Winter Olympics medal. Barely two hours later, another 16-year-old New Zealander, Nico Porteous, won his country's third when he took bronze in the ski halfpipe. — Reuters

## Gisin holds off Shiffrin to claim combined gold

**PYEONGCHANG:** Switzerland's Michelle Gisin held off the might of American Alpine skiing to win the women's combined at the Pyeongchang Games yesterday, claiming victory ahead of Mikaela Shiffrin while her fellow Swiss Wendy Holdener won bronze. Shiffrin's American compatriot Lindsey Vonn, who had led after the downhill section, was the last skier to compete but was unable to finish her slalom run, leaving the 24-year-old Gisin to savor her first Olympic medal.

Gisin's victory, with her combined time of two minutes, 20.90 nearly a second ahead of pre-race favorite Shiffrin, completed a rare Olympic double for her family after elder sister Dominique won the downhill in Sochi four years ago. "It's so exciting. It's insane I really thought it's so hard to ski so fast in slalom," Gisin told reporters. "I tried to give it my all and to put my whole heart in that run and I knew I had to be fast to keep a little distance because with Lindsey, you never know how fast she skis in slalom because she was amazing a couple years ago."

"I was scared while skiing because this season slalom kicked my butt so many times... I was believing that one day I will put all the pieces together, one day it will all come to me and today it was exactly that," the Swiss added. The two medals take Switzerland's tally to six in Alpine skiing at these Games, their most in a single Winter Games since 1988, when they won 11. Shiffrin departs South Korea with two medals after she won gold in giant slalom and despite wild pre-Olympic predictions of her sweeping every event she entered, the American was satisfied with her return.

"I came into these Olympics knowing I could be a medal threat in multiple disciplines. I didn't even know how many I would ski," she said. "After the gold in the giant slalom, I was really hopeful and positive. Then I had a tougher day in the slalom (she finished fourth) but it still feels good though." Holdener produced the fastest slalom run of the day with a 40.23 and held on to bronze, with Norwegian Ragnhild Mowinckel struggling in the technical element and then Vonn skiing out early in her effort.

For Holdener it was a second medal of these Games following a silver in slalom. "The slope wasn't that good anymore, it wasn't that smooth so in the end I thought it was going to be fourth place. I'm really happy it was enough for the third place," she said. The joy was particularly sweet given that she was able to share success with her compatriot Gisin. "It's a really cool moment because we are friends and grew up together. It's amazing," she added. — Reuters



## Sports



# South Korea 'Garlic Girls' spice up Olympic curling

## Minimizing confusion - All share surname 'KIM'

**GANGNEUNG:** They're dubbed the "Garlic Girls" but go by the names Pancake, Yogurt, Steak, Cookie and Sunny-meet the South Korean curlers who are whipping up a recipe for success at the Olympics. The Koreans, ranked eighth in the world, have emerged medal contenders at the Pyeongchang Games. After stunning top teams like Canada, Switzerland and Sweden, they were the first to advance to the semi-finals.

Their giant-killing feats on the ice have drawn big crowds in a country where curling is little known. Their skills have wooed fans while their affectionate nicknames have added a light-hearted twist to their feats on the ice. "I think the names are so fun," said Oh Ja-young, a spectator from Bundang. "But if they weren't doing so well, I wouldn't pay attention to their names."

All of them have "KIM" written on the back of their uniforms, the most common Korean surname that they share. To minimize confusion, Kim Eun-jung, Kim Seon-yeong, Kim Kyeong-ae, Kim Yeong-mi and alternate Kim Cho-hi decided to adopt nicknames-and a brainstorming session took place at the breakfast table. But in

contrast to their fun nicknames, the curlers mean business on ice. "They play with a lot of passion, very technically sound," Rick Patzke, chief executive officer of the US Curling Association said. "It's great to see the home crowd getting behind them here."

The curlers were apparently unprepared for the fervent flag-waving home crowd that packs the stadium each time they play. They entered the tournament as outsiders and saw the crowds build up as they went from win to win. "We are surprised that curling can be so welcomed in Korea," said the team's coach Kim Min-jung. South Korea sent its first curling team to the Olympics in 2014. "We've always wanted to make curling a more popular and common recreational sport in Korea and we're happy we are getting there," Kim added.

### 'Team Kim'

Only last month, curling was considered an obscure sport in South Korea. Now, memes of the South Korean curlers have gone viral online and several fans are posting good-humored clips mimicking the sport with cleaning supplies. De-

## 'Blown away' - Swede Myhrer wins shock Olympic slalom gold

**PYEONGCHANG:** Swedish veteran Andre Myhrer captured a shock slalom men's gold at the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics yesterday as the two favorites both spectacularly bombed out. Ramon Zenhausern of Switzerland won silver, 0.34sec behind, and Michael Matt of Austria the bronze after his countryman Marcel Hirscher and then Henrik Kristoffersen of Norway crashed out.

It later transpired that Kristoffersen vomited before he started his ill-fated second run. Myhrer, at 35 years and 42 days, becomes the oldest man to win a slalom Olympic medal, breaking the record set by Austria's Mario Matt-Michael's brother-in-2014. He also follows his "idol" Ingemar Stenmark, who won the slalom and giant slalom in 1980, as only the second Swedish man to claim a Games alpine skiing crown. "It means everything. I've been training my whole life for a moment like this," said the unheralded Swede.

"I took a medal in Vancouver (2010), a bronze, but I've been always dreaming about the gold medal and now it's a reality and I'm totally blown away," Myhrer, who clocked a winning combined time of 1:38.99, was flattered to be talked about in the same breath as Stenmark. "He's like an institution in Sweden and one of the greatest athletes in Swedish history," he said. "To be named alongside him is a great honor for me. He was my idol

since I was growing up, to be named alongside him is simply amazing." Myhrer is the second 35-year-old man to take Alpine gold in South Korea after Aksel Lund Svindal of Norway won the downhill.

### Hirscher crashes out

The 23-year-old Kristoffersen went fastest in the morning, just ahead of Myhrer, and looked to have one hand on the title. But nerves appeared to get the better of the Norwegian, skiing last, and his dreams of a first Olympic gold evaporated when he failed to finish his second run. Kristoffersen, who won silver in the giant slalom in Pyeongchang, refused to blame his vomiting at the start.

"I'm always sick. I've been sick for four days. A little cold, didn't affect me at all. I usually puke before the start, anyway." The American star Mikaela Shiffrin similarly vomited before the start of the women's slalom last week. She blamed nerves. Kristoffersen's dramatic demise came after Hirscher crashed out in the morning leg, ruining his hopes of a golden hat-trick in South Korea. Hirscher, 28, failed to find his rhythm on a course set by his own coach, Michael Pircher, and eventually missed a gate, failing to even make the second run.

Hirscher-who had already won the alpine combined and giant slalom at these Games, his first individual Olympic titles-revealed he had never been comfortable in the lead-up to the slalom, even in training. "The feeling was really bad the whole week on slalom skis and this is the final result," he admitted. "I had absolutely no confidence on this kind of snow. I skied really badly. This is what also can happen and is part of the game, part of the sport. "You have success and sometimes you have not the best days." Hirscher had been aiming to become only the fourth skier in history to win a third gold medal at a single Olympics, joining Austria's Toni Sailer (1956), Frenchman Jean-Claude Killy and Croatia's Janica Kostelic (2002). — AFP



**GANGNEUNG:** South Korea's Kim Alang (2nd left) competes in the women's 1,000m short track speed skating quarter-final event during the Pyeongchang 2018 Winter Olympic Games yesterday. — AFP

spite the sudden spike in the team's popularity, they are no flash in the pan-they have been in the sport for more than a decade. Their hometown of Uiseong-a rural town of around 54,000 people

famous for garlic farming-built a curling centre in 2006 with funding from the local government. As a result, many students at Uiseong joined the curling team, including the Olympians. — AFP

## Russian curler stripped of Olympic medal for doping

**PYEONGCHANG:** Russian curler Alexander Krushelnitsky was stripped of his Pyeongchang Winter Olympics bronze medal yesterday after admitting doping, the Court of Arbitration for Sport said. The 25-year-old was one of 168 Russian athletes who passed rigorous testing to compete as neutrals in Pyeongchang after Russia were banned over a major doping scandal. "The athlete has admitted the anti-doping rule violation; he is disqualified from the mixed doubles curling event," the court said in a statement.

Krushelnitsky, who won mixed doubles bronze along with his wife, Anastasia Bryzgalova, has protested his innocence and officials have hinted at foul play. But Krushelnitsky decided not to contest yesterday's CAS hearing, saying it was "stupid to deny" testing positive for meldonium, an endurance booster. However, CAS said Krushelnitsky, who is provisionally suspended, "reserved his rights to seek the elimination or reduction of any period of ineligibility based on 'no fault or negligence' following the conclusion of the Games". — AFP



## Sports



# Ivanka, North Korean general to attend Olympic closing ceremony

## Pyeongchang Games - a venue for geopolitics

**SEOUL:** US President Donald Trump's daughter Ivanka will come face-to-face with a top North Korean general at the Winter Olympics closing ceremony in the South this weekend, it emerged yesterday. The Pyeongchang Games have become a venue for geopolitics as much as sports as the nuclear-armed North mounts a charm offensive analysts say is intended to loosen the sanctions regime against it and weaken the alliance between Seoul and Washington.

Leader Kim Jong Un dispatched his sister Kim Yo Jong to the opening ceremony - which US Vice President Mike Pence also attended - and during her visit she extended an invitation to South Korean President Moon Jae-in to come to a summit in Pyongyang. The family connections will be reversed at Sunday's closing ceremony. The White House said Donald Trump had asked his eldest daughter - who is also one of his top advisers - to travel to Pyeongchang to lead up a "high level delegation".

The 36-year-old businesswoman and former model will be joined by press secretary Sarah

Sanders and is going in part because "she is something of a winter sports enthusiast", an official said. The North will send an eight-member delegation Sunday headed by Kim Yong Chol, a top general who oversees inter-Korean relations for the ruling Workers' Party, Seoul's unification ministry said in a statement. Kim Yong Chol's presence is a demonstration of how Pyongyang is testing the limits of the multiple different sanctions imposed on it over its banned nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs.

### Games have seen a flurry of cross-border visits and diplomacy



The general is black-listed under Seoul's unilateral sanctions against the North - meaning he is subject to an assets freeze - although he is not named in the UN Security Council's measures. He is believed to have once led the North's spying agency, the Reconnaissance General Bureau,

and to have ordered a deadly torpedo attack on the South's corvette Cheonan in 2010 that left 46 sailors dead. Seoul blamed the North for the attack but Pyongyang denied involvement. South Korea's defense ministry has also linked him to the shelling of its Yeonpyeong island the same year, which killed four people. — AFP



**PAJU:** North Korea's chief delegate Kim Yong Chol (center) and North Korean soldiers cross the border which divides the two Koreas to attend the inter-Korean general talks at the South's side of the truce village of Panmunjom, in the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). Top North Korean general Kim Yong Chol will be at the closing ceremony of the South's Winter Olympics on February 25, 2018, Seoul said - an event that US President Donald Trump's daughter Ivanka will also attend. — AFP

## 5 things to know about Olympic ladies figure skating

**GANGNEUNG:** There are 24 skaters in the running for Olympic ladies figure skating gold today, but you'd never know it because only two names are on everyone's lips - Alina Zagitova and Evgenia Medvedeva. AFP Sport assesses the mouthwatering showdown between the two Russian ice princesses at the Gangneung Arena:

### The state of play

Zagitova set a new short program world record on Wednesday with a score of 82.92 to lead Medvedeva by a slender 1.31 points. Medvedeva holds the world record in free dance of 160.46 and combined record of 241.31, compared to Zagitova's respective bests of 158.08 and 238.24. Medvedeva is more than capable of overturning her deficit, but Zagitova has shown rapid improvement every time she takes to the ice. "We're friends, but on the ice it's like a little war" Medvedeva says.

### Zagitova leaps into controversy

While Medvedeva will raise her arms when she jumps to garner extra points, Zagitova backloads her jumps to the second half of her routine. The ruse, which can earn up to a maximum 10 points, has come in for criticism, with one American skating correspondent calling the ploy "strategic" which it undoubtedly is, and calling for the judges in Pyeongchang "to penalize" the 15-year-old for "an unbalanced routine". And American skater Ashley Wagner took the youngster to task for exploiting the rules. "I understand that this is what the system allows but it's not all figure skating is about", Zagitova was having none of it though, responding: "I don't agree with Ashley Wagner's opinion of my routine. I have a balanced program: downbeat music at the start, and going upbeat gradually. All of my jumps go along with the music."

### Anna Karenina and Don Quixote

The two friends and training partners are out to woo the judges with very different routines. Zagitova, in a red ballerina dress, has set her four-and-a-half minute routine to Austrian composer Ludwig Minkus's score to the ballet Don Quixote, about the fictional Spanish nobleman which featured in Spaniard Javier Fernandez's free dance en route to his bronze behind Yuzuru Hanyu in the men's competition. Medvedeva enters the character of Anna Karenina to the soundtrack of the film written by Oscar-winning Italian composer Dario Marianelli.

With Zagitova drawing the 22nd slot Medvedeva will go in 24th and last spot knowing what score she has to beat.

### Turning point

After Wednesday's short program Zagitova spoke feelingly about a turning point in her young career. Born in the Western Urals, she joined Medvedeva at Eteri Tutberidze's skate school in Moscow where she lives with her grandmother. But it was by no means a case of instant success, as she recounted: "At one point my coach told me to leave the school and go home. She wanted to let me go because I wasn't working hard enough, I didn't appreciate the seriousness of it all. I cried a lot, for three days I didn't practice, it made me realize how much I loved skating. The coach then said 'let's try again', I was very happy, I had butterflies in my stomach. If it wasn't for that moment maybe I wouldn't be here."

### Anxious mum

Medvedeva's mum gets so caught up in emotion when her daughter skates she doesn't travel to competitions. "My mother never watches my performance. Probably, our connection is so strong that mum's anxiety comes to me even at a distance. That's why we've agreed that she does not go to competitions and does not even watch the live broadcast" says Medvedeva, who doesn't say whether she's imposed the same strict viewing conditions on Jammy, her beloved canine companion. — AFP

## Wipe-out ends Choi's rollercoaster Games

**GANGNEUNG:** Choi Min-jeong's bid for an Olympic short track treble ended in a wipe-out with fellow South Korean Shim Suk-hee yesterday. The winner of the women's 1,500m and 3,000m relay clipped the blades of Shim in the final lap of the 1,000m, sending both skaters hurtling into the side padding. That left Suzanne Schulting of the Netherlands to claim gold, with Canada's Kim Boutin taking silver and Arianna Fontana of Italy the bronze.

The 19-year-old Choi was heralded as the 2018 Winter Games' hosts golden girl, but she has experienced a rollercoaster ride at the Gangneung Ice Arena. Her hopes of four golds were dashed from the start when she was disqualified from her opening 500m race. But Choi got off the mark when she won the 1,500m, and then led South Korea to 3,000m relay success. She only made yesterday's final through the back door, when a penalty to one of her rivals earned her a pass to the decider.

Starting on the outside she was always up against it, and she ended her race - and her Olympics - unceremoniously on her backside. For Boutin, this was another step up the podium in Pyeongchang after filling bronze in both the 500m and 1,500m. She received abuse from Korean trolls on social media over Choi's disqualification in the 500m. Schulting was part of the Dutch relay team that set a new world record on Tuesday in the 'B' final on their way to bronze behind Korea and Italy. Fontana, 27, added silver to the gold she won in the 500m and relay to swell her Olympic medal haul to eight. — AFP



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NAJAF: A man walks near the pitch in Najaf International Stadium in Iraq's central shrine city. —AFP

## Iraq urges FIFA to lift ban

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