

# Friday Times

ISSUE NO: 17429

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## Local

## Prison hunger strike and Amiri amnesty



Local Spotlight

By Muna Al-Fuzai

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The Kuwait Human Rights Society issued a report on the hunger strike by some prisoners in Kuwait. Such a move by prisoners is universally known, as the prisoner sees that this is the only means he has to express his demands. It is a nonviolent act that is used by prisoners, especially activists and politicians, in countries around the world to protest against the deprivation of their rights. But do these strikes lead to a positive end? KHRS is committed to the standards of humanitarian organizations internationally as per all treaties and conventions on human rights, which call to preserve a prisoner's dignity and allow him to express his right in any peaceful way.

The prisoners held in state security cases (related to freedom of opinion) announced that they will launch hunger strikes in order to achieve their demands and obtain their rights in the same manner as others. They want the authorities to activate article 87 of the Kuwaiti penal code and demand an inclusion in the Amiri amnesty (half-term) similar to other amnesty cases. The hunger strikers issued a statement in which they stressed that Kuwait must respect freedom of expression. Accordingly, prisoners considered their detention to be contrary to international law and international covenants and treaties which the government has to comply and abide with.

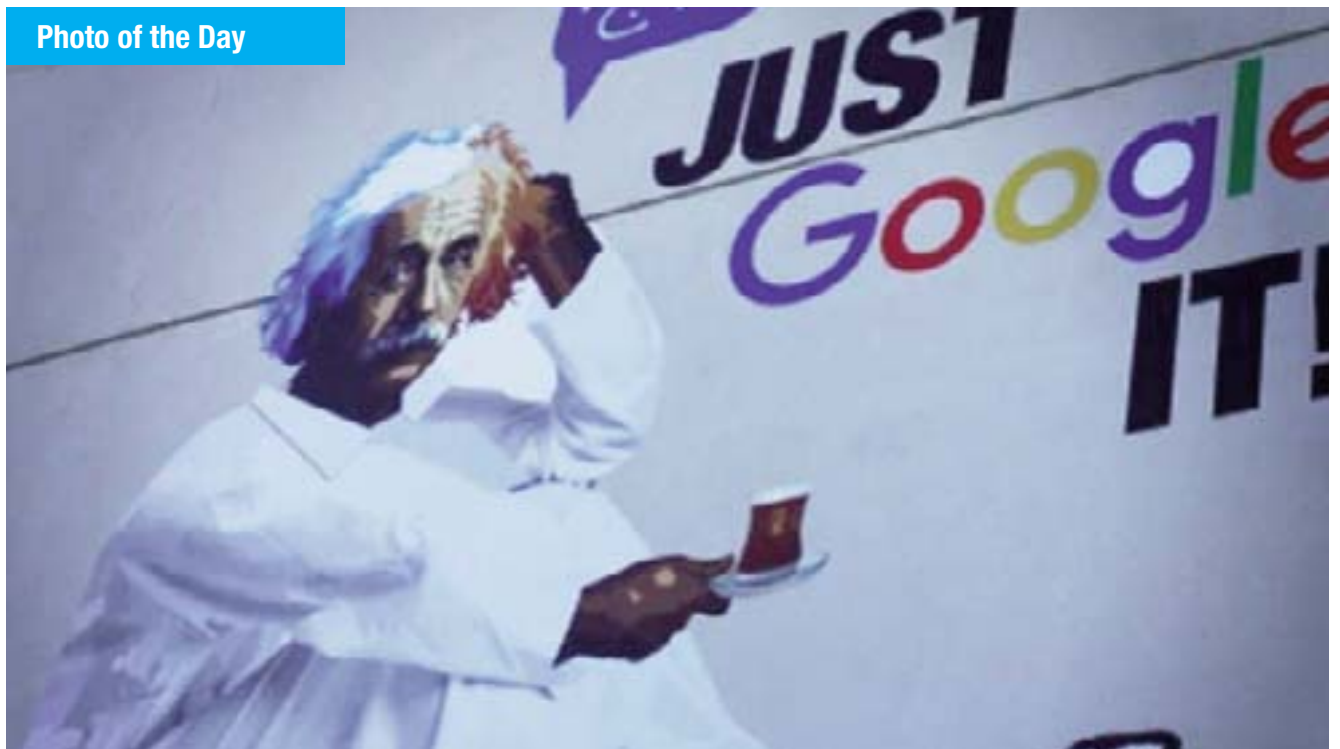
Hunger strikes have become a common expression for prisoners in penal institutions to express their tragic situation. Hardly a month passes without an announcement by prisoners somewhere in the world of a hunger strike, which increases the concern of defense bodies and human rights activists and fears of their families.

I think the hunger strike in Kuwait reflects a negative image of Kuwait regionally and internationally, because it reveals an improper face of the state's dealing with its citizens, especially those who object to its policies or the way of running the state. They find themselves in prison with criminals convicted over drugs, murder and theft, and are not treated any better, as if they are murderers or drug dealers.

We have an annual and humanitarian gesture in Kuwait that is a pure right of HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, called the Amiri pardon. It is an initiative of the Amir through an annual Amiri amnesty decree for immediate release or reduction of penalties and fines. The justice ministry, the judicial department, the public prosecutor's office, the Amiri Diwan and the interior ministry work on the processing of this humanitarian gesture.

The prisoners' strike occurred for a reason, and I hope that the reasons will be looked into and perhaps end this disturbing subject once and for all. We are a small community and a country of goodness, mercy and humanity. Soon, Kuwait will celebrate its independence and liberation from the Iraqi invasion. This is an opportunity for all to celebrate.

## Photo of the Day



Imagine of world famous physicist Albert Einstein wearing a dishdasha and drinking istakana over a logo of Google painted onto the side of a building in Murouj. — Photo by Thomas Joseph

## Why expats avoid police stations in Kuwait

IN MY VIEW

By Dave Torres

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The police's sworn duty is to protect and serve the community, regardless of nationality, and often the men in uniform go above and beyond the call of duty to implement their social responsibilities. Many Kuwaiti police officers are doing their job diligently and deserve our highest respect and salutations.

We've witnessed many positive gestures these days by the Kuwaiti police, especially on the busy roads of the country. We see them helping motorists in trouble, especially on highways or major thoroughfares. They also don't think twice to help women on the roads.

When my car tire burst in the middle of Road 30 a few months back, I drew the attention of police in minutes. This is one of the busiest highways in Kuwait, and staying there exposed for long can be deadly. Gladly, I saw a police vehicle pulling aside and rushing towards the back of my car, preventing more accidents. Two police officers offered help - one to change the tire and the other to man the traffic.

On another beautiful morning, I saw a police officer saving a cat crossing the street. I also witnessed a police officer helping a disabled person climb the pedestrian bridge. There are countless kind acts demonstrated by police officers in Kuwait, who really deserve our praise.

Visiting a police station, however, can be daunting for many expats. We are often ignored, or rudely told to wait or come back another day. Even when we are trying to stay inside the law by reporting a crime, a car accident or a lost/stolen driver's license, the police at the station aren't always helpful.

Case in point: Once I was involved in a minor traffic accident somewhere in Khaitan, and we were told to follow the police officer to the police station. After two hours of waiting there, we were told to come back the

following day, only because the police officers who were in charge of preparing the report were busy talking with friends over cups of tea.

In another instance, the tires of a friend's car in Farwaniya were deliberately deflated at least five times in two weeks by his neighbor. I asked him to report the matter to the police, so the culprit could be held accountable, but he said he would rather keep quiet than report such acts to the police. He had his reasons - can you blame him?

There are many reasons why expats would rather keep quiet and not refer their cases directly to the authorities. When my car was towed for illegal parking and held by traffic authorities, it remained in the impounding area for weeks, merely because of miscommunication. They told me to go to the traffic police in Jahra, and I remember going there for three consecutive days.

Asian expats, for example, do not want to deal directly with authorities because of the language barrier. They are not sure if they can relay the message to the police properly or if they will be understood. I remember a police officer once told me to communicate with him only in Arabic, "since we are living in an Arab country". With due respect to many good English-speaking police officers in the country and those who are helping expats immeasurably, sometimes we have to learn the language or bring an Arabic translator along in order to make a complaint.

If you are a law abiding member of the society - whether expat or citizen - visiting the police station should be a simple and easy matter. But for expats, just getting a police officer to listen your issue or problem can sometimes be an impossible task. Many just give up or never bother to report petty crimes in the first place.



# Kuwait Times



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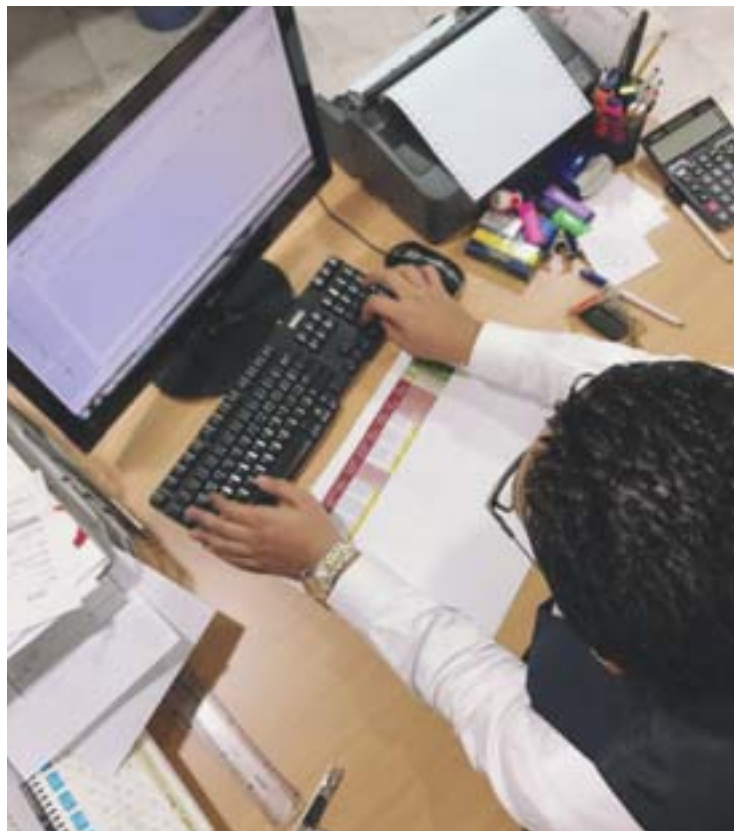
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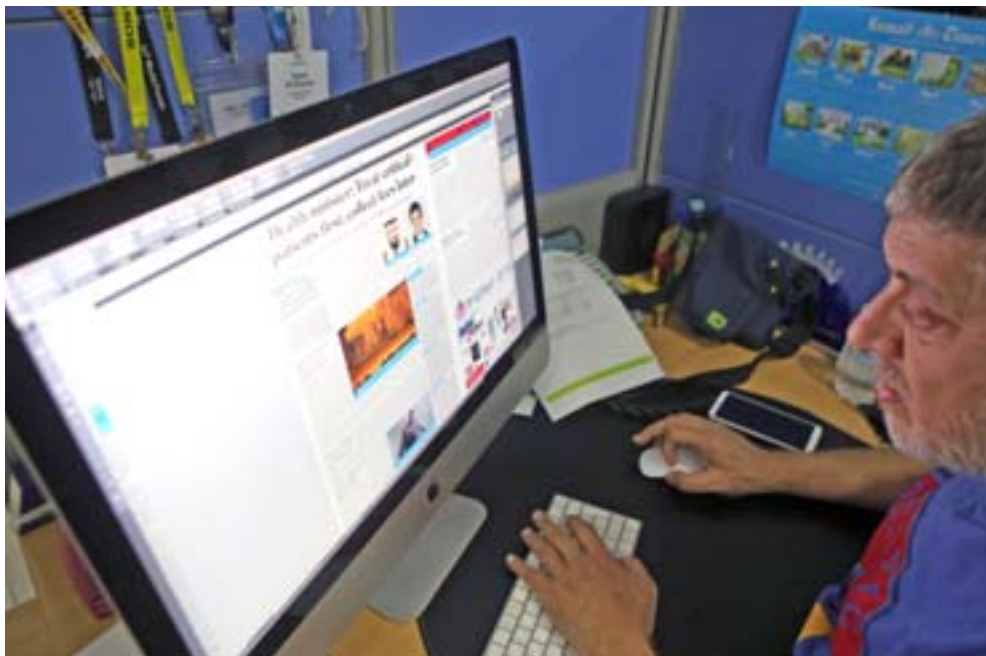
# *Life* **at work**

The average adult spends around one third of his or her life at work. The countless hours, days, weeks, months and years often slip by without one realizing. The environment in which one works, therefore, can have a real and substantive impact - both positively and negatively - on how one views their life.



## Local

Friday, January 12, 2018



In this new series, Kuwait Times looks at work environments by examining our own offices and our employees' desk. KT staff spend long hours at work and in the field, editors and reporters both go out to research and interview and then return to their desks to write and file before deadline. Between time-sensitive stories, long investigative reports that need to be checked and corrected, and the availability of the necessary images, the time goes by lightning speed, either preceded or precedes us.

However, not everyone wants to decorate his office, some people like to stay clean as they are, while beautiful decors are lost among piles of paper at some. What is important is that the employee feels comfortable and familiar in order to accomplish his work.

Do you have a desk or an office? Do you work outdoors or in a space shared with others? Maybe you work in a government office sharing a desk or station with many others? Maybe your 'desk' is a taxi cab or hospital exam room? How do you make your workspace your own? How do you add personality and decoration to make it more friendly and a happy place you enjoy being? Let us know!

Kuwait Times invite readers: Send us photos of your work environment for our series. Email high res jpegs to [Local@KuwaitTimes.com](mailto:Local@KuwaitTimes.com).



Photos by Athoob Al-Shuaibi and Yasser Al-Zayyat





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# The growing popularity of **K-pop** in Kuwait



Photos of some of the most popular K-pop bands growing in popularity in Kuwait.

EXO

By Athoob Al-Shuaibi

At the start of the second millennium, the Korean wave began to sweep Arab media through television dramas and anime movies, which had been spreading like wildfire across the world since the 1990s. This was subsequently followed by the invasion of South Korean pop music, or K-pop, especially among post-millennials.

Kuwaiti teenager Dana Hussain's passion about K-pop music pushed her, like other netizens, to read more about her favorite bands and follow their news. However, this wasn't enough for her. The 13-year-old girl conducted a survey on the popularity of the most famous Korean band in her school - BTS - and got a response from 74 students. Fifty students from the participating group had heard about the band, which makes us question why would someone be so obsessed about music they can't understand?

K-pop is a term that encompasses all types of traditional and modern Korean music. Meanwhile, modern K-pop is a unique musical genre. One song may comprise of hip-hop, pop, rock, rap and electric, while preserving the Korean musical heritage. The artists are recruited by entertainment agencies such as JYP, SM, Cube Entertainment and Big Hit Entertainment. The process is extremely rigorous, where artists undergo daily intensive dancing and singing drills. Some band members are banned from dating to maintain their popularity among their fans around the world.

"It is impossible to see someone in real life as perfect as a K-pop idol. They are of the highest quality standard," gushed Dana. The perfection of the form and content of Korean pop music is an industry, and a normal human being cannot be this perfect. It really

is unreal. A teenager may enter a maze of questions about his own self-worth if he isn't following in the steps of his favorite idols, or his friends who resemble them. "My sister and I now prefer to borrow our parents' tops because they appear loose on us. The baggy outfits of Korean pop stars are trending nowadays," she told Kuwait Times.

It took Dana a long time to fall in love with Korean music. At first, she didn't quite like it. Later, many of her friends encouraged her to give it another chance. This is scarcely a model that shows us how trends are spread, grow and last for a long time. In general, the shift of the world into a small village paved the way for the globalization of arts, music and literature. It also created a broad audience of devotees on the Internet.

It is also important to understand the positive aspects of the Korean wave, or Hallyu. More people are receptive to their culture and language. "I can read Korean alphabets and a few words. Also, I constantly read the translated lyrics on YouTube. The more I listen, the more I memorize its syllables," Dana enthused.

The new Korean pop is a fusion of Western musical genres, yet pop stars hold on to the Korean culture, which has a clear impact on the lyrics they sing. It's mostly about emotions, love and even the things we see around us, a consequence of moral values that were adopted thousands of years ago by the Korean people. Nonetheless, there's an exception to every rule.

Dana loves to listen to BTS, Got7, Loona, Twice, Red Velvet, Zico and Black Pink. "Their lyrics are beautiful and catchy! But I have noticed that some teenagers hate BTS because of their ongoing feud with the EXO band. Others like to listen to K-pop, but they don't recognize the names of the bands they listen to!" she exclaimed.



Loona



BTS



Red Velvet



## Local

# MoCI, PAI adopt new criteria for distributing industrial land

## 1,036 blocks in Shadadiya to be given to applicants

By Faten Omar

**KUWAIT:** Minister of Commerce and Industry Khaled Al-Roudhan announced the adoption of new standards for the distribution of industrial land by the board of directors of the Public Authority for Industry. He disclosed that 1,036 industrial blocks will be distributed in the coming months according to these standards.

Roudhan said at a press conference held yesterday at PAI that the new standards and the evaluation of the industrial projects will be based on three basic criteria: Industrial capital, which means the size of the capital used in technology, machinery and equipment, in addition to the volume of energy used to operate the plant. This will form 20 percent of the total standards. Industrial priority of the quality of investment and products makes up 30 percent.

The third criterion is value added to the national economy, which includes the volume of profits to be achieved in addition to the size of national manpower working in the project and its service to other local projects, as well as the actual production volume. He said this standard will have 50 percent weightage of the total distribution standards.

Roudhan said the distribution of the 1,036 industrial blocks will be in the Shadadiya industrial area, adding that it will contribute to enhancing the role of the industrial sector in Kuwait to diversify sources of income and increase domestic output. He announced plans to

encourage upgrading the quality of existing and future factories.

Roudhan said the blocks will be distributed to entrepreneurs who meet the new settlement criteria so that Kuwaiti industrial products can compete globally. "It is not enough for our industry to be for domestic consumption only. Without exports, the industry will not work for the economy," he said. "We will seek to contribute to the new industries to reduce imports of some basic products. The local products should be of competitive quality and exportable quantities that can be sold in world markets and achieve self-sufficiency in crises," he added.

He pointed out that the new criteria for settlement in the new industrial zones were meant to give a great push to PAI to work more freely and quickly to achieve basic objectives, including the increase in exports, providing real job opportunities acceptable to Kuwaitis, diversification of products and focusing on global competitiveness. "We have formed a team that has set a timetable for approval of projects with feasibility studies. It started work three months back and is expected to disband at the end of March and start the actual distributions after approval," Roudhan explained.

Abdulkarim Taqi, General Manager of PAI, said the first criterion in the new standards is industrial capitalism, which is divided into two parts: Energy conservation, because energy is subsidized and depends on a depleting resource, so saving it will bring great benefits to the econ-



**KUWAIT:** Abdulkarim Taqi, General Manager of Public Authority for Industry and Minister of Commerce and Industry Khaled Al-Roudhan hold a press conference yesterday. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

omy. It has 50 percent weightage. Machines and equipment out of the total number of productive labor forms the other 50 percent in order to reduce dependence on unskilled labor and encourage dependence on trained labor and thus provide jobs for Kuwaitis.

The second standard (industrial priority) is that it is distributed in four bases: Recycling waste from manufacturing operations (5 percent weightage), 40 percent for export products, 20 percent for products for the local market that replace imports and 35 percent for medicine and technology products.

The third criterion (value added to the national economy) will be divided into five sections

- 20 percent weightage for profitability of trade, 15 percent for national employment, 20 percent to use local raw materials and feed the product to other factories, 25 percent for product made for the first time and 20 percent for products that will replace imports.

Taqi said the technical team adopted a time-frame for project approvals, starting by sorting applications at the sector level, then approvals of feasibility studies, followed by applying the criteria to these approvals to get the preliminary results. He said applicants will be interviewed to explain the project, announcing that a committee will be formed by MoCI and PAI in the event of any objections.

## KFAS launches Innovation Challenge 2018

**KUWAIT:** In collaboration with University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) and with the participation of teams from 10 private Kuwaiti companies, the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) launched on Wednesday the Innovation Challenge 2018, a unique program designed to develop human capital within the private sector through science, technology and innovation (STI).

Out of the 50 private shareholding companies that applied for the program, 10 were selected after careful evaluation: The National Bank of Kuwait, EQUATE Petrochemicals, Kuwait Finance House, Agility Logistics, Gulf Bank, KAMCO Investment, TabCo Food, Jadeite Group, Boubyan Bank, and Rasameel Investment. Two of these teams, KAMCO and Jadeite, are participating for the first time.

At the inaugural dinner of the 2018 Innovation Challenge, KFAS Director General Dr Adnan Shihab-Eldin, noted that teams will learn practical knowledge that can be readily applied to their

work. The goal is to develop innovative solutions towards challenges within their companies in four months. He reflected on some of the success stories of past Innovation Challenges, where participants have been able to translate the outcomes of the training they acquired into the development of new initiatives, demonstrating the power of STI as a tool for business development and growth. The Innovation Challenge is customized for the private sector in Kuwait. The program utilizes experiential learning methodologies to equip participants with skills and tools to successfully undertake innovative approaches to business challenges faced in their work environment, he added. The Challenge, currently in its fourth year, has developed significantly over the past few years, and much of its success can be attributed to the diverse learning modalities and the use of proven educational approaches in promoting innovative ideas, shifting from traditional business norms, he said.

Senior Associate Dean, UCLA Anderson School of Management, Alfred E Osborne, Jr said: "I believe that this kind of partnership - reaching across nations and bringing together the best that academia and business have to offer - is a powerful template for the way in which we can create positive change in our world today. We are grateful for the confidence that KFAS is placing in UCLA - because you are trusting us with the development of your human resources. And how-



**KUWAIT:** Senior officials are seen during the launch of the Innovation Challenge 2018 by the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences on Wednesday. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

ever great a nation's wealth, industrial might, technological prowess or geological resources, its people will always be its most precious asset."

As a result of previous participation in the program, Boubyan Bank introduced its first interactive teller machine in Kuwait as an innovative service to their clients. They are also one of the first banks to establish an internal innovation center. The program also prompted EQUATE to establish two internal innovation centers, which accelerated the promotion of innovation culture within the company. The program started in January and will be ending in May 2018.

The Executive Education Center at the UCLA Anderson Center is a world-renowned institution

in the United States, that has traditionally been known for its excellence in capacity building, coaching and training initiatives, including promoting and designing innovation worldwide. The program, which is designed and funded by the foundation, will include workshops and seminars led by experts from UCLA. Most of the workshops will be held in Kuwait; however, as a part of the program, the teams will attend workshops on the UCLA campus and visit high-profile companies in Los Angeles such as Disney and Snapchat. The program aims to advance the knowledge and skills of the participating teams through simulation, comparative studies and distance learning.



## Local

## Bahraini King receives Kuwaiti Defense Minister



MANAMA: Bahrain's King Hamad Al-Khalifa receives Kuwait's First Deputy PM and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. — KUNA

**KUWAIT:** Bahrain's King Hamad bin Issa Al-Khalifa received Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah at Al-Sakhir Palace on Wednesday. Sheikh Nasser relayed the greetings of HH the Amir and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to King Hamad, a Defense Ministry statement read. The visiting Kuwaiti official underlined the depth of historic relations built on solid foundations between the neighboring countries.

Meanwhile, General Commander of the Bahraini Defense Force Field Marshal Sheikh Khalifa bin Ahmad Al-Khalifa and Sheikh Nasser met yesterday to discuss an array of mutual issues, mainly military ones. During the meeting, Sheikh Nasser Sabah commended deep relations between Kuwait and Bahrain, stressing mutual willingness to further promote and develop them in all fields. He also spoke highly of the continuing development of the Bahraini Defense Force in the fields of practical and scientific training, according to a ministry statement. The meeting was attended by the accompanying delegation of the Kuwaiti first deputy prime minister and defense minister and a host of Bahraini high-ranking officers. Sheikh Nasser arrived in Manama on an official visit to Bahrain at the invitation of Bahrain's Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander of the Bahrain Defense Force and First Deputy Prime Minister Prince Salman bin Hamad Al-Khalifa.

## MoE addressing concerns of special needs students

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

**KUWAIT:** The education ministry's assistant undersecretary for private and specialized education affairs, Abdul Mohsen Al-Howailah said all educational officials give due care to students with special needs and disabilities, be they motor, sight, hearing or mental. Speaking after presiding over an open meeting including students, parents, teachers and a number of principals, Howailah stressed that curriculums will be amended to conform to various disabilities. He added teachers of students with hearing disabilities will have to learn sign language.

### Illegal camps razed

Municipality PR Manager Abdul Mohsen Abalkhail said municipal inspectors have removed 423 illegal camps, and so far 1,063 camps have been legally licensed.

### National celebrations

The Ahmadi governor yesterday presided over a meeting with the national anniversaries' committee to discuss its preparations for the upcoming national festivities, due to be launched on Jan 29 by hoisting the Kuwait flag, until Feb 22.

# Three MPs file to grill Sabeeh over five issues

## Speaker lists motion for Jan 23 session

**KUWAIT:** National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem yesterday declared that an interpellation motion against Minister of Labor and Social Affairs Hind Al-Sabeeh will be listed in agenda of the parliament's next session on Jan 23. In a statement to journalists at the parliament building, the speaker said he received the motion from MPs Al-Humaidi Al-Subaei, Khaled Al-Otaibi and Mubarak Al-Hajraf, addressed to the minister in her capacity.

Legislative procedures have been taken, he said, noting that HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and Sabeeh, who is also minister of state for economic affairs, were notified about the planned inquiry. The three MPs earlier delivered the motion to the speaker to question the minister over five issues. — KUNA



**KUWAIT:** MPs Al-Humaidi Al-Subaei, Khaled Al-Otaibi and Mubarak Al-Hajraf file the grilling motion yesterday. — Photo by Fouad Al-Shaikh

## FM meets Indian counterpart, receives envoy's credentials



**KUWAIT:** Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah meets his Indian counterpart V K Singh. — KUNA photos

**KUWAIT:** Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received yesterday his visiting Indian counterpart V K Singh. During the meeting, both sides discussed the latest developments in the region and ways to strengthen bilateral ties and boost cooperation in various fields.



**Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled receives the credentials of India's new ambassador to Kuwait K Jeeva Sagar.**

Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled also received the credentials of India's new ambassador to Kuwait K Jeeva Sagar. During the meeting, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled wished the new ambassador best of luck in his new duty, and more developed relations between both friendly countries. — KUNA

## Operations begin at Sabriya Jurassic oil, gas field: KOC

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Oil Co announced on Wednesday the immediate launch of operations at Al-Sabriya field, which will produce Jurassic oil and gas. The field is the first of three similar projects, which have been under construction, and will "contribute to the gradual increase of gas and oil production," the state-run firm said in a statement.

The remaining two fields are expected to be operational in the coming months. With the new addition, KOC expects the production of gas in the first quarter of the following financial year to reach a



**KUWAIT:** Operations begin at Al-Sabriya Jurassic oil, gas field. — KUNA

daily 500 million cubic feet, with oil production to climb by 200,000 barrels. The accomplishment outlines the company's commitment to raise its production of gas in order for the country to reach the strategic goal of responding to domestic demand. — KUNA



## Local

# Harbors key to maritime trade in old Kuwait



Old houses and neg'aas (harbors) in Kuwait. — KUNA photos



Hilal bin Fajhan's house overlooking a neg'aa.

**KUWAIT:** Major ship owners in old Kuwait were known to have their own harbors, which they usually named after them and built opposite their buildings, stores or diwanias to moor their commercial dhows as well as others' after the season concluded. Such wharfs were built by builders who had gained the needed experience and skills by practicing the profession since early childhood. By the beginning of the 20th century, Kuwait's government started issuing ownership deeds to the owners of these marinas.

Harbors (neg'aa) are as old as Kuwait itself, since Kuwait's economy mainly relied on the sea and maritime trading, according to heritage researcher Mohammed Jamal. In his book, *Old Crafts, Pro-*

*fessions and Activities in Kuwait*, Jamal defined the 'neg'aa' as a basin on the beach surrounded by rocks and used to harbor dhows and protect them from wind and waves, as well as to conduct maintenance operations. Some harbors had special palm-leaf shades to protect the dhow from the searing heat and other weather conditions. He added that Kuwait used to have around 40 neg'aas.

Jamal said these jetties always had some dhows moored according to the season. He explained that commercial dhows used to dock after concluding their season in June and remained there until mid-August, while pearl diving ones used to be docked after the season concluded in September, remaining there until mid-May. He added

that fishing dhows operated all year long, bringing the daily catch ashore to the fish market.

Jamal said some dhows were used to bring freshwater from the Shatt Al-Arab and dock at various harbors, where kandaris (water carriers) took the water to sell it around the city. In addition, some dhows used to carry stones from Eshairej Cape to various jetties, from where they were taken on donkeys to construction sites. Jamal added smaller diving dhows used to be dragged ashore for maintenance operations, while larger ones used for carrying passengers had to be docked and kept in the water, where 'qalaleef' (plural of qallaf or shipbuilder) conducted needed repair works.—KUNA

## Jabri opens Qurain Cultural Festival

**KUWAIT:** On behalf of HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Minister of Information Mohammad Al-Jabri inaugurated the 24th edition of Qurain Cultural Festival Wednesday evening. Jabri, also President of the National Council for Culture, Arts and Literature (NCCAL), said that Kuwait, as a long-standing beacon of Arab cultural enlightenment, puts its resources at the disposal of the cultural and artistic movement. Under its wise leadership, Kuwait takes pride in its leading role in promoting all forms of arts, literature and culture, he said at the opening ceremony.

"Kuwait's contributions to the cultural enlightenment stem from profound belief of its leaders and people in the role of culture in de-radicalization and in curbing extremism, hate and xenophobia," the minister pointed out. Jabri noted that Qurain Festival provides a chance for creative men of letters, artists, media people and critics from across the Arab world to network and add to the cultural movement.

"Since its first edition in November 1994, the festival has turned to be a regional and international cultural platform for intelligentsia to display their achievements that contribute to social stability and economic development. The annual event helped Kuwait being selected as capital of Arab Culture in 2001 and Capital of Islamic Culture in 2016," he added.

The current session of the festival is honoring Yassin Shamlan Al-Hasawi - a celebrated Kuwaiti poet and writer, and Fahad Al-Rabiq - a Saudi, Jabri said. The festival, which continues until Jan 29, features a range of artistic performances, formative art galleries, plays, movies, cultural seminars, and workshops on pantomime and story and novel writing. — KUNA



**KUWAIT:** Artists perform during the opening of the Qurain Cultural Festival. —Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

## Pedophile teacher arrested

**KUWAIT:** An Egyptian private school physical education teacher was arrested for repeatedly molesting a 12-year-old student, said security sources. The girl said the teacher used to let all her classmates out after class except her, and forcibly kissed and groped her. She added the suspect promised to marry her when she got older, and when she threatened to report him to her mother, he threatened back to report her to the school principal. The girl finally told her mother, who filed a case. The suspect was arrested pending deportation.

### Youth escapes abduction

A Syrian juvenile sustained various injuries when he jumped out of a moving vehicle in which three people he knew had abducted him, said security sources. The young man was walking near a Saad Al-Abdullah jogging track when the three suspects grabbed him and assaulted him

to prevent his attempts to escape. However, the boy managed to jump from the car and ran to the nearest house, where he called his brother, who picked him up and took him to hospital. A case was filed and the boy provided the police with the suspects' names and vehicle registration number. They are being summoned for further investigations.

### Deadly car ramming

Two citizens were instantly killed and a third sustained critical injuries after their vehicle rolled over along Abdaly highway, said security sources, noting that the injured person was immediately medevacked to Jahra Hospital, where he was admitted to the ICU. The sources added that an eyewitness reported that someone had deliberately caused the accident and fled the scene before the police arrived, describing him and providing the police with his license plate number. Checking on the suspect, detectives found out he is a Kuwaiti too. A search is on for the suspect. Separately, a GCC national was killed in a crash along Mutlaa highway, said security sources, noting that on arriving at the scene, paramedics found that the man had already died after sustaining very serious injuries.

—Translated from the Arabic press





Tunisia deploys army, makes 300 arrests as violence rages

Myanmar army changes tack, admits killings of Rohingya

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BRUSSELS: (Left to right) French Foreign Affairs Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian, German Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel, British Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson and High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini give a press conference at the EU headquarters in Brussels yesterday.—AFP

# EU powers back Iran nuclear deal

## Trump mulls re-imposing sanctions on Tehran

**BRUSSELS:** European powers yesterday insisted the 2015 deal to curb Iran's nuclear ambitions was working, as US President Donald Trump mulls re-imposing sanctions on Tehran.

The European Union and the foreign ministers of Britain, Germany and France put on a united front to defend the accord after talks in Brussels with Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif. Trump, who has repeatedly condemned the deal and in October refused to certify Iran was complying with it, is expected to decide today whether or not to re-impose sanctions against Tehran that were suspended under the deal. "The deal is working, it is delivering on its main goal which means keeping

the Iranian nuclear program in check," Mogherini said, stressing the importance of preserving an agreement she said is "making the world safer and... preventing a potential nuclear arms race in the region". Senior officials have told AFP they "expect" Trump to extend waivers on nuclear-related sanctions on Iran Friday to keep the US in line with the agreement, though he is also expected to impose fresh measures

against Iran over human rights abuses and support for foreign extremist groups. The EU and other world powers have repeatedly warned it would be a mistake for anyone to abandon the deal, thrashed out with Iran over 12 years by the US, Britain, France, China, Germany and Russia. UN inspectors have certified Iran's compliance with the deal nine times, most recently in November,

and French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian said there was "no indication" Tehran was not keeping its side of the bargain.

"It is important now that all parties respect this joint commitment and that our American allies respect it as well," Le Drian said. Iran has said that if the US walks away from the agreement, it is ready to give an "appropriate and heavy response". Zarif took to Twitter after the Brussels meeting to warn that "Iran's continued compliance conditioned on full compliance by the US".

The Iranian said there was a "strong consensus in Brussels today" that Iran was complying with the deal and that "any move that undermines (the agreement) is unacceptable."

One of the criticisms leveled at the nuclear deal is that it does nothing to address Iran's continuing ballistic missile program and meddling in Middle East conflicts such as Yemen and Syria.

The Europeans say these issues should be kept separate from discussion of the nuclear deal, but in a nod to US concerns, Mogherini stressed they were raised with Zarif at today's talks.

She said they had also brought up "internal recent events" in a reference to anti-government protests in Iran that left more than 20 people dead. Johnson added that it was important for building global support for the nuclear deal that "Iran should be able to show that it is a good neighbor in the region" and show what it can do to help solve the Yemen crisis.

German Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel even indicated that Iran had agreed to open talks about regional issues, starting with Yemen. Mogherini, who played an important role in crafting the nuclear accord, has vowed to preserve the deal and has lobbied US lawmakers in Washington. US Congress is working on a way to punish Iran for the ballistic missile program and its interference in Middle East conflicts such as Yemen and Syria.

The 28-member EU has condemned the "unacceptable loss of human lives" in the protests and stressed that peaceful protest and freedom of expression are "fundamental rights". — AFP



**US decision likely today**



## International

# Tunisia deploys army, makes 300 arrests as violence rages

## Protesters burn down security headquarters

**TUNIS:** Tunisian protesters burned down a regional national security headquarters near the Algerian border, prompting authorities to send in troops after police retreated, witnesses said, as unrest over prices and taxes continued nationwide.

Over 300 protesters were arrested overnight and the army was deployed in several cities to help quell violent protests in Tunisia seven years after the overthrow of autocrat Zine El-Abidine Ben Ali in the first of the Arab Spring revolts. In Thala, near the Algerian border, soldiers deployed after crowds torched the region's national security building, forcing police to retreat from the town, witnesses told Reuters.

Tunisia's unity government - which includes Islamists, secular parties and independents - has portrayed the unrest as driven by criminal elements, and Prime Minister Youssef Chahed has accused the opposition of fuelling dissent.

Rejecting that accusation, Tunisia's main opposition bloc, the Popular Front, called for a major protest in Tunis on Sunday to coincide with the seventh anniversary of Ben Ali's fall. Tunisia's Football Association said it was postponing all weekend matches because of the disturbances.



### Unrest over prices and taxes unabated

Anti-government protests have flared in a number of Tunisian cities and towns - including the tourist resort of Sousse, since Monday against price and tax rises imposed to cut a ballooning deficit and satisfy international lenders. While Tunisia is regarded as the only democratic success story in the Arab world, it has also had nine governments since Ben Ali's overthrow, none of which have been able to deal with growing economic problems.

The army has been deployed in several cities, including Sousse, Kebeli and Bizerte, to protect government buildings that have become a target for protesters.

"Three hundred and thirty people involved in acts of sabotage and robbery were arrested last night," Interior Ministry spokesman Khelifa Chibani said. That brought the total number of detainees since the protests began to around 600. "What is happening is crime, not protests. They steal, intimidate people and threaten private and public property," he added.

Many of the protests have been peaceful, however, with demonstrators expressing their anger and frustration over deepening economic hardship since the 2011 uprising.

"It is true that some protesters burned and



**TUNIS:** Tunisian security forces detain a protester in the Ettadhamen on the outskirts of Tunis late on Wednesday after price hikes ignited protests in the North African country. — AFP

stole during last night's protests, but the rulers steal and destroy Tunisia in the morning and at night with their frustrating decisions," said a teacher who was shopping in the capital and only gave his first name, Mohamed.

"We expected things to improve after Ben Ali was ousted, but it seems that after seven years of the revolution, we'll give our salaries each month to Prime Minister Chahed for him to spend

them," he said. The 2011 revolt and two major Islamist militant attacks in 2015 damaged foreign investment and tourism, which accounts for eight percent of Tunisia's economic activity.

Unemployment nationally exceeds 15 percent, and is much higher in some marginalized regions of the interior. Annual inflation rose to 6.4 percent in December, the highest rate since July 2014. — Reuters

## Syrian rebels declare counter attack in Idlib

**BEIRUT/AMMAN:** Rebels launched a counter attack against Syrian government forces and their allies in Idlib province yesterday, seeking to roll back an advance that is fuelling tension with neighboring Turkey.

Fighting raged in the area, where a government offensive backed by Iran-backed militia has gathered pace in the last two weeks, according to rebels and a military news service run by the Lebanese group Hezbollah, which is fighting on the government side. Idlib province is the biggest chunk of Syria still held by rebels fighting President Bashar al-Assad, with a population swollen by Syrians who have fled government advances in other parts of the country. Assad has defeated rebels in

many parts of western Syria with critical help from Russia and Iran.

The recent military escalation in western Syria has included an unprecedented attack by a squadron of drones on Russian military bases and has cast a shadow over Moscow's efforts to convene a Syria peace congress later this month.

The Hezbollah-run news service said the army and its allies were repelling a "fierce assault" by the Nusra Front, formerly al Qaeda's affiliate in the Syrian war, and groups linked to it.

Rebels fighting under the banner of the Free Syrian Army (FSA) said in a statement they had set up a joint operations room to repel the offensive and to take back areas seized by the government in northeastern Hama and southern Idlib.

"The operation is to hit the belly of the regime deep into liberated territories and to encircle their advancing forces," said Abdul Hakim Al Rahamon, a senior official in Jaish al Nasr, an FSA faction taking part. — Reuters

## Israel approves hundreds of new settlement homes

**JERUSALEM:** Israel has given final building approval for 352 homes in settlements in the occupied West Bank, an anti-settlement movement said yesterday - construction that Palestinians see as jeopardizing their prospects for statehood.

The Peace Now group said a meeting on Wednesday by a planning committee of Israel's military-run Civil Administration for the West Bank also moved plans for 770 other settler homes to more advanced stages. Settlements are one of the most heated issues in efforts to revive Israeli-Palestinian peace talks, frozen since 2014.

"I think what Israel is doing is a purposeful, well-planned process of destruction of the two-state solution and possibility of the establishment of a Palestinian state," Mustafa Barghouti, a Palestinian lawmaker, said of the committee's decision.

Palestinians want the West Bank for a future state, along with East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip. Most countries consider as illegal the settlements that Israel built in the territory it captured in the 1967 Middle East war. Israel disputes that its settlements are illegal. Its government says their future should be determined in

peace talks and that the Palestinians' refusal to recognise Israel as a Jewish state and declare an end to a decades-old conflict are the real obstacles to peace.

Some 500,000 Israelis live in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, areas that are home to more than 2.6 million Palestinians. Hagit Ofra, a Peace Now spokeswoman, said the new round of construction approvals was "not a dramatic change" from last year's pace, when Israel gave the go-ahead for 6,742 housing projects in the West Bank - a figure described by Peace Now as the highest since 2013.

But she noted that many of the latest housing projects were slated for settlements deep inside the West Bank, "especially in places that Israel would need to (evacuate) in case of a (peace) agreement - which means our government is trying to prevent a two-state solution".

Barghouti linked the increased settlement activity to the 2016 election of US President Donald Trump, a Republican who has been less critical than his predecessor, Democrat Barack Obama, of Israel on the issue. "These settlements could have been stopped by the United States," he told Reuters.

The latest construction plans were first announced by Israeli Defence Minister Avigdor Lieberman earlier this week.

Asked about them, a US State Department official said on Tuesday there had been no change in policy on settlements and the Israeli government had made clear that going forward "its intent is to adopt a policy regarding settlement activity that takes the president's concerns into consideration." — Reuters



International

# Bulgaria to push for ERM-2 membership

## Sofia to apply for ERM-2 by mid-year, says FM

**SOFIA:** Bulgaria stepped up its campaign to adopt the euro yesterday, challenging member states to let it into the single currency's "waiting room" in the coming months-or spell out why it cannot join. Speaking to Brussels-based reporters as EU commissioners visited Sofia at the start of Bulgaria's six-month presidency of EU ministerial councils, the finance minister said he was ready to apply to join the ERM-2 exchange rate mechanism this year even if he had no assurance that the request would be accepted.

Prime Minister Boyko Borissov and finance chief Vladislav Goranov said the European Union's poorest nation had long met all formal criteria for joining the euro zone and was frustrated that fellow EU states were reluctant to let it in.

"We have done our homework for the euro zone," Borissov said, noting the lev's 20-year-old fixed rate against the euro, a non-existent budget deficit and one of the lowest public debt levels in the EU. "Any moment they invite us, we can enter it."

Bulgaria has been reluctant to repeat the experience of flat rejection of its request to join the Schengen passport-free area and has been in discussions on joining the ERM-2 with the European Commission and the European Central Bank, hoping

for an informal green light before lodging its formal application.

However, Goranov said, patience was wearing thin with a lack of clarity from states on why they object. Euro zone officials say that lead economy Germany sees the gulf between Bulgarian incomes with the EU average and concerns over graft and organized crime as reasons to keep it at arm's length.

Goranov said he now expected to lodge an application by the middle of this year after a biennial EU report on performance on economic convergence, which the EU executive said it plans to publish in May. "We are ready to file a formal application even if we are not convinced that the reply will be 'yes'," Goranov said.

"This is not a threat," he said, noting pressure on the government from Bulgarian businesses to join.

"A 'no' will also show us what to do in order to get there." As an example, he cited the fact that Bulgaria's GDP per capita is about half that of the EU average and said that if euro zone states wanted to set it a target of 70 percent of the average he could accept that. There is no such formal criterion at the moment and some euro zone countries are below that level. — Reuters



**SOFIA:** A picture taken through a window on Wednesday shows a general view of the National Palace of Culture in Sofia, where the meetings of the Council of Europe will be held. Bulgaria's capital Sofia was all done-up to host incoming European Union officials for the opening of its EU Council presidency. —AFP

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## International

# 15,000 Cameroonian refugees flee to Nigeria amid crackdown

## Move poses biggest challenge to President Paul Biya

**ABUJA:** More than 15,000 Cameroonian refugees have fled to Nigeria amid a crackdown on Anglophone separatists, the United Nations (UN) refugee agency and Nigerian government officials said yesterday.

The once-fringe English-speaking movement in majority French-speaking Cameroon has gathered pace in the last few months after a military crackdown on protests, leading it to declare independence in October for a breakaway “Ambazonia” state it wants to create. The move poses the biggest challenge yet to the 35-year rule of President Paul Biya, who will seek re-election this year, and the violent repression he has unleashed has driven thousands of people from English-speaking regions across the border into Nigeria.

More than 8,000 refugees have been registered in the southeastern state of Cross River alone, said Antonio Jose Canhandula, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees’ (UNHCR) representative in Nigeria, at a briefing in Abuja.

A further 6,700 or so Cameroonian refugees

have crossed into neighboring Benue state, said Sadiya Umar Farouq, the head of Nigeria’s National Commission for Refugees, Migrants and Internally Displaced Persons, citing Benue officials. There are also at least 350 refugees in the states of Taraba and Akwa Ibom, said Tamuno Dienye Jaja, deputy comptroller general of the Nigeria Immigration Service.

The refugees are mostly children, women and the elderly, with very few young men, the officials said. “Certainly there are more, how many more we are not able to state,” said the UNHCR’s Canhandula.

“They are still coming, and they are coming daily,” he said. “It is a crisis.” More food assistance, education and social services are needed,

particularly as a number of the women are pregnant at a young age, were all issues, Canhandula said.

Nigeria’s Farouq pledged the government’s support. “We are going to do all that we can to bring some kind of relief,” she said.

Nigerian and Cameroonian officials have met to discuss the refugees and those talks are on-

### Anglophone separatists being targeted



Cameroonian refugees in Nigeria in this November 2016 file photo. Analysts fear more will be displaced by the government’s crackdown.

going, she said, although she declined to give details. The separatist movement, including armed radical elements, has strained bilateral relations between the two countries. Last week, Nigerian authorities took 12 leaders of the separatists, including the chairman of the self-declared Governing Council of Ambazonia, into

custody after they gathered for a meeting in a hotel in the Nigerian capital Abuja, people familiar with the matter said.

Cameroonian troops last month crossed into Nigeria in pursuit of rebels without seeking Nigerian authorization, leading to diplomatic wrangling behind the scenes. — Reuters

## Catalan parliament speaker latest separatist to step down

**BARCELONA:** Catalonia’s parliamentary speaker said yesterday she would step down as she is investigated for sedition and rebellion over her role in the independence drive, the latest separatist leader to leave their post.

Speaking to reporters in Barcelona, staunchly pro-independence Carme Forcadell said she would not stay in the post despite having been offered to do so after regional elections on December 21 that saw separatist parties retain their absolute parliamentary majority.

“I think this new political moment requires a new person who is, above all else, free of legal proceedings,” she said. Forcadell was a key figure among Catalan leaders who attempted to break away from Spain, a process that culminated with the regional parliament declaring unilateral independence on October 27.

But this was short-lived as Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy imposed direct rule on the semi-autonomous region, sacked its government, dissolved its parliament and called snap elections. Forcadell’s decision to step down as parliamentary speaker—she will continue on as lawmaker—comes just two days after one of the main candidates to replace her announced he was leaving politics. — AFP

## LuxLeaks whistleblower’s conviction quashed

**LUXEMBOURG:** A Luxembourg court yesterday overturned the verdict against a “LuxLeaks” whistleblower who was convicted of leaking thousands of documents that revealed tax breaks for multinational firms. Luxembourg’s highest court rejected the conviction against former PricewaterhouseCoopers employee Antoine Deltour, who in March was handed a reduced six-month suspended jail sentence with a 1,500-euro fine.

The LuxLeaks scandal erupted in 2014 and sparked a major global push against generous deals handed to multinational companies, which grew even stronger with new revelations such as the Panama Papers and Paradise Papers Leaks.

“Today is a victory,” Deltour said as he left the courtroom. The court “has clearly indicated towards a favorable outcome here in Luxembourg”, he added. The tiny EU country’s highest appeal court said Deltour was wrongly accused as he should have been fully recognized as a whistleblower as defined by the European Court of Human Rights. However, the sentence against Deltour’s colleague Raphael Halet, who received a 1,000-euro fine after an appeal, was upheld as the court said he did not fit the whistleblower definition.

Halet said he will be taking his case to the Strasbourg-based rights court, adding: “It will really be up to the judges of the ECHR to decide if I am a whistleblower or not.” The blockbuster leak revealed the huge tax breaks that Luxembourg offered firms including Apple, IKEA and Pepsi, at a time when Jean-Claude Juncker, now head of the European Commission, was



This file photo taken on April 21, 2016 shows Antoine Deltour, the whistleblower at the origin of the LuxLeaks affair, posing in Epinal, eastern France. — AFP

prime minister. An appeal court will now hold a fresh trial with new judges tasked to decide a very limited part of Deltour’s case, Luxembourg’s highest court said in a statement. “This decision is a significant step in the protection of whistleblowers in Europe,” Deltour’s lawyer William Bourdon told AFP. “For the first time in Europe, a high court recognizes the jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights,” he said.

### ‘Small step’

Activists demonstrated at the opening of the court proceeding and called for the case’s dismissal and better protection of whistleblowers. “We need comprehensive legislation in all EU countries to ensure that whistleblowers like Deltour and Halet are no longer prosecuted in the future,” said Patricia Moreira, Executive Director at Transparency International. — AFP



## International

# Merkel expects 'tough day' in crunch German coalition talks

## Chancellor needs deal with SPD to secure fourth term

**BERLIN:** Chancellor Angela Merkel said her conservatives still had high hurdles to clear in yesterday's talks on forming a coalition with the Social Democrats (SPD), who are pressing for accelerated European integration.

Merkel, weakened by an election setback in September, turned to the left-leaning SPD to seek a re-run of their so-called "grand coalition"

after the collapse in November of talks on a three-way coalition untested at national level. The chancellor, who commands wide respect abroad after more than 12 years in power, needs coalition talks to succeed to avoid further erosion of her personal authority

and weakening of German international influence, not least in the European Union (EU).

Speaking at the start of the final day of exploratory talks that could lead to formal negotiations, Merkel said it would be a tough day but she recognized that Germans expected results.

"Of course we also have in mind that we have to create a good policy platform for our country. So it's going to be a tough day," she said. SPD leader Martin Schulz, a former president of the European Parliament, made clear his priority

was Europe. "On the last day of exploratory talks we will make clear that above all this must be a new start for the European Union," he told reporters. "If we join a government it will be on the condition that it makes Europe strong."

Schulz has called for a United States of Europe by 2025 - an idea rejected by senior conservatives, many of whom are wary of such ambitious

reform plans they fear could see Germany funnel more of its taxpayers' money to other EU states.

However, Merkel helped lead Europe through its twin euro zone and refugee crises and is adept at finding compromises, especially on European issues.

### SPD wants new start for EU as condition

Should the parties fail to reach a deal on Thursday they could extend the talks, though President Frank-Walter Steinmeier is eager for an agreement, keenly aware that businesses want a stable coalition to end uncertainty and avoid another vote.

### SPD hurdle

In signs of incremental progress in the talks, negotiators agreed to reduce use of the weed killer glyphosate, draft plans seen by Reuters



**BERLIN:** German Chancellor and Christian Democratic Union (CDU) leader Angela Merkel arrives for talks with the leaders of the conservative CDU/CSU union and the social democratic SPD party on forming a new government yesterday at the SPD headquarters in Berlin. — AFP

showed. SPD Secretary General Lars Klingbeil told party members in a video message the party was striving for improvements in labor, health, education and family policy, and on Europe. "We're fighting for that," he said in a video message, adding that the final day of exploratory talks would show "whether we can cut through the knot on these big issues".

Participants have described the negotiations as "good", but SPD leaders need to convince

their party members and are offering them a vote on Jan. 21 on whether to proceed. Merkel has ruled with the SPD in a sometimes unwieldy "grand coalition" - or 'GroKo' - in two of her three previous terms in office, including in the last parliament from 2013-2017. But both parties bled support in the Sept. 24 election, which saw the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) enter the Bundestag lower house of parliament for the first time. — Reuters

## UK denies Assange diplomatic status after Ecuador request

**LONDON:** Britain said yesterday it has denied a request by Ecuador to issue diplomatic status to WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange, who has been living in the country's London embassy since 2012.

"The government of Ecuador recently requested diplomatic status for Mr Assange here in the UK. The UK did not grant that request, nor are we in talks with Ecuador on this matter," the British foreign ministry said in a statement. Ecuador's attempt to obtain diplomatic status for the 46-year-old comes as part of the country's broader efforts to resolve the case of their long-term lodger, who moved into the embassy to avoid arrest over a Swedish probe into rape allegations.

Sweden dropped their investigation over the 2010 allegations last year, but British police have said they are still seek-



**LONDON:** This file photo taken on November 14, 2016 shows protesters and supporters holding banners that read "Free Assange" outside the Ecuadorian Embassy in London where WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange was being questioned over a rape allegation against him. — AFP

ing to arrest him for failing to surrender to a court after violating bail terms.

"Ecuador knows that the way to resolve this issue is for Julian Assange to leave the embassy to face justice," Britain's foreign ministry said yesterday. Assange has refused to step outside the embassy and claimed he fears being extradited to the United States, for WikiLeaks' publication of leaked secret US military documents and diplomatic cables in 2010.

Ecuadorian Foreign Minister Maria Fernanda Espinosa said on Tuesday her gov-

ernment is looking at the possibility of a "third country or a personality" stepping in to resolve the stand-off.

"No solution will be achieved without international cooperation and the cooperation of the United Kingdom, which has also shown interest in seeking a way out," Espinosa told foreign correspondents in Quito. On Wednesday the Ecuadorian foreign ministry refused to comment on media reports that Assange, an Australian national, has been granted citizenship by the South American country. — AFP

## Macron under fire over French asylum law reform

**PARIS:** French President Emmanuel Macron faces a backlash over plans to tighten immigration law as the number of asylum seekers soars, with aid and emergency agencies accusing his government of planning mass expulsions. To try to ease the tension, Macron dispatched Prime Minister Edouard Philippe to meet aid organizations yesterday and explain legislation due to go in coming weeks to parliament where his *Republique En Marche* group has an absolute majority.

Before Thursday's meeting, the *Secours Catholique* charity denounced the policy plans—which will clarify when migrants must be returned to their countries of origin—as a simplistic and backward step. Another charity said it planned to boycott the meeting with Philippe. Laurent Giovannoni of *Secours Catholique* said the new law would trigger the expulsion of anyone not classified as a war refugee in the strictest sense, meaning scores of people in dire need or danger would be forced out.

"This policy belongs to the past," Giovannoni, who said he had been shown the latest draft of the bill, told *franceinfo* radio. The number of people filing asylum requests in France hit a record in 2017, topping 100,000.

Macron, elected in May after a duel with Marine Le Pen, the head of the anti-immigrant National Front, has promised to speed up processing asylum requests while also ensuring that those who do not qualify are dealt with more firmly. — Reuters



## International

# Trump blasts immigration ruling, calls court system 'broken, unfair'

## Senators urge quick democratic solution

**WASHINGTON/NEW YORK:** US President Donald Trump on Wednesday blasted the federal court system as "broken and unfair" after a judge blocked his administration's move to end a program protecting young immigrants brought to the United States illegally by their parents.

A US District Court judge in San Francisco ruled late on Tuesday that Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA, which Trump has said he will end, should remain in effect until legal challenges brought in multiple courts are resolved.

Under the administration's plan, the program for young people commonly known as "Dreamers" would be phased out over a two-year period, beginning in March. "It just shows everyone how broken and unfair our Court System is when the opposing side in a case (such as DACA) ... almost always wins before being reversed by higher courts," the Republican president wrote on Twitter.

The Justice Department said in a statement it "looks forward to vindicating its position in further litigation."

But the administration did not immediately appeal the decision by US District Judge William Alsup of the Northern District of California. An appeal from that court would typically go to the 9th US Circuit Court of Appeals.

Some legal experts predicted the Trump administration would be successful if it appealed the ruling to the US Supreme Court. In December, the country's highest court granted an administration request to block an earlier Alsup order that called for the release of internal documents related to the government's DACA decision.

Several experts also said Tuesday's court ruling could complicate negotiations between congressional Democrats and Republicans trying to reach a deal to resolve the legal status of nearly 700,000 young immigrants covered by the program, which allows them to live and work in the United States. "The ruling could deflate the pressure on Congress to act in the next week and in our view there remains just as much urgency as ever for a lasting fix," said Michael Tan from the American Civil Liberties Union. Dreamers "don't need a protracted legal battle," he added.



**Court blocks move to end protection to young immigrants**

At a White House meeting on Tuesday before the court ruling, Trump urged lawmakers to quickly reach a bipartisan DACA deal before moving on to even tougher negotiations on a comprehensive immigration bill.

### 'Urgency'

Democratic Senate leader Chuck Schumer also urged a quick legislative solution. The talks on DACA have become embroiled in negotiations on funding for the federal government, which expires on Jan. 19. "The ruling last night in no way diminishes the urgency of solving the DACA issue," Schumer said on the Senate floor. "On this, we agree with the White House."



**WASHINGTON, DC:** US President Donald Trump speaks during a press conference with Norway's Prime Minister Erna Solberg in the East Room of the White House on Wednesday in Washington, DC. — AFP

John Cornyn, the Senate's No. 2 Republican, condemned the ruling, but said it would not affect congressional negotiations. "We're reading the court's opinion. It strikes me as wildly wrong," Cornyn told reporters. "If President Obama can create the Deferred Action program, then certainly President Trump can uncreate it." — Reuters

John Cornyn, the Senate's No. 2 Republican, condemned the ruling, but said it would not affect congressional negotiations. "We're reading the court's opinion. It strikes me as wildly wrong," Cornyn told reporters. "If President Obama can create the Deferred Action program, then certainly President Trump can uncreate it." — Reuters

## Rescuers race against time to find missing in California mudslides

**SANTA BARBARA:** Rescue crews in Southern California resumed yesterday the arduous task of combing through tons of debris for survivors from deadly mudslides that struck along the state's picturesque coastal communities. Seventeen people are confirmed dead and another 17 people are missing after a wall of mud roared down hillsides in the scenic area between the Pacific Ocean and the Los Padres National Forest, according to authorities in Santa Barbara County.

"Right now, our assets are focused on determining if anyone is still alive in any of those structures that have been damaged," Santa Barbara County Sheriff Bill Brown told Los Angeles television station KCAL. Some 500 rescuers using search dogs, military helicopters, and thermal



**MONTECITO:** A home is surrounded by mud and debris caused by a massive mudflow in Montecito, California on Wednesday. — AFP

imaging equipment are on scene.

Search and rescue efforts have been slow as crews have to navigate through waist-deep mud, fallen trees, boulders and other debris. "Another tough day in Santa Barbara County as Search and Rescue, Fire and Law Enforcement personnel from across our county and our neighboring counties searched for survivors and evacuated people," the sheriff's office said on its Twitter feed late Wednesday night.

The devastating mudslides, which were triggered by heavy rains early on

Tuesday, roared into valleys denuded by historic wildfires that struck the area last month. The debris flow from the mudslides has destroyed 100 homes, damaged hundreds of other structures and injured 28 people, said Amber Anderson, a spokeswoman for the Santa Barbara County Fire Department. Among the damaged properties were historic hotels and the homes of celebrities including television personality Oprah Winfrey and talk-show host Ellen DeGeneres, who both live in the upscale hillside community of Montecito. — Reuters

## Surrender or be shot in the face, senior US soldier tells IS

**WASHINGTON:** US troops and their allies will shoot Islamic State jihadists in the face, beat them to death with shovels or drop bombs on them if they don't surrender, the US military's most senior enlisted member has said.

In an eyebrow-raising set of postings on social media Tuesday, Command Sergeant Major John Troxell warned that IS members who refuse to quit will be dispatched with "extreme prejudice," including via a small shovel known as an entrenching tool. "If they surrender, we will safeguard them to their detainee facility cell, provide them chow, a cot and due process," Troxell wrote on Facebook. "HOWEVER, if they choose not to surrender, then we will kill them with extreme prejudice, whether that be through security force assistance, by dropping bombs on them, shooting them in the face, or beating them to death with our entrenching tools," he added.

The post featured a photo of a US soldier holding a shovel and, in case anyone was in any doubt about to slay a man with a small spade, Troxell posted a diagram on Facebook on Wednesday explaining exactly how to do so. Troxell's chest-thumping remarks quickly attracted a slew of commentary, mostly supportive.

One detractor said on Twitter the message was "bad optics." "No, that's exactly the message that soldier(s) need and love to hear," another user responded. — AFP



## International

# Myanmar army changes tack, admits killings of Rohingya

## The tales from 655,000 Rohingya who fled to Bangladesh horrify the world

**BANGKOK:** After months denying any wrongdoing, Myanmar has admitted its forces helped kill 10 Rohingya in custody in an apparent bid to blame a few rogue soldiers for what the global community alleges is part of an organized ethnic cleansing campaign.

Accounts of mass murder, rape and torture from the 655,000 Rohingya who fled Myanmar's army to Bangladesh have horrified the world. Since the August crackdown the army vigorously denied any abuses, instead locking down access to Rakhine state and accusing critics—including the UN of pro-Rohingya bias and spreading “fake news”.

Then late on Wednesday it suddenly changed tune: an internal probe found four members of the “security forces” helped kill 10 Rohingya militant suspects at Inn Din village on September 2, leaving their bodies in a hastily-dug pit.

It was found that the incident was not submitted to superior levels,” it said. The unprecedented acknowledgment, relayed on the Facebook page of the office of army chief Min Aung Hlaing, rippled out across the rights community that has spent months piecing together allegations of numerous atrocities. “This grisly admission is a sharp departure from the army’s policy of blanket denial of any wrongdoing,” said James Gomez, Amnesty International’s regional director for Southeast Asia and the Pacific.

“However, it is only the tip of the iceberg,” he added, urging independent investigation into

other allegations. Some observers say the army move is an attempt to retake control of the story after rumors of extra-judicial killings at Inn Din and the surrounding area began to seep out.

The admission came the same day as two Reuters journalists were formally charged by police in court with breaching the Official Secrets Act. The pair, Myanmar nationals Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo, have widely covered the military campaign in Rakhine although Reuters has declined to comment on whether they were specifically reporting on the mass grave in Inn Din.

“The military’s admission demonstrates the culpability of soldiers and commanders in mass atrocities,” said Matthew Smith of Fortify Rights, suggesting the arrest of the journalists was a clumsy effort “to cover their tracks”. Khin Zaw Win, of Yangon-based think-tank the Tampadipa Institute, echoed that theory, speculating the army “had no option but to come clean with it”.

In December the US hit General Maung Maung Soe, who led the Western Command in the Rakhine operations, with targeted sanctions. That punishment may have rattled the upper army echelons, speculated Khin Zaw Win about an institution renowned for denials and secrecy. Cover-ups “could go bad for them... there could be sanctions against other generals,” he said.

### Swords and guns

Until Wednesday the army said its operations had killed around 400 militants in a legitimate

defense of the country from Muslim militants intent on taking over Rakhine. Its stance helped curdle a siege mentality inside Myanmar where the Buddhist-majority public has little sympathy for the stateless Rohingya. Inn Dinn, in Maungdaw district, was engulfed by violence in late August. On September 1 the 10 “Bengali terrorists” were apprehended after clashes pitting Rohingya against security forces and Rakhine villagers enraged by the murder of a local man by militants, the army chief’s office said in its post.

food when verification failed. In a Wednesday hearing on night shelters, the court asked Uttar Pradesh authorities whether homeless people are being turned away if they do not have an Aadhaar. “How do homeless people get Aadhaar if they have no home or a permanent address?” asked Justice Madan Lokur during the hearing. “Does this mean that they do not exist for the Government of India?”

Additional Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, who is representing the state, told the court that most homeless people in cities come from villages where they have homes and can therefore get the ID card there. Activists say that sending homeless people back to their villages is not a solution, and that states must follow the 2014 Supreme Court ruling that the Aadhaar cannot be a requirement for welfare programs.

“People are dying on the streets because they cannot go into shelters without an ID,” said Shivani Chaudhry, executive director of the Housing and Land Rights Network. “Shelters should not be asking for Aadhaar,” he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. There are 1 million urban homeless people in India, according to census data, although charities estimate the actual number to be up to three times higher.

Every year, hundreds die from exposure to the cold or heat on pavements and train station platforms. —Reuters



Rohingya refugee children carry wood at Kutupalong refugee camp in the Bangladeshi district of Ukha on Tuesday. —AFP

defense of the country from Muslim militants intent on taking over Rakhine. Its stance helped curdle a siege mentality inside Myanmar where the Buddhist-majority public has little sympathy for the stateless Rohingya. Inn Dinn, in Maungdaw district, was engulfed by violence in late August. On September 1 the 10 “Bengali terrorists” were apprehended after clashes pitting Rohingya against security forces and Rakhine villagers enraged by the murder of a local man by militants, the army chief’s office said in its post.

“Bengali” is loaded term for the Muslim minority who are widely reviled inside Myanmar.

The 10 suspects should have been taken to a police station. Instead after a night of “interrogation” at a school they were killed the next day by Rakhine villagers armed with swords and “four members of security forces” who “shot them with the use of guns”. Their remains were found on December 20. The account chimes with refugee testimony collected in Bangladesh on the Inn Din incident. —AFP

## Indian court orders probe into homeless being denied shelter due to lack of ID

**MUMBAI:** Uttar Pradesh state officials must investigate whether homeless people are denied access to shelters because they don’t have identity cards, which they cannot obtain without an address, India’s highest court has ordered. It was the latest criticism of the government’s program to issue each citizen an Aadhaar, an identity card meant to streamline welfare payments and reduce waste in public spending.

The Supreme Court has been holding hearings on the legitimacy of the government’s demand to make the Aadhaar mandatory for a range of services from filing taxes to booking train tickets.

More than 1 billion of India’s 1.25 billion population have an Aadhaar. Technology experts have raised concerns about the privacy and safety of the data, which includes a residential address, date of birth, fingerprints and iris scans.

Activists say that people without the card are being refused welfare services, with reports of deaths linked to denial of subsidized

## Pirate attacks at two-decade low: Maritime watchdog

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Pirate attacks worldwide fell to their lowest level in over two decades last year, the International Maritime Bureau said, but more than doubled in the Philippines while African trouble spots remained dangerous. A total of 180 incidents of piracy and armed robbery against ships were recorded last year, the lowest number since 1995 and down from 191 in 2016, the bureau said in its annual report.

Some countries such as Indonesia, the world’s biggest archipelago nation, saw a drop in incidents, with 43 attacks in its waters last year, down more than half in the past two years.

However a handful of countries witnessed a steady climb in attacks. Twenty-two incidents were recorded in the Philippines, a jump from 10 in 2016, with most of them low-level attacks on vessels anchored at Manila and Batangas, south of the capital, the country’s two busiest ports.

There were also kidnappings of crew in the southern Philippines, the bureau said. Islamic militants have been increasingly targeting seafarers in the strife-torn region, abducting them and demanding ransoms for their release.

The number of attacks in Bangladesh jumped three-fold to 11 in 2017, with most in Chittagong, the country’s busiest port. The Gulf of Guinea off the west coast of Africa remained an attack hotspot in 2017. Out of 16 incidents of vessels being fired on reported worldwide last year, seven occurred in the gulf.

There were 10 incidents of kidnapping involving 65 crew members in or around waters off Nigeria, which lies next to the Gulf of Guinea, according to the Kuala Lumpur-based IMB’s report, which was released Wednesday. Waters off Somalia remained dangerous, with nine incidents recorded last year, up from two in 2016. A dramatic attack on a container ship far off the Somali coast saw pirates firing rockets at the vessel after a failed attempt to board it.

“This dramatic incident... demonstrates that Somali pirates retain the capability and intent to launch attacks against merchant vessels hundreds of miles from their coastline,” said IMB director Pottengal Mukundan. —AFP



## International

# China's Xi supports progress in recent inter-Korean talks

## Japan protests presence of Chinese ship in disputed waters

SEOUL: Chinese President Xi Jinping yesterday welcomed recent progress in inter-Korean talks during a telephone call with South Korean President Moon Jae-in, the South's Blue House said in a statement. At Tuesday's talks, North Korea said it would attend the Winter Olympics in the South next month, and both sides agreed to resolve problems through dialogue and revive military consultations to avoid accidental conflict.

Seoul and Beijing agreed in October to move beyond a year-long stand-off over the deployment of a US anti-missile system in South Korea, a dispute that has been devastating to South Korean businesses that rely on Chinese consumers. Moon made his first visit to China last month. During the 30-minute call, Xi said he supported Moon's stance that the advancement of inter-Korean ties and the denuclearisation of the peninsula should "go in parallel", Moon's office said.

"The two leaders agreed to strengthen strategic communication and cooperation," the statement said. It added that the two leaders hoped the latest dialogue effort would lead to a peaceful resolution of the North Korean nuclear issue and the establishment of peace on the Korean peninsula, beyond next month's Olympics.

In Beijing, the official China Daily cited Xi as

telling Moon that China wanted to work with South Korea to "jointly maintain regional peace and stability". In a telephone call on Wednesday, Moon and US President Donald Trump also said the dialogue "could naturally lead to talks between the United States and North Korea for the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula after the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics."

Washington welcomed the talks as a first step towards resolving the crisis over North Korea's program to develop nuclear missiles capable of reaching the United States, but it has reiterated

that any talks involving the US must be aimed at the North's denuclearization. However, Pyongyang said it would not discuss its nuclear weapons because they were aimed only at the United States and not its "brethren" in China, Russia and South Korea, showing that a diplomatic

breakthrough to the crisis remains far off.

### Japan protests

Meanwhile, Japan yesterday protested to China after a Chinese military vessel was detected in waters near disputed islands in the East China Sea, calling on China to avoid actions that could interfere with improving bilateral ties.

The Chinese frigate was seen in waters contigu-

“ Leaders to strengthen strategic cooperation ”

## Shanghai closes Marriott website in China after questionnaire gaffe

BEIJING: Authorities in Shanghai yesterday closed down Marriott International Inc's Chinese website for a week, punishing the world's biggest hotel chain for listing Chinese-claimed regions such as Tibet and Taiwan as separate countries in a customer questionnaire.

The US company issued an apology earlier in the day for the gaffe, which had drawn accusations of disrespecting Chinese sovereignty and calls for a boycott by angry netizens on Weibo, China's version of Twitter. "Marriott International respects Chinese sovereignty and its territorial integrity... We sincerely apologize for any actions that led to misunderstanding on the aforementioned stance," the company said in a statement on its official Weibo account.

Aside from closing down the website, the Shanghai Cyberspace Administration said in statement that it was shutting the Marriott's mobile phone application, in a move that would also disrupt bookings.

In a Mandarin-language questionnaire sent out to customers a few days ago, Marriott listed Tibet, Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan as separate countries.

China claims sovereignty over all four of territories, though Taiwan is self-ruled and has democratic elections. The Shanghai government said it had asked Marriott to "take down all relevant content, conduct a thorough check on all contents it posted on its website and online application to prevent anything similar, and address the public's concern in a timely fashion to eliminate a negative impact."

It also said Shanghai's Huangpu district market supervision bureau was launching an investigation into Marriott, as it was suspected of violating China's cyber security law and advertisement law.

Last year, South Korean companies were hit heavily by Chinese economic retaliation over Seoul's deployment of a US missile shield system. —Reuters



BEIJING: Mark Sedwill (center), national security advisor to the British prime minister shakes hands with Chinese delegates upon arrival for a meeting with Chinese State Councilor Yang Jiechi prior to a meeting at the Zhongnanhai Leadership Compound in Beijing yesterday. —AFP

ous to Japan's territory around the islands, known as the Senkaku in Japan and Diaoyu in China, the Defence Ministry said. It did not enter Japanese territorial waters.

A foreign submarine was also detected in the same area on Wednesday as well as yesterday, it added, without identifying the nationality. Both had left the area by yesterday afternoon.

Japan and China have long been at loggerheads over the tiny, uninhabited islands. They are controlled by Japan but claimed also by China. "We

want to strongly urge China not to do anything to interfere with improving bilateral ties," Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga told a news conference. Kenji Kanasugi, director-general of the Japanese Foreign Ministry's Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau, met with Chinese ambassador Cheng Yonghua at the Foreign Ministry to express grave concern about the move, the ministry said in a statement. The Chinese ambassador responded to the protest by reiterating China's stance on the islands, the statement added. —Reuters

## Japanese crime boss held in Thailand after 'yakuza' tats go viral

BANGKOK: A retired Japanese crime boss has been arrested in Thailand ending more than 14 years on the run after photos of his 'yakuza' tattoos and a missing little finger went viral.

The fugitive, Shigeharu Shirai, 72, was arrested by a SWAT team on Wednesday in the sleepy central Thai market town of Lopburi while he was out shopping.

Japanese authorities have called for his arrest over an alleged role in the shooting of a rival in Japan in 2003, after which he fled to Thailand, married a Thai woman and drifted into a seemingly peaceful retirement. That was until a Thai local posted some photos of the diminutive, frail-looking retiree playing a streetside checkers game with his intricate gang tattoos on full show and a missing little finger-yakuza members often slice off the tip of a finger to atone for an offence.

The photos were shared more than 10,000 times online and caught the attention of Japanese police, who asked the Thai authorities to move in.

"The suspect admitted that he was the leader of the Yakuza sub-gang Kodokai," Thai police spokesman General Wirachai Songmetta said, re-



This handout photo taken on Wednesday and received by the Royal Thai Police shows retired Japanese crime boss Shigeharu Shirai (center), 72, being paraded to show his gang-style tattoos to reporters at a police station after his arrest in the central Thai province of Lopburi. —AFP

ferring to an affiliate of Japan's largest yakuza gang, the Yamaguchi-gumi. The yakuza emerged in the chaos of post-war Japan turning into multi-billion-dollar criminal organizations involved in everything from gambling, drugs and prostitution to loan sharking, protection rackets and white-collar crime.

They were long tolerated as a necessary evil to keep order on the streets and getting things done quickly—however dubious the means. Unlike the Italian Mafia or Chinese triads, yakuza are not illegal and each group has its own headquarters in full view of police. —AFP



# Lifestyle

Friday Times

FRIDAY, JANUARY 12, 2018

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

Argentine Agustin Viglione performs with his bubbles at the Capital Circus during the 12th edition of the International Circus Festival in Budapest.—AFP

Delon says he's ready to die,  
but his dog must come too

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## ELVIS FANS ALL SHOOK UP ON AUSTRALIA PARTY TRAIN TO ANNUAL FEST



Elvis fans shook up Sydney's Central station yesterday with hundreds rocking to his famous tunes ahead of a special train trip to outback Australia to celebrate the late entertainer's birthday. Decked out in their glittering best, the fans were heading to Parkes—a small town some 300 kilometers (190 miles) west of Sydney—on the “Elvis Express” and “Blue Suede Express” trains to take part in a five-day festival. “He’s such an icon and he hasn’t lost any of that magic that he used to have,” avid Elvis Presley fan Julie Mellae—who wore an orange wig, tiara and fishnet stockings for the special occasion—told AFP.

“In fact, I think he’s developed more, so this festival is like the biggest thing that happens in January. Everyone wants to be on the Elvis train and it’s booked out years in advance.” Elvis impersonators belted out the legendary singer’s biggest hits on a makeshift stage before the seven-hour train pilgrimage, swiveling their hips and blowing kisses to adoring admirers amid loud cheers. The annual extravaganza, in its 26th year, is billed as the southern hemisphere’s biggest tribute to the rock ‘n’ roll legend—who died in 1977—and attracts thousands of die-hard fans. Last year’s event drew 25,000 people to Parkes, more than double the town’s population, and generated millions of dollars for the local economy.

The town transforms into a vibrant tribute to The King, who would have been 83 this year, with a street parade and non-stop entertainment to keep visitors jiving. “It’s just everybody’s in a good mood, everybody’s happy, nobody’s cranky,” said David Ward-Smith, who was wearing a specially made “Elvis Festival” T-shirt with his friends on board the “Elvis Express”. “Up and down the streets (in Parkes), it’s Elvis singers. Every 50 meters, it’s somebody else trying hard. Everybody’s just in party mode, it’s a great little atmosphere. It’s like the Olympics every year,” he told AFP.

Parkes, a mining town with a population of more than 11,000, is famous for its radio telescope which played a pivotal role in bringing Neil Armstrong’s 1969 moon landing to the world. But the Elvis Festival, first held in 1993 to coincide with the singer’s birthday on January 8, 1935, has since placed the town on the tourist map and also earned it the moniker of “Elvis Capital of Australia”. — AFP



Elvis fans arrive at Central station to board a train to The Parkes Elvis Festival, in Sydney yesterday.— AFP photos





Singer-songwriter Katy Perry performs live in concert on her "Witness" The Tour event held at the AT&T Center in San Antonio, Texas. — AFP

## FILM LEGEND **DELON** SAYS HE'S READY TO DIE – BUT HIS DOG MUST COME TOO

Veteran French film star Alain Delon said yesterday that he was so sick of the world he would be happy to die now—but he wants his dog to go with him. "I hate the times that we live in, it makes me vomit," said the 82-year-old actor, one of the handsomest men ever to grace the silver screen. "There are people that I hate. Everything is false, and only money counts. I will leave this world without regret," he told Paris Match magazine in a frank, tell-all interview in which he admitted to not being much of a father to his children, one of whom he still refuses to recognize.

Delon, who lives alone outside Paris, said he wants his two-year-old Belgian Shepherd dog, Loubo, to die with him. "If I go before him I will ask the vet for us to go together. He will inject him so he can die in my arms. 'I would prefer that rather than leaving him to die of grief on my tomb,'" said the star of such classics as Visconti's "The Leopard", "The Samurai" and "Purple Noon", which was later remade as the "Talented Mr Ripley". Yet Delon did not rule out making room for the right woman to share his last days. He said there were about 10 candidates, "but for now none are quite right." He added he might even consider breaking his vow to never remarry if the right woman "was ready to accompany me to the end." The actor, who made his name playing pretty boy killers and cads, talked of his fear that he might be dug up after his death for DNA for a paternity test.

### 'Don't dig me up'

"I've told my daughter, 'Please don't let that happen to me when I'm dead,'" he said. Delon has long denied he fathered a son with Nico, the late German pop star and muse of Andy Warhol. However, Delon's mother later adopted the boy, making him his half-brother. Yet Delon's own miserable childhood badly marked him, he told the

magazine. "My parents got rid of me when I was four. I found myself with a foster family like an orphan." "Both of them came running back to me when I was famous. All of a sudden they remembered they had a son," he said bitterly.

Nor has he forgiven them for signing his army papers so he could be thrown into the bloody Indochina War at 17. "It was them getting rid of me a second time," he said. Delon put down his tumultuous love life and much of his woes with women to being abandoned. "You cannot get back the love that wasn't given to me as a child. These are holes that can never be filled. Even when I love a woman, I feel alone. I was only four when I understood that those you love the most can abandon you." The tell-all interview, over oysters, was conducted by Valerie Trierweiler, the es-

tranged partner of former French president Francois Hollande. She effectively torpedoed his presidency with a bestselling account of their relationship, "Thank You For This Moment", after he left her for an actress. The journalist recently denied that she and Delon were an item.

### 'Few men loved like me'

The actor admitted that he had not always been the perfect gentleman. "I am like that, I do stupid things. I have been in prison. I was a little thug. All I had was my face," he said. Yet women have always fallen at his feet, even as a baby, he said. "My mother had to put a sign on my pram, 'You can look, but you can't touch!'" "I have been loved all my life," he said, particularly by the German actress Romy Schneider and Mireille Darc, who died last year. "Very few men have been loved like me." But Delon said he never slept with Brigitte Bardot, who was the Venus to his Apollo in French cinema of the 1960s.

"Strange though it may seem... given the torrid scenes we did, we were only friends, but good friends," he told Paris Match of the actress, who like him has been a vocal supporter of the far-right National Front party. "I really like her and we share a passion for animals. If she had not her great love of animals I am sure she would have killed herself by now, like so many other great sex symbols. It is very hard for a woman to no longer see desire in men's eyes." — AFP



French actor Alain Delon



## Lifestyle | Features

## THE INTERNATIONAL CIRCUS FESTIVAL



Members of the Chinese National Acrobat Troupe perform at the Capital Circus during the 12th edition of the International Circus Festival in Budapest. — AFP photos



Members of the Chinese National Acrobat Troupe perform at the Capital Circus.



Members of the Mongolian "No-muna" Circus troupe perform.



Member of the French-Cuban 'Duo Solys' perform at the Capital Circus.

## NORTH KOREA'S 'ARMY OF BEAUTIES' SET TO INVADE SOUTH



This picture taken in 2005 shows a woman (right) believed to be North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un's current wife Ri Sol-Ju among a group who attended the 2005 Asian Athletics Championships in Incheon. — AFP

Chosen for their good looks and sharp moves, North Korea's female cheerleaders are a marked contrast to the regime's menacing nuclear ambitions. Dubbed the "army of beauties" in South Korea, the young North Korean women mostly in their late teens or early 20s have attracted huge publicity whenever they have been sent to the South. North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un's future wife Ri Sol-Ju was among the group who attended the 2005 Asian Athletics Championships in Incheon. The cheerleaders are set for their fourth appearance in the South after Pyongyang agreed this week to send a delegation to next month's Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang, just 80 kilometers (50 miles) south of the Demilitarized Zone that splits the peninsula in two.

North and South have been totally separated since the end of the Korean War in 1953, with no direct telephone or postal links between them. Any North Korean delegations to its neighbor are carefully chosen by Pyongyang, and their movements are tightly controlled in the South. According to reports, the Winter Olympics group could be accommodated on a cruise ship moored in Sokcho, making it easier to monitor them.

An Chan-Il, a defector researcher who runs the World Institute for North Korea Studies, said the cheerleaders are cherry-picked by the regime based on tough criteria. "They must be over 163 centimeters (5ft 3ins) tall and come from good families," An told AFP. "Those who play an instrument are from a band and others are mostly students at the elite Kim Il-Sung University."

### Samsung phone

The Koreas' separation makes citizens of the North an object of some fascination for Southerners. The cheerleaders made their first appearance at the 2002 Asian Games in Busan, hitting the headlines when nearly 300 of them arrived on a ferry dressed in colorful hanboks-traditional Korean dresses-and waving so-called unification flags, a pale blue silhouette of the whole Korean peninsula. Hundreds of Busan residents lined the port to greet them, with several homes also flying unification flags. With their tight choreography-sometimes using props such as fans-the cheerleaders were lavished with attention as they sang and danced in the stands.

In 2005, former North Korean cheerleader Cho Myung-Ae-whose looks had gained her a huge following in the South-appeared in a television commercial for a Samsung mobile phone with South Korean pop star Lee Hyo-Ri. The supporters have always proven to be a major ticket draw, and their attendance is good news for the Pyeongchang Games organizers. "It will help with ticket sales," said Pyeongchang Organising Committee spokesman Sung Baik-You. "It will fulfil our desires for a peace Olympics." When North Korean teams have played in the South without accompanying supporters, pro-unification South Koreans have turned out to support them, such as at a women's ice hockey match last year in Gangneung, an Olympic venue. "A joint cheering squad would be phenomenal," said Lee Sun-Kyung, who organized the group.

### 'Tearful efforts'

But the Northerners' presence also has potential to create some diplomatic headaches. There are concerns that South Koreans may not be as welcoming as in the past, given their opposition to North Korea's nuclear program and its increasingly belligerent behavior. And displaying the North Korean flag and playing its anthem are illegal in the South, where they are regarded as symbols of sedition under Seoul's national security laws, hence the use of the unification flag at past inter-Korean matches. When a North Korean flag was draped over a railing at a North-South football game during the 2014 Asian Games in Incheon it was removed by officials.

The rule will not be enforced within the Olympic venues, where IOC protocol applies, but could become an issue elsewhere. The two teams marched behind the unification flag when they entered the stadiums together for the opening ceremonies of the 2000 and 2004 Olympics in Sydney and Athens, and the 2006 Winter Games in Torino. But if they do so again at the opening ceremony on February 9, it would mean the South's emblem would not appear on the stadium floor at its home Olympics. How could the South accept that reality, the Chosun Ilbo newspaper asked in an editorial Wednesday, having secured the Games "through tearful efforts after two failures"?—AFP



## Major jewelry heists in France

After four million euros (\$4.75 million) worth of jewels were stolen from Paris's Ritz hotel, here is a recap of some of France's biggest jewelry heists in the past 10 years.

### 'Customer' in Cannes

In January 2017 a man walks into a boutique in the French resort town and is greeted as a customer before pulling out a gun and making off with 15 million euros worth of jewellery.

### Switch

A thief posing as a client switches two rough diamonds and two rings, worth around 5.5 million euros, with fakes at a Swiss jeweler's private showroom in Paris in December 2016. He is arrested in Romania the following month.

### From the airport

In November 2016 masked robbers hold up two Qatari women in their 60s who are in a chauffeur-driven Bentley having just landed at a Paris airport. Jewels and other items worth more than five million euros are stolen.

### Kim Kardashian

The US reality television star is tied up and robbed at gunpoint in October 2016 by thieves who make off with jewelry worth at least nine million euros. She is in Paris for Fashion Week and staying in a luxury residence.

### Cannes, again

Four robbers, one wearing the mask of an elderly person, steal 17.5 million euros in jewelry and watches from a boutique in May 2015 just days before the start of the city's international film festival.

### Paris airport taxi

In April 2015 thieves make off with a handbag containing four million euros worth of Chanel jewels in a smash-and-grab attack on a taxi between Paris and Charles De Gaulle airport. The victim is a Taiwanese art collector.

### Highway hold-up

Around 15 robbers stop two vans at a toll booth on the A6 motorway in March 2015, near the central city of Auxerre, and make off with jewelry worth around nine million euros.

### Cannes diamond display

In July 2013 a man armed with a semi-automatic pistol and his head covered with a cloth walks into the Carlton hotel and steals jewels that were part of an exhibition and worth 103 million euros. It is the largest jewelry heist in France.

### Others

- In February 2010 a thief steals a handbag with 4.5 million euros in jewels from the daughter of a mayor of Kiev being driven into Paris from an airport.
- In May 2010 armed robbers walk off with seven million euros in gems after taking a jewel wholesaler and his family hostage in a town near Marseille.
- In July 2009 three men take 15 million euros worth of jewels in a hold-up of a Cartier store in Cannes.
- In May 2009 a lone robber enters the exclusive Chopard jewellery store in Paris's upmarket central Place Vendome and leaves with 6.8 million euros of jewelry.

Three men steal around 900 pieces from the Harry Winston jewelry boutique on Paris's chic Avenue Montaigne in December 2008. Some are recovered but the loss is estimated at nearly 79 million euros. Fifteen men linked to the crime are eventually jailed. — AFP



A picture shows the facade of the Ritz luxury hotel in Paris after an armed robbery.—AFP

Kim Kardashian

## FRENCH POLICE RECOVER SOME JEWELS FROM RITZ HEIST

French police have recovered some of the jewels worth over 4.0 million euros looted from the Ritz hotel in central Paris, a police source told AFP yesterday, as officers hunt for two robbers who remain on the run. The gang burst into the five-star hotel on the French capital's glitzy Place Vendome through a rear staff entrance on Wednesday evening and smashed the display windows of jewelry shops on the ground floor.

Three men were arrested as they tried to flee by the way they came in with bags of gems and watches. But they came up against locked doors. "Obviously there is a security system and an alarm in this type of establishment," a police source said. Part of the loot was recovered after being scattered about during the arrest of the three suspects, while more jewels and watches were found in a bag dropped by one of the two robbers who got away, another source added, without being able to give an estimate for the value of the goods retrieved. The three men arrested, all around 40 years old, are from the Seine-Saint-Denis area north of Paris, and are "well known the police for armed robbery, violence and receiving stolen goods", a source close to the inquiry said.

The incident took place at around 6:30 pm (1730 GMT). A police team in charge of patrolling the square-home to some of Paris's top jewelry and watchmakers, as well as the justice ministry-was quickly on the scene. Place Vendome has been the scene of several daring jewelry heists in recent years. Security in the neighborhood was beefed up in 2014 but robbers have continued to strike.

Several luxury brands display their jewels in the storied Ritz, famous as the lodging of choice for Coco Chanel and Ernest Hemingway as well as Princess Diana, who stayed there before her death in a car crash in a Paris tunnel in 1997. Wednesday's robbery took place a year and half after the hotel re-opened its palatial doors to guests after nearly four years of renovations and

a massive fire. The suspects were wearing gloves and balaclavas and carrying handguns as well as hatchets, according to police sources.

On finding their escape route blocked they tried to transfer the loot through a window to two accomplices waiting outside. One of the two accomplices fled by car. The other made his getaway on a motorbike, dropping a bag of jewels in the process. Yesterday, the source close to the inquiry said the car had been found in the Val d'Oise department, near Seine-Saint-Denis. Contacted by AFP, the Ritz management declined to comment on the robbery.

### Long list of heists

The total value of the loot was estimated at 4.0 million euros (\$4.75 million), a judicial source told AFP. Interior Minister Gerard Collomb praised the responding officers for the arrests, saying they had "done our police force credit." France has found itself repeatedly in the headlines for high-profile robberies, particularly in Paris and on the Cote d'Azur. US reality television star Kim Kardashian was the target of one of the biggest heists in recent years, while attending Paris Fashion Week in October 2016.

Five men, some wearing jackets with police insignia, held up Kardashian at gunpoint in a luxury apartment in the central Madeleine district, making off with a diamond ring and other jewelry pieces valued in total at nine million euros. One of the robbers, fleeing the scene on a bicycle, dropped a diamond-encrusted cross worth 30,000 euros, which was found by a passer-by a few hours later. The gold jewelry was melted down into bars, one of the six suspects being held over the case told investigators. — AFP



# KNOT A PROBLEM: THAI CAPITAL TACKLES STREET CABLES



This photo shows a knot of cables hanging over Wireless Road in Bangkok. — AFP photos



A network of cables strung along a crosswalk over Wireless Road in Bangkok.



A tangle of cables strung above an intersection in Bangkok.

**B**angkok's Wireless Road may soon live up to its name. Like many streets in the Thai capital, the thoroughfare is festooned with electrical and telecom cables, a black web that hangs menacingly overhead like dystopian Christmas decorations. But Bangkok authorities are now untangling the cables and moving them underground as part of an urban renewal pushed by the Thai junta that seized power in 2014. The aim is to make Bangkok not only safer, but easier on the eyes and less prone to blackouts. Frayed cables—often live—dangle at head-height onto Bangkok's streets, making safe navigation of the already treacherous pavements even harder. Other wires are left to bunch up near pylons, creeping hazardingly across the narrow walkways of the city Centre.

Exposure to the elements has also meant the cables are easily damaged, which can cause problems for the city's electrical system. Wireless Road, which got its name from hosting one of Thailand's first radio transmitting stations, is among dozens of streets targeted in the early phase of the de-cluttering campaign.

Large stretches of Sukhumvit Road, a central artery that cuts through high-end neighborhoods and tourist hotspots, have already been cleared since November. "This is a commercial road. We see hotels and foreigners living around here. When they see the beautiful road, they will spread the word," Prasonk Kumpradit, an official with Bangkok's Metropolitan Electricity Authority, told AFP. The project has been planned for years, but many suspect it received an unexpected jolt after Microsoft founder Bill Gates visited Bangkok in 2016 and took a disapproving photo of one street's wiry web. The billionaire later deleted the Facebook post, which blamed the cluster

of wires on people illegally tapping into the grid. Netizens quibbled with his diagnosis of the cable bunches, which include both telecom connections and power supply wires, but less than a week later the government announced that cleanup was moving forward.

## 'No more disorderly stuff'

So far 1,184 utility poles have been removed from three of the city's biggest roads. Over the next five years authorities plan to strip cables from 39 more streets totaling 127 kilometers, reinstalling the new connections under the road. While there are no hard figures, Bangkok authorities say that is just a fraction of the city's cables but is still a major improvement on the status quo. "The main advantage we get is the security of the electrical system," said Prasonk. "When the cables are underground, the problem with disturbances that can cause blackouts will be gone." Thailand's military rulers have launched a flurry of campaigns to impose some order on their chaotic capital in recent years, including clearing away many of Bangkok's famous street-food stalls.

But while that decision caused dismay in some quarters, few will shed a tear when the cable clusters disappear. "Taking the wires away is really great. It makes the city clean, clear and pleasant to look at," Sukanya Phuangdech, a 45-year-old Bangkokian, told AFP from a newly-cleared Sukhumvit Road. "No more disorderly stuff. I feel like people are happier." Martin Fletcher, a 30-year-old teacher from England, agreed. "Bangkok's very famous for having all the electrical wires—and it's a bit like spaghetti, and they've been cleared... it's a lot nicer now," he said. — AFP



A network of cables strung above a pedestrian bridge in Bangkok.

## Dominic West to star in TV version of 'Les Miserables'



British actor Dominic West poses as he arrives for the screening of the film "The Square" at the 70th edition of the Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southern France.—AFP

**"T**he Wire" star Dominic West is to play Jean Valjean in a new television adaptation of "Les Miserables" scripted by the master adapter Andrew Davies, the BBC said yesterday. "Spooks" star David Oyelowo will play his nemesis Javert, the relentless police inspector who dogs the life of the former convict, in the six-hour costume drama, which had previously been backed by disgraced Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein.

"Jean Valjean is one of the great characters in world literature," West said of the hero of Victor Hugo's 1862 novel, which is regarded as one of the greatest of 19th century literature. "His epic journey

of redemption is one of the extraordinary roles an actor can take on, and I can't wait to get stuck in to bringing Andrew Davies' brilliant adaptation to the screen." The veteran adapter, now 81, was the brains behind a string of BBC costume drama hits including "Pride and Prejudice", "Middlemarch" and "War & Peace", most of which he adapted after retiring from his job as a university lecturer.

He described "Les Miserables", the sprawling story of Valjean, who spent years in prison for stealing a loaf of bread for his starving sister, as a "huge, intense and gut-wrenching". "Most of us are familiar with the musical version, which only offers a frag-

mentary outline of its story," which reaches its climax during the 1848 Revolution in Paris. "I am thrilled to have the opportunity of doing real justice to Victor Hugo at last," he said.

Davies also scripted the original British version of the political thriller "House of Cards", as well as having a hand in the first two "Bridget Jones" films. Weinstein—whose company pulled out of the project as claims that he raped and assaulted a string of actresses mounted—had said earlier that "with the exception of James Bond, nobody does it better than Andrew Davies."—AFP





Izumi Kawanishi, head of Sony's AI Robotics Business Group, removes Sony's robot dog "Aibo" from a cocoon during its birthday ceremony for new owners who purchased pre-order's in Tokyo yesterday.



Children play with their pre-ordered Sony robot dogs "Aibo" after its birthday ceremony.



A young boy plays with a pre-ordered Sony robot dog "Aibo". — AFP photos

# Old dog, new tricks: Sony unleashes 'INTELLIGENT' ROBOT PET



Izumi Kawanishi, head of Sony's AI Robotics Business Group, removes Sony's robot dog "Aibo" from a cocoon during its birthday ceremony.



An owner plays with a pre-ordered Sony robot dog "Aibo" after its birthday ceremony.

As Japan celebrates the year of the dog, electronics giant Sony yesterday unleashed its new robot canine companion, packed with artificial intelligence and internet connectivity. The sleek ivory-white puppy-sized "aibo" robot shook its head and wagged its tail as if waking from a nap when it was taken out of a cocoon-shaped case at a "birthday ceremony" held in Tokyo. Seven-year-old boy Naohiro Sugimoto from Tokyo was among the first to get his hands on the shiny new toy, which he described as "heavy but cute". "The dog we had previously died... We bought this robot dog as we wanted a (new) family," he said. The 30-centimetre (one-foot) long hound-like machine comes complete with flapping ears and its eyes, made of a cutting-edge light-emitting display, can show various emotions.

Aibo is also fitted with an array of sensors, cameras and microphones and boasts internet connectivity. The owner can play with the pet remotely via smartphone and even teach it tricks from the office for the faithful hound to perform when its "master" gets home. It builds up a "character" by interacting with people and while not always submissive, it is friendly towards those who are kind to it. What the machine "learns" is stored in the cloud so its "character" can be preserved even in the event of hardware damage. Photos it takes can also be shared. But such cutting-edge canine technology does not come cheap, with the aibo costing nearly \$3,000 for a three-year package, including software services such as data storage.

### 'Touches a chord'

Aibo is not the Japanese electronic giant's first foray into the animal robot entertainment world. Its earlier robot dog was put to sleep more a decade ago—a victim of business restructuring—shocking fans. Sony rolled out the first-generation dog in June 1999, with the initial batch of 3,000 selling out in just 20 minutes, despite a hefty price tag of 250,000 yen (\$2,200 at current rates). Over the following years, more than 150,000 units were sold, with numerous models ranging from gleaming metallic-silver versions to round-faced cub-like models.

But by 2006, Sony was in trouble. Its business model was under pressure and it was facing fierce competition from rivals in all fields. The robot dog, an expensive and somewhat frivolous luxury, had to go. Yasuyuki Nakamura, another owner of the new generation Aibo—his third robot pet—said he was happy to see the dog back in Sony's catalogue. "I had been waiting (for a new aibo). I ordered one as I was happy to see this kind of business was revived," the 46-year-old said.

A middle-aged couple said they bought the robot for their 25th anniversary this year. Sony plans to release the new aibo overseas as well but no details are set yet. The dog does not speak human languages or perform tasks such as turning a light on. But that is not the point of the product, according to Sony's Izumi Kawanishi who is in charge of the project. "You don't think about what the dog can do when you want to get a dog, do you?," he asked reporters. "The point is that it touches a chord (with people)," he said. — AFP

HEAVY  
BUT  
CUTE



Izumi Kawanishi (left), head of Sony's AI Robotics Business Group, hands over a cocoon containing Sony's robot dog "Aibo" during its birthday ceremony to new owners who purchased pre-order's in Tokyo.





# Leftovers make tasty Spinach and Feta Burgers

By Sara Moulton

**L**eftovers! Some folks love them, others happily scrape them into the trash. Me, I'm on the love team. Leftovers speak to me. I'd always rather start a meal with a fridge full of tasty bits of this and that than have to confront a blank canvas of raw ingredients. This recipe tackles one particular challenge: how to repurpose leftover cooked chops, steaks, or roasts.

The answer? Turn them into burgers. "Wait a minute," you say. "They've already been cooked once. Won't they be dry as dust if you turn them into burgers and cook them again?" Nope, not if you combine the leftover meat with some moist ingredients, such as the spinach and feta cheese listed here.

For Spinach and Feta Burgers with Cucumber Yogurt Sauce, start with 12 ounces of cooked meat - beef or lamb - trimmed of excess fat and any sinew. Cut the meat into cubes roughly 1 inch per side, then pulse in a food processor to chop it to burger consistency. (Be careful not to leave your finger on the pulse button for too long; you don't want to end up with baby food.) Add the moist ingredients, along with an egg and a bit of

panko to bind it all up. If you're no fan of spinach and feta, you can substitute other cooked (and finely chopped) vegetables and/or cheese.

If you have time, make the burgers early in the day and chill them for a few hours before cooking. This will help them to hold their shape. If you don't have the time, don't worry. Just take care to turn them gently as they cook.

One last note: The sauce is a wonderful complement, but you're welcome to lose it if it doesn't appeal to you. The burgers are plenty tasty without it.

This recipe's true miracle is transforming a mere 12 ounces of meat into six full dinner portions, allowing you to save money as well as food. And the new dish is so different from the original that no one will pipe up to say, "What, leftovers again!?"

## Spinach and Feta Burgers with Cucumber Yogurt Sauce

### For the sauce:

A 6-inch piece of English cucumber (the long, thin kind)  
Kosher salt

1 cup plain Greek yogurt  
1 teaspoon minced garlic  
For the burgers:  
3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided  
5 ounces baby spinach  
Kosher salt  
1 teaspoon minced garlic  
1/4 teaspoon hot pepper flakes, optional  
1 large egg  
12 ounces trimmed cooked meat or cooked steak, or leftover roast meat  
3 ounces coarsely crumbled feta cheese  
3/4 cup panko bread crumbs  
6 pita halves  
Shredded romaine lettuce and sliced tomatoes for garnish

**Make the sauce:** Peel, halve lengthwise and seed the cucumber. Coarsely shred it and in a medium bowl toss it with a pinch of salt.

Let the cucumber stand for 10 minutes and then add the yogurt, garlic, additional salt to taste; stir well.

In a large nonstick skillet heat 1 tablespoon of the oil over medium-high heat until hot. Add the spinach and a pinch of salt and cook, stirring,

for 1 minute. Add the garlic and hot pepper flakes, if using, and cook, stirring, until all of the spinach is wilted, 1 1/2 to 2 minutes. Transfer the mixture to a shallow bowl and cool to room temperature in the refrigerator. Wipe out and reserve the skillet.

In a food processor, process the egg until it is lightly beaten. Cut the lamb into 1-inch pieces and add it to the food processor. Pulse 6 to 8 times or until the meat is chopped into medium-fine pieces. Add the feta, cooled spinach mixture and 1/4 cup of the bread crumbs and pulse two or three times or until just mixed.

Shape the mixture into six burgers. Spread out the remaining bread crumbs in a soup or pie plate. Heat the remaining 2 tablespoons oil in the reserved large skillet over medium heat until hot.

Dip the burgers into the crumbs to coat them lightly on all sides; shake off any excess crumbs. Add the burgers to the skillet and cook until golden and heated through, about 3 minutes a side.

Transfer the burgers to the pita halves and spoon some of the sauce over each burger. Garnish with the lettuce and tomatoes.



# How the cauliflower can morph into movie night **snack food**



By Melissa D'Arabian

**Y**ears ago, I was attempting to reverse my daughter Valentine's disdain for cauliflower. She was always my veggie-loving kiddo, so I was stumped by her dislike of one my favorites. Who doesn't love roasted cauliflower florets, with those crispy caramelized golden edges? She loved artichoke - pulling apart the leaves and scraping them on her teeth. So, why not create a pull-apart version of cauliflower?

I roasted it whole on a lower temperature (about 350 F) for nearly an hour, and then pumped up the heat to 400 F for some browning. I then seasoned the whole head of cauliflower with a little lemon butter or cheese.

The idea worked: all four of my kids had fun pulling apart the cauliflower, eating little florets

like finger food.

Over the years, cauliflower morphed from dinner table favorite to movie night snack food, right alongside popcorn. The recipe has changed a little: I've found that steaming the cauliflower a few minutes first cuts the cook-time in half and the florets are easier to pull apart.

And, I've upped my seasoning, for example slathering on a garlicky cheese mixture spiked with just a touch of hot sauce to remind me of the buffalo wings of my college days, when I thought nothing of downing a half-dozen fried wings, skin and all.

With today's recipe for Cheesy Pull-Apart Whole Cauliflower, the high-cal buttery and cheesy coating packs a garlic punch, even though each serving has relatively little of it, so healthy eating goals stay on track. And while

we're enjoying movie-time or game-time nibbles, it's nice to know that we're actually getting a little nutrition in our bodies, too.

#### **Cheesy pull-apart whole cauliflower**

1 medium head of cauliflower (about 1 1/2 pounds), trimmed of leaves  
 1 tablespoon unsalted butter, softened  
 2 tablespoons mayonnaise  
 1/4 cup grated parmesan  
 2 cloves garlic, pressed or finely minced  
 1 tablespoon hot sauce or buffalo sauce  
 Preheat the oven to 400 F.

Turn the cauliflower upside down and gently cut out the bulk of the core, leaving a triangle-shaped indentation at the bottom of the cauliflower. Add an inch of salted water to a large pot

and bring to a boil. Place the cauliflower right side up in the pot and cover the pot to steam the cauliflower until tender, but still firm (not mushy), about 7-10 minutes, depending on the size and age of the cauliflower. Test with a slim sharp knife.

Once the cauliflower is done, remove it from the pot and place on paper towels to cool. Meanwhile, in a small bowl, mix together the butter, mayonnaise, parmesan cheese, garlic and hot sauce.

Blot the cooled cauliflower with paper towels. Coat the outside of the cauliflower with the cheesy mixture, using your hands to coat the whole head. Place the cauliflower on a baking tray lined with foil or parchment. Bake until the cauliflower is golden brown, about 15 minutes. Let cool a few minutes before serving. Serve with forks or as finger food.



## Mix Tape

# Journeys through The Downside: 'PYRE' IS 2017'S MOST ENLIGHTENING GAMING EXPERIENCE

By Aakash Bakaya

“What does freedom mean to you?” This question is asked to you, the player, at a crucial point in 'Pyre's story. As with any game driven by player choice, the words you choose will affect how your character is seen by your companions and the story as a whole. But unlike other games in the visual-novel genre which gives the player somewhere between 2-5 different choices, 'Pyre' gives you twelve different answers and each answer speaks more towards how the player feels in reality than in the game. It might not be an easy question to answer but 'Pyre' never compels you to make the right choices rather it tells the player - the only thing that matters is that we remain free to choose.

To simply categorize 'Pyre' as a visual-novel would be doing the game a grave injustice. It's actually a decisively strange combination that can be simply described as a deep, story-driven RPG sports game. That might sound confused or pretentious on the surface and it's what kept me from picking up the game ever since its release this summer. But about 30 minutes into the game, I was hooked. The characters, the quirky fantasy setting and the writing had me enthralled from the very start of my campaign.

### A league of their own

'Pyre' takes place in 'The Downside' - a dreary yet starkly beautiful land that acts as a sort of prison to a nation known as 'The Commonwealth'. The game begins with you the protagonist (later called the Reader) waking up with no recollection of your past life or the crime that led you to your exile in 'The Downside'. Almost immediately you're confronted by three wayward companions - Hedwyen the wanderer, Rusky the charming cur (this world's dogs) and the imposing Jodariel (a demon-human hybrid). They too are exiles and decide to aid you more so for



curiosity sake rather than the goodness of their hearts. They allow you to come aboard their wagon and travel with them. On your travels, you will earn their trust, find and befriend other exiles, learn about the world's history and most importantly - fight to regain the freedom of your companions and maybe yourself in the ancient ritual of 'The Rites'.

'The Rites' is where the RPG/Sports gameplay comes in. Think of it as a 3-on-3 match where the offensive tactics are similar to basketball while the defensive manoeuvres incorporate

a more football-like approach. The match revolves around the Celestial Orb (simply a ball) that must be thrown or carried into the opponents Pyre (simply a goalpost) until it is extinguished. Each character has an Aura that can be projected forward, if you or your opponent gets hit or runs into an Aura, they are banished (simply put on the side-lines) for a short period of time. Whoever is holding on to the Orb loses their Aura and thus is vulnerable unless they pass it to a team-mate. You can even fling it to your opponent, make them catch it and then strike them while their defenceless, thus putting them on the sidelines for a short period. The challenge lies in being only allowed to move a single character at a time but you're free to select which member of your team you wish to control whenever you please.

Matches are fast, intense and nail-bitingly close at times. Each character has their own set of abilities and attributes so choosing the right character against the variety of opponents you will come across is never an easy decision. Jodariel for instance is extremely slow but her massive size means she can project her Aura large distances and is able to throw the Orb quickly as well. Sir Gilman, another character you meet in your journey is simply a worm. As such his Aura is almost non-existent but he offsets that by being hard to catch and his valiant nature gives him 'heroic' boosts when his team is behind or banished. Your team will grow into an 8-man roster and his character in it functions and plays completely different from the other. Sport fans will love the different tactics you can use and just how fluid the gameplay feels while RPG enthusiasts can immerse themselves into each of the characters lore and skill-tree abilities, each one connecting itself to the world and its mythos. It is a fascinating amalgamation that works on many levels. But what truly makes all this come together is the story behind it all.

### Freedom isn't free

The main goal of your journey through 'The Downside' is the pursuit of 'The Rites' and by simply participating in them - you are gaining favour towards your ultimate goal - freedom from exile, a chance to go back to 'The Commonwealth'. But freedom, much like any desperately sort after goal, comes with a price.





## Mix Tape



Once you've completed enough matches against opponents who are seeking freedom for themselves as well, you are sent to participate in a final 'Liberation Rite'.

Here you can only choose one of the companions in your roster to be set free. If you succeed, they are set free and can never be used in 'The Rites'. It is a heart wrenching decision, especially as you grow fonder of your motley crew. You learn their backstories, their hopes and the reason they were sent into exile but only if you ask the right questions. They grow close to each other and to you as well and once you set anyone of them free, neither you nor your other companions might ever see them again. These evocative choices you find yourself in are those rare gaming experiences you will cherish and remember long after you've walked away from the keyboard.

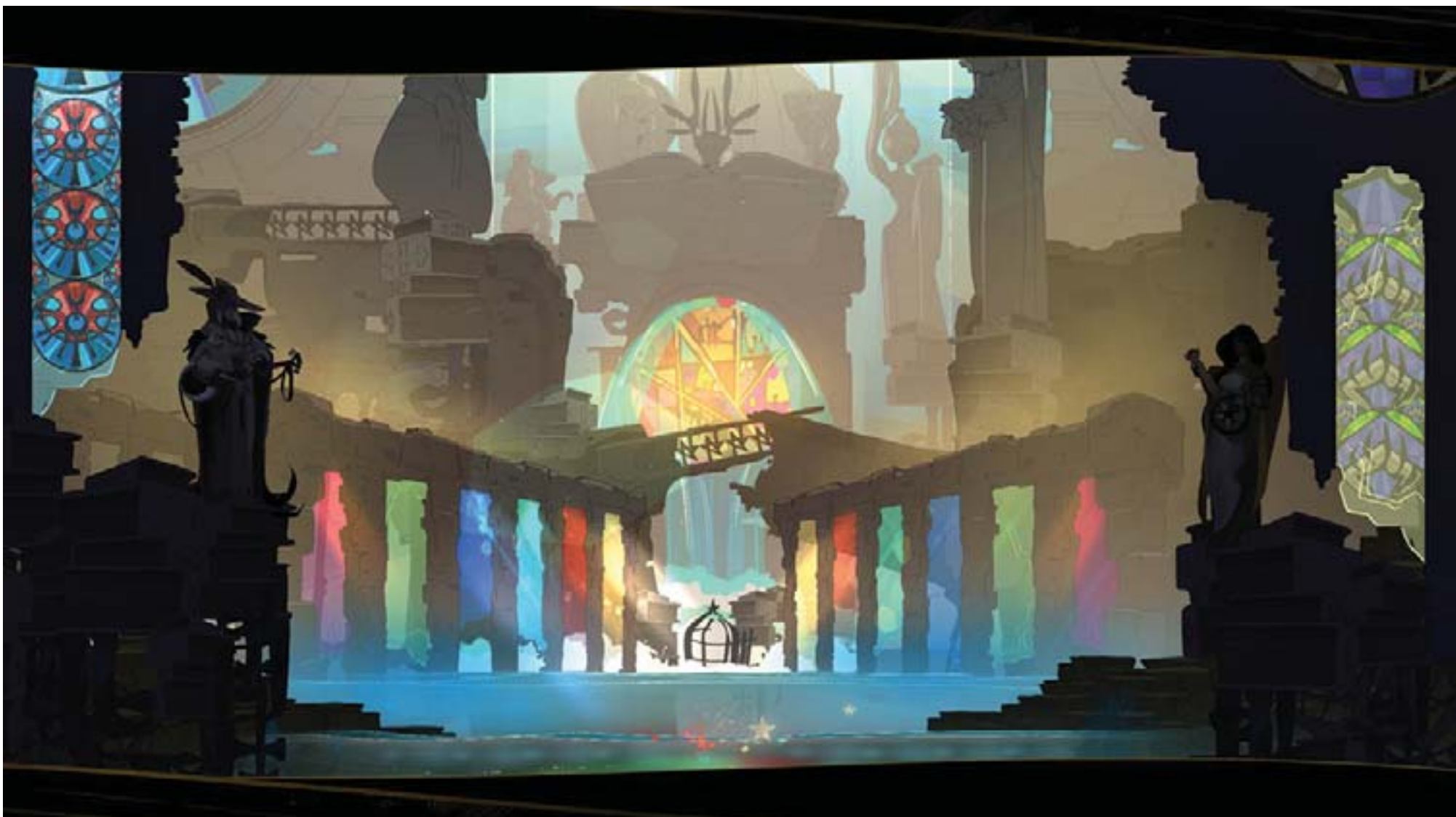
The story continues to twist and surprise before and after 'The Liberation Rite'. You will find out that each character's back

story carries themes of regret, honor, longing and strife. But one character in particular - the de facto leader of your group becomes the catalyst of the entire plot. Volfred Sandalwood, a humanoid-tree, is not content with simply regaining the freedom of himself or the team he help found. What he truly desires is to end the corrupted, misguided leadership of the 'Commonwealth' and spark a revolution from the inside to end the practice of casting down it's people into exile in the first place. And so what starts of as a simply journey to regain freedom lost becomes a complex plot to ensure freedom is won for all.

There are no 'Game Over' screens in 'Pyre'. Even if you are beaten in every 'Rite' you participate in, the story continues on whether you win or lose. As Volfred reminds you early on in your journey - "the only failure is to stray from the path". As you travel onward, you realize that the entire story is based on that line. 'Pyre' is not content in simply telling 'motivational' quotes

to the player, it becomes determined to show them why that approach works in the first place.

It is absolutely stunning game design, one that went greatly under-appreciated when it was released. By the time the player gets to the end, it could play out in almost a countless (yes countless!) number of ways. The fact that they tie up all the numerous choices you've made, both big and small, in such a satisfactory way is an achievement in itself. Mix in the gorgeous hand-drawn visuals with one of the best video-game soundtracks I've ever heard and 'Pyre' elevates itself to something way beyond the ordinary. It's one of my most memorable gaming experiences and easily my gaming highlight of 2017.





Lifestyle | Kids

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

Sudoku

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

Solution



DID YOU KNOW

A male giraffe can weigh as much as a pickup truck! That's about 1400 kilograms.

Although a giraffe's neck is 1.5 - 1.8 meters, it contains the same number of vertebrae at a human neck.

A giraffe's habitat is usually found in African savannas, grasslands or open woodlands.

The hair that makes up a giraffe's tail is about 10 times thicker than the average strand of human hair.

The distinctive spots that cover a giraffe's fur act as a good camouflage to protect the giraffe from predators. When the giraffe stands in front of trees and bushes the light and dark coloring of its fur blends in with the shadows and sunlight.

It is possible to identify the sex of the giraffe from the horns on its head. Both males and females have horns but the females are smaller and covered with hair at the top. Male giraffes may have up to 3 additional horns.

Giraffes are ruminants. This means that they have more than one stomach. In fact, giraffes have four stomachs, the extra stomachs assisting with digesting food.

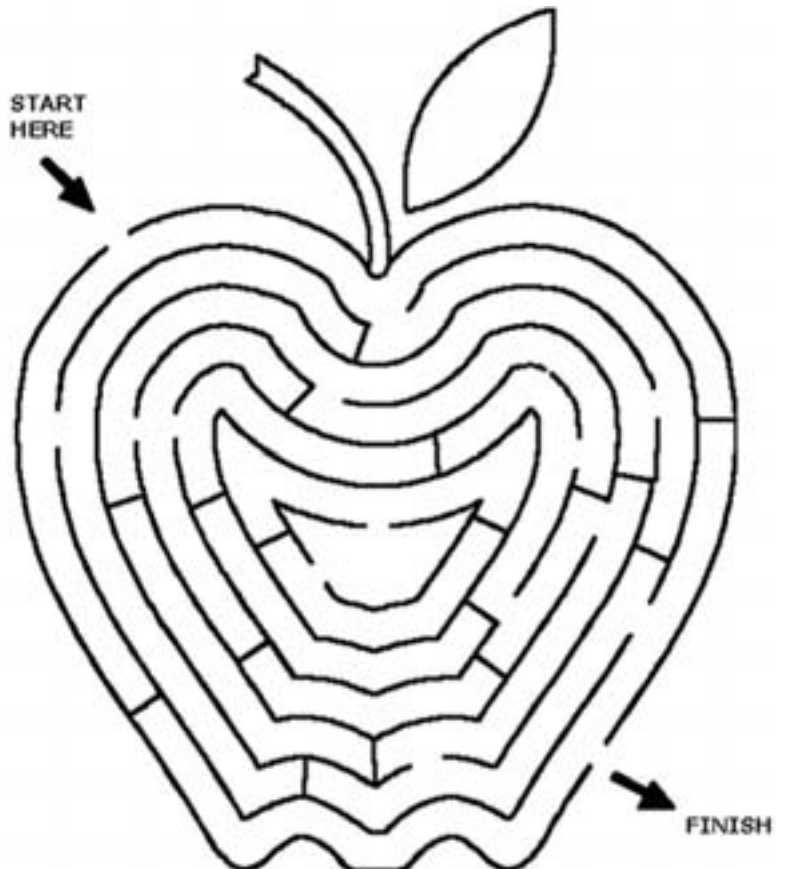
Drinking is one of the most dangerous times for a giraffe. While it is getting a drink it cannot keep a look out for predators and is vulnerable to attack.

Male giraffes sometimes fight with their necks over female giraffes. This is called "necking". The two giraffes stand side by side and one giraffe swings his head and neck, hitting his head against the other giraffe. Sometimes one giraffe is hit to the ground during a combat.

A female giraffe gives birth while standing up. The calf drops approximately 6 feet to the ground, but it is not hurt from the fall.

Giraffes have bluish-purple tongues which are tough and covered in bristly hair to help them with eating the thorny Acacia trees.

Color Me





## Comic

### WORD SEARCH

#### Halloween

Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell an activity played on Halloween.

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

- |            |             |                |           |
|------------|-------------|----------------|-----------|
| APPLES     | COSTUME     | JACK O LANTERN | SKELETON  |
| BATS       | DRACULA     | MASK           | SKULL     |
| BLACK CAT  | FRIGHTENING | MUMMY          | SPIDERS   |
| BROOMSTICK | FULL MOON   | NIGHT          | TOMBSTONE |
| CANDLE     | GHOSTS      | PUMPKIN        | VAMPIRE   |
| CANDY      | GHOULS      | SCARECROW      | WEREWOLF  |
| CEMETERY   | GOBLINS     | SCARY          | WITCHES   |
| COFFIN     | GRAVEYARD   | SCREAM         | ZOMBIE    |

### Yesterday's Solution

#### Golf

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

- |           |               |             |              |
|-----------|---------------|-------------|--------------|
| ALBATROSS | CLUBHOUSE     | GREEN       | ROUGH        |
| APPROACH  | CLUBS         | GRIP        | RULES        |
| BACK NINE | CONDOR        | GROSS SCORE | SHOT         |
| BACKSPIN  | COURSE        | HANDICAP    | SLICE        |
| BALL      | DIVOT         | HOLE IN ONE | STROKE       |
| BIRDIE    | DRIVER        | HOLES       | SWING        |
| BOGEY     | DRIVING RANGE | HOOK        | TEE OFF      |
| BUNKER    | EAGLE         | IRON        | TREES        |
| CADDIE    | FAIRWAY       | NET SCORE   | WATER HAZARD |
| CART      | FLAGSTICK     | PAR         | WEDGE        |
| CHIP      | FORE          | PUTTER      | WOOD         |

The hidden message is: GOLF IS A GOOD WALK SPOILED

### CROSSWORD 1807



#### ACROSS

- An edible tuber native to South America.
- (of spatial position) In or brought into line with or into proper relative position.
- The compass point that is one point south of due east.
- The basic unit of money in Uruguay.
- Genus of chiefly small rock-loving ferns.
- (Scotland) A small loaf or roll of soft bread.
- (Loloish language).
- English courtier (a favorite of Elizabeth I) who tried to colonize Virginia.
- The compass point that is one point east (clockwise) of due north.
- Sour or bitter in taste.
- A Russian river.
- A radioactive element of the actinide series.
- The state of being under the control of another person.
- Russian country house.
- A port in northwestern Israel on the Bay of Acre.
- Of texture.
- An associate degree in applied science.
- Any of numerous local fertility and nature deities worshipped by ancient Semitic peoples.
- (Old Testament) The first king of the Israelites who defended Israel against many enemies (especially the Philistines).
- (informal) Exceptionally good.
- Date used in reckoning dates before the supposed year Christ was born.
- Capable of being acted.
- A unit of magnetomotive force equal to 0.7958 ampere-turns.
- A poliovirus vaccine consisting of inactivated polio virus that is injected subcutaneously to provide immunity to poliomyelitis.
- A bed where seedlings are grown before transplanting.
- Something or someone that causes anxiety.
- Edible starchy tuberous root of taro plants.
- An associate degree in nursing.
- The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.
- A family of North American Indian languages spoken widely in the midwest by Caddo peoples.
- Having a woven pattern.
- Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
- Relating to the pineal body.
- The capital and largest city of Bangladesh.
- Goddess of fate.
- Order of mammals having few or no teeth including.
- A rotating disk shaped to convert circular into linear motion.
- Of or relating to a member of the Buddhist people inhabiting the Mekong river in Laos and Thailand.
- A town in southeastern New Mexico on the Pecos River near the Mexican border.
- A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.

#### DOWN

- A single splash.
- Cultivated in temperate regions.
- Irish prelate who deduced from the Bible that Creation occurred in the year

- 4004 BC (1581-1656).
- Sorghums of dry regions of Asia and North Africa.
- The month following March and preceding May.
- (archaic or Scottish) Faithful and true.
- Prohibited by law or by official or accepted rules.
- (Scottish) A narrow secluded valley (in the mountains).
- Submerged aquatic plant having narrow leaves and small flowers.
- A graphical record of electrical activity of the brain.
- The longer of the two telegraphic signals used in Morse code.
- The compass point that is one point north of due east.
- A small cake leavened with yeast.
- A detailed description of design criteria for a piece of work.
- Divulge information or secrets.
- A deep opening in the earth's surface.
- At risk of or subject to experiencing something usually unpleasant.
- A book of the New Testament.
- A heavy odorless colorless gas formed during respiration and by the decomposition of organic substances.
- Relating to or characteristic of Arabs.
- Having a face or facing especially of a specified kind or number.
- Antibacterial consisting of any of several synthetic organic compounds capable of inhibiting the growth of bacteria that require PABA.
- Being one more than ten.
- (architecture) Forming or resembling an arch.
- Fed beyond capacity or desire.
- A member of a Turkic people of Uzbekistan and neighboring areas.
- A soft-finned fish of the family Gadidae.
- Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
- Tropical starchy tuberous root.
- A small pellet fired from an air rifle or BB gun.
- In bed.
- Small terrestrial lizard of warm regions of the Old World.
- A rare heavy polyvalent metallic element that resembles manganese chemically and is used in some alloys.
- A member of a seafaring group of North American Indians who lived on the Pacific coast of British Columbia and southwestern Alaska.
- Located inward.
- An indehiscent fruit derived from a single ovary having one or many seeds within a fleshy wall or pericarp.
- A city in northern India.
- Panel forming the lower part of an interior wall when it is finished differently from the rest.
- An organization of countries formed in 1961 to agree on a common policy for the sale of petroleum.
- Informal or slang terms for mentally irregular.
- (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.
- Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
- God of love and erotic desire.
- An inflammatory complication of leprosy that results in painful skin lesions on the arms and legs and face.
- A workplace for the conduct of scientific research.
- A hard gray lustrous metallic element that is highly corrosion-resistant.

### Yesterday's Solution

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

### Daily Sudoku

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

### Yesterday's Solution

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




## TV Listings



00:10 Road House  
02:15 Captain America: The First Avenger  
04:25 The Core  
06:40 Star Wars: Episode II - Attack Of The Clones  
09:10 Captain America: The First Avenger  
11:20 Captain America: Civil War  
13:50 Resident Evil: Vendetta  
15:30 Star Wars: Episode III - Revenge Of The Sith  
17:50 Star Wars: The Force Awakens  
20:10 Blood Diamond  
22:35 The Night Crew



00:50 Untamed & Uncut  
01:45 Treehouse Masters  
02:40 Biggest And Baddest  
03:35 Swamp Brothers  
04:25 Whale Wars  
06:02 Wildest Latin America  
06:49 Untamed & Uncut  
07:36 Night  
08:00 Night  
08:25 Swamp Brothers  
08:50 Swamp Brothers  
09:15 Treehouse Masters  
10:10 Biggest And Baddest  
11:05 Wildest Latin America  
12:00 Swamp Brothers  
12:28 Swamp Brothers  
12:55 Whale Wars  
13:50 Whale Wars  
14:45 Biggest And Baddest  
15:40 Wildest Latin America  
16:35 Untamed & Uncut  
17:30 Treehouse Masters  
18:25 Keeping Up With The Krugers  
19:20 The Lion Queen  
20:15 Biggest And Baddest  
21:10 Swamp Brothers  
21:38 Swamp Brothers  
22:05 Keeping Up With The Krugers  
23:00 Blood Ivory  
23:55 Wildest Latin America



00:05 Benidorm  
01:00 New Tricks  
02:00 Holby City  
03:05 Doctors  
03:35 Eastenders  
04:05 Benidorm  
05:00 New Tricks  
06:00 Doctors  
06:35 Casualty  
07:25 Holby City  
08:30 Doctors  
11:00 Casualty  
11:55 Holby City  
13:05 Eastenders  
15:05 Casualty  
16:00 Doctors  
16:30 Doctors  
17:00 Doctors  
17:30 Doctors  
18:00 Doctors  
18:30 Bad Move  
19:00 New Tricks  
20:00 Father Brown  
21:00 Death In Paradise  
22:00 Poldark  
23:00 Doctors  
23:30 Bad Move




01:00 The First 48  
02:00 Britain's Darkest Taboos  
03:00 Deadly Secrets: The Lost Children Of Dozier  
05:00 The First 48  
06:00 Britain's Darkest Taboos  
07:00 Homicide Hunter  
08:00 Crimes That Shook Britain

09:00 It Takes A Killer  
09:30 It Takes A Killer  
10:00 Homicide: Hours To Kill  
11:00 Cold Case Files  
12:00 The First 48  
13:00 Crimes That Shook Britain  
14:00 It Takes A Killer  
14:30 It Takes A Killer  
15:00 Homicide: Hours To Kill  
16:00 Cold Case Files  
17:00 Homicide Hunter  
18:00 It Takes A Killer  
19:00 The First 48  
20:00 Homicide: Hours To Kill  
21:00 Crimes That Shook Britain  
22:00 Cold Case Files  
23:00 Killer Kids



00:30 Kids Do The Craziest Things  
00:55 Kids Do The Craziest Things  
01:20 NASA's Unexplained Files  
02:10 Mission Asteroid  
03:00 Bahama Blue  
03:50 Bear Grylls: Born Survivor  
04:40 Tanked  
05:30 How It's Made  
05:55 How It's Made  
06:20 Kids Do The Craziest Things  
06:40 Kids Do The Craziest Things  
07:00 Bear Grylls: Born Survivor  
07:50 How It's Made  
08:15 How It's Made  
08:40 Kids Do The Craziest Things  
09:05 Kids Do The Craziest Things  
09:30 Tanked  
10:20 Bahama Blue  
11:10 Penn & Teller Tell A Lie  
12:00 The Carbonaro Effect  
12:25 The Carbonaro Effect  
12:50 How It's Made  
13:15 How It's Made  
13:40 Kids Do The Craziest Things  
14:05 Kids Do The Craziest Things  
14:30 Tanked  
15:20 Bear Grylls: Born Survivor  
16:10 Bahama Blue  
17:00 Penn & Teller Tell A Lie  
17:50 The Carbonaro Effect  
18:15 The Carbonaro Effect  
18:40 Kids Do The Craziest Things  
19:05 Kids Do The Craziest Things  
19:30 How It's Made  
19:55 How It's Made  
20:20 Tanked  
21:10 Penn & Teller Tell A Lie  
22:00 The Carbonaro Effect  
22:25 The Carbonaro Effect  
22:50 Bahama Blue  
23:40 Bear Grylls: Born Survivor



00:50 Golden State Killer: People Magazine Investigates  
01:45 Swamp Murders  
02:40 Murder By Numbers  
03:35 Murder Book  
04:30 Golden State Killer: People Magazine Investigates  
05:25 California Investigator  
05:50 California Investigator  
06:20 I Almost Got Away With It  
07:10 Nightmare Next Door  
08:00 California Investigator  
08:25 On The Case With Paula Zahn  
09:15 California Investigator  
10:10 Nightmare Next Door  
11:05 Lauryn Is Lost: A Disappeared Special  
12:00 Evil Stepmothers  
12:55 On The Case With Paula Zahn  
13:50 I Almost Got Away With It  
14:45 Nightmare Next Door  
15:40 Lone Star Mystery: A Disappeared Special  
16:35 The Perfect Murder  
17:30 On The Case With Paula Zahn  
18:25 California Investigator  
18:50 California Investigator  
19:20 I Almost Got Away With It  
20:15 Nightmare Next Door  
21:10 Missing In Maui: A Disappeared Special  
22:05 Murder Calls




23:00 Evil Online  
23:55 I Speak For The Dead

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  
02:40 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch  
03:05 Binny And The Ghost  
03:30 Binny And The Ghost  
03:55 Hank Zipzer  
04:15 Disney Mickey Mouse  
04:20 Hank Zipzer  
04:45 Alex & Co.  
05:10 Alex & Co.  
05:35 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch  
06:00 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch  
06:25 Binny And The Ghost  
06:45 Disney Mickey Mouse  
06:50 Rolling With The Ronks  
07:00 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir  
07:25 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir  
07:50 Tsum Tsum Shorts  
07:55 Elena Of Avalor  
08:20 K.C. Undercover  
08:45 Bunk'd  
09:10 Hotel Transylvania: The Series  
09:35 Tangled: The Series  
10:00 Lemonade Mouth  
11:40 Austin & Ally  
12:05 That's So Raven  
12:30 That's So Raven  
12:55 Disney Mickey Mouse  
13:00 Bunk'd  
13:25 Tangled: The Series  
13:50 Jessie  
14:15 Hotel Transylvania: The Series  
14:40 K.C. Undercover  
15:05 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir  
15:30 Bizaardvark  
15:55 Elena Of Avalor  
16:20 Stuck In The Middle  
16:45 Star vs The Forces Of Evil  
17:00 Tangled: The Series  
17:25 Disney Cookabout  
17:50 K.C. Undercover  
18:15 Descendants Wicked World  
18:20 Bunk'd  
18:45 Hotel Transylvania: The Series  
19:10 Disney Mickey Mouse  
19:15 Liv And Maddie  
19:40 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir  
20:05 Descendants Wicked World  
20:10 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir  
20:35 Disney The Lodge  
21:00 Alex & Co.  
21:25 Alex & Co.  
21:50 Lolirock  
22:15 Lolirock  
22:40 Evermoor Chronicles  
23:05 Rolling With The Ronks  
23:20 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir  
23:45 Lolirock



00:15 PJ Masks  
00:40 PJ Masks  
01:05 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  
16:35 Mickey And The Roadster Racers  
17:05 Sofia The First: The Curse Of Princess Ivy  
17:50 Minnie's Bow-Toons  
18:00 PJ Masks  
18:25 Puppy Dog Pals  
18:50 Sofia The First  
19:20 Mickey And The Roadster Racers  
19:45 Doc McStuffins  
20:10 The Lion Guard  
20:35 P-King Duckling  
21:00 Vampirina  
21:30 PJ Masks  
22:00 PJ Masks  
22:25 Sofia The First  
22:50 P-King Duckling  
23:20 Puppy Dog Pals  
23:45 Mickey And The Roadster Racers




00:15 Yukon Men  
01:05 Madiba  
01:50 Deadliest Job Interview  
02:35 Ed Stafford: Left For Dead  
03:20 Street Outlaws  
04:05 Alaska: The Last Frontier  
04:50 Deadliest Catch  
05:35 How Do They Do It?  
06:00 Extreme Collectors  
06:23 Container Wars  
06:45 How Do They Do It?  
07:10 How Do They Do It?  
07:35 Misfit Garage  
08:20 Extreme Collectors  
08:45 Container Wars  
09:10 Deadliest Catch  
09:55 Alaska: The Last Frontier  
10:45 Deadliest Catch  
11:30 Yukon Men  
12:20 Extreme Collectors  
12:43 Container Wars  
13:05 How Do They Do It?  
13:30 How Do They Do It?  
14:40 Yukon Men  
15:30 Strip The City  
16:15 Deadliest Job Interview  
17:05 Ed Stafford: Left For Dead  
17:50 Finding Escobar's Millions  
18:40 Treasure Quest: Snake Island  
19:25 Yukon Men  
20:15 Street Outlaws  
21:00 Diesel Brothers  
21:50 Supertruckers  
22:40 Fast N' Loud  
23:30 Gold Rush




06:00 Disney11  
06:25 Supa Strikas  
06:50 Marvel's Spider-Man

07:15 Right Now Kapow  
07:40 Disney Mickey Mouse  
07:45 Walk The Prank  
08:10 Phineas And Ferb  
08:35 Mech-X4  
09:00 Marvel's Spider-Man  
09:25 Lab Rats  
09:50 Star Wars Freemaker Adventures  
10:20 Gravity Falls  
10:45 Kid vs. Kat  
11:10 Milo Murphy's Law  
11:35 Right Now Kapow  
12:00 Lab Rats: Bionic Action Hero  
12:55 Pair Of Kings  
13:20 Pair Of Kings  
13:45 Phineas And Ferb  
14:10 Disney Mickey Mouse  
14:15 Phineas And Ferb  
14:40 The Suite Life Of Zack & Cody  
15:05 The Suite Life Of Zack & Cody  
15:30 Gravity Falls  
15:55 Gravity Falls  
16:20 Two More Eggs  
16:25 Lab Rats  
16:50 Lab Rats  
17:15 Kirby Buckets  
17:40 Kirby Buckets  
18:05 Supa Strikas  
18:30 Marvel's Ant-Man  
18:35 Disney11  
19:00 Penn Zero: Part Time Hero  
19:25 Penn Zero: Part Time Hero  
19:50 Marvel's Rocket And Groot  
19:55 Walk The Prank  
20:20 Walk The Prank  
20:45 Supa Strikas  
21:10 Supa Strikas  
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



00:00 Tia Mowry At Home  
00:30 Tia Mowry At Home  
01:00 The Big Eat - Middle East  
01:30 The Big Eat - Middle East  
02:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives  
02:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives  
03:00 Man Fire Food  
03:30 Man Fire Food  
04:00 Chopped  
05:00 Guy's Grocery Games  
06:00 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics  
06:25 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics  
06:50 Bake With Anna Olson  
07:15 The Kitchen  
08:05 The Pioneer Woman  
08:30 The Pioneer Woman  
08:55 Siba's Table  
09:25 Siba's Table  
09:55 Cooking For Real  
10:25 Cooking For Real  
10:55 The Kitchen  
11:45 Cooking For Real  
12:10 The Pioneer Woman  
12:35 The Pioneer Woman  
13:00 Siba's Table  
13:30 Siba's Table  
14:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives  
14:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives  
15:00 Chopped  
16:00 The Kitchen  
17:00 Cooking For Real  
17:30 Cooking For Real  
18:00 Chopped  
19:00 Guy's Grocery Games  
20:00 Extreme Cake Wars  
21:00 Beach Bites With Katie Lee  
21:30 Beach Bites With Katie Lee  
22:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives  
22:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives  
23:00 Chopped




00:10 Chopping Block  
01:00 Emmerdale  
01:30 Coronation Street  
02:00 Coronation Street  
02:30 Cash Trapped  
03:25 Catchphrase

04:20 Martin Clunes & A Lion Called Mugie  
05:15 Big Star's Little Star  
06:10 Chopping Block  
07:05 Cash Trapped  
08:00 Catchphrase  
09:00 Martin Clunes & A Lion Called Mugie  
10:00 Big Star's Little Star  
10:55 Chopping Block  
11:50 Cash Trapped  
12:45 Emmerdale  
13:15 Emmerdale  
13:45 Coronation Street  
14:15 Chopping Block  
15:10 Cash Trapped  
16:00 Paul O'Grady: For The Love Of Dogs  
16:30 Paul O'Grady: For The Love Of Dogs  
17:00 5 Star Family Reunion  
17:50 Big Star's Little Star  
18:45 Emmerdale  
19:45 Coronation Street  
20:10 Cash Trapped  
21:00 Paul O'Grady: For The Love Of Dogs  
21:30 Paul O'Grady: For The Love Of Dogs  
22:00 5 Star Family Reunion  
22:50 Emmerdale  
23:15 Emmerdale  
23:40 Coronation Street



00:00 How 2 Win  
01:00 Ancient Impossible  
02:00 Command Decisions  
03:00 Brad Meltzer's Decoded  
03:50 Ancient Aliens  
04:40 Clash Of The Gods  
05:30 How 2 Win  
06:20 Ancient Impossible  
07:10 The Universe  
08:00 Command Decisions  
08:30 Command Decisions  
09:00 Brad Meltzer's Decoded  
10:00 Ancient Aliens  
11:00 Clash Of The Gods  
12:00 How 2 Win  
13:00 Ancient Impossible  
14:00 Command Decisions  
15:00 Brad Meltzer's Decoded  
16:00 Ancient Aliens  
17:00 Clash Of The Gods  
18:00 The Universe  
19:00 Ancient Impossible  
20:00 Command Decisions  
21:00 In Search Of Aliens  
22:00 Ancient Aliens  
23:00 Bible Secrets Revealed



00:20 Swamp People  
01:10 Swamp People  
02:00 American Restoration  
02:50 The Warfighters  
03:40 The Warfighters  
04:30 Swamp People  
05:15 Swamp People  
06:00 Swamp People  
06:50 Swamp People  
07:40 Swamp People  
08:30 Swamp People  
09:20 Swamp People  
10:10 Alone: Lost And Found  
11:00 Alone: Lost And Found  
11:50 Alone: Lost And Found  
12:40 Alone: Lost And Found  
13:30 Alone: Lost And Found  
14:20 Swamp People  
15:10 Swamp People  
16:00 Swamp People  
16:50 Swamp People  
17:40 Swamp People  
18:30 Ultimate Wheels  
19:20 Counting Cars  
19:45 Counting Cars  
20:10 Fifth Gear  
21:00 American Pickers  
21:50 Storage Wars  
22:15 Storage Wars  
22:40 Forged In Fire  
23:30 Ultimate Wheels



## TV Listings



00:45 Miguel's Feasts  
01:10 What's For Sale?  
01:40 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces  
02:35 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces  
03:30 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Sea  
04:25 The Food Files  
04:50 The Food Files  
05:20 Cruise Ship Diaries  
05:45 Cruise Ship Diaries  
06:15 Cradle Of Mandopop  
07:10 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces  
09:00 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Sea  
09:55 The Food Files  
10:20 The Food Files  
10:50 Cruise Ship Diaries  
11:15 Cruise Ship Diaries  
11:45 Cradle Of Mandopop  
12:40 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Sea  
13:35 My Pacific Quest  
14:30 Raw Travel  
14:55 Raw Travel  
15:25 The Food Files  
15:50 The Food Files  
16:20 Cruise Ship Diaries  
16:45 Cruise Ship Diaries  
17:15 My Restaurant In India  
17:40 My Restaurant In India  
18:10 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Sea  
19:05 My Pacific Quest  
20:00 Raw Travel  
20:30 Raw Travel  
21:00 The Food Files  
22:00 Cruise Ship Diaries  
22:25 Cruise Ship Diaries  
22:55 My Restaurant In India  
23:50 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Sea



00:10 Nazi Megastructures  
01:00 Supercar Megabuild  
02:00 To Catch A Smuggler  
03:00 Science Of Stupid Compilations  
04:00 Nazi Megastructures  
05:00 Crash Science  
06:00 100% Planes  
07:00 Origins: The Journey Of Humankind  
08:00 Seconds From Disaster  
09:00 Crash Science  
10:00 Explorer XL  
11:00 The 90s: The Decade That Connected Us  
13:00 Supercar Megabuild  
14:00 Seconds From Disaster  
15:00 Origins: The Journey Of Humankind  
16:00 Explorer XL  
17:00 Original Sin  
18:00 Drugs Inc  
19:00 Origins: The Journey Of Humankind  
20:00 Explorer XL  
20:50 Original Sin  
21:40 Drugs Inc  
22:30 Origins: The Journey Of Humankind  
23:20 Born To Ride



00:20 America's Deadliest  
01:10 Safari Brothers  
02:00 Croc Invasion  
02:50 Animal Fight Club  
03:45 World's Deadliest  
04:40 Ultimate Animal Countdown  
05:35 Croc Invasion  
06:30 Animal Fight Club  
07:25 World's Deadliest  
08:20 Ultimate Animal Countdown  
09:15 Africa's Super Snake  
10:10 Wild Scotland S2 Compilations  
11:05 Last Devils

12:00 Megafish  
12:55 Africa's Deadliest - 2017  
13:50 Animal Fight Club  
14:45 World's Deadliest  
15:40 Ultimate Animal Countdown  
16:35 Search For King Cobra  
17:30 Wild Scotland S2 Compilations  
18:25 Mission Critical: Animal Avengers  
19:20 World's Deadliest  
20:10 Ultimate Animal Countdown  
21:00 Search For King Cobra  
21:50 Wild Scotland S2 Compilations  
22:40 Mission Critical: Animal Avengers  
23:30 Megafish



00:12 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles  
00:36 Rabbids Invasion  
01:24 Sanjay And Craig  
02:12 Winx Club  
03:00 Harvey Beaks  
03:48 The Loud House  
04:36 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 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles  
12:12 The Loud House  
12:36 Rabbids Invasion  
13:00 Breadwinners  
13:24 Harvey Beaks  
13:48 Hunter Street  
14:12 I Am Frankie  
14:36 The Thundermans  
15:00 Nicky, Ricky, Dicky & Dawn  
15:24 School Of Rock  
15:48 SpongeBob SquarePants  
16:12 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles  
16:36 The Loud House  
17:00 Sanjay And Craig  
17:24 I Am Frankie  
17:48 Hunter Street  
18:12 Henry Danger  
18:36 Nicky, Ricky, Dicky And Dawn  
19:00 School Of Rock  
19:24 Game Shakers  
19:48 The Thundermans  
20:12 Ride  
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  
00:14 Shimmer And Shine  
00:38 Shimmer And Shine  
01:00 Max & Ruby  
01:24 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom  
01:34 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom  
01:45 The Day Henry Met  
01:50 The Day Henry Met  
01:56 Blaze And The Monster Machines  
02:19 Blaze And The Monster Machines  
02:42 Zack & Quack  
02:52 Kid-E-Cats  
02:57 Kid-E-Cats

03:03 Shimmer And Shine  
03:25 Nella The Princess Knight  
03:37 Paw Patrol  
03:59 Little Charmers  
04:11 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom  
04:23 Dora The Explorer  
04:46 Max & Ruby  
05:08 The Day Henry Met  
05:13 Nella And The Princess Knight  
05:36 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  
08:10 Kid-E-Cats  
08:21 Bubble Guppies  
08:44 Blaze And The Monster Machines  
09:07 Paw Patrol  
09:30 Shimmer And Shine  
09:53 Nella And The Princess Knight  
10:15 The Day Henry Met  
10:22 Paw Patrol  
10:45 Rusty Rivets  
11:05 Wallykazam!  
11:28 Bubble Guppies  
11:52 Team Umizoomi  
12:15 Shimmer And Shine  
13:01 Max & Ruby  
13:25 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom  
13:47 The Day Henry Met  
13:57 Blaze And The Monster Machines  
14:41 Zack & Quack  
14:52 Kid-E-Cats  
15:04 Shimmer And Shine  
15:26 Nella The Princess Knight  
15:38 Paw Patrol  
16:01 Little Charmers  
16:13 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom  
16:24 Dora The Explorer  
16:46 Max & Ruby  
17:06 The Day Henry Met  
17:12 Nella And The Princess Knight  
17:35 Shimmer And Shine  
17:59 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  
20:10 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  
22:22 Paw Patrol  
22:45 Rusty Rivets  
22:56 Rusty Rivets  
23:05 Wallykazam!  
23:28 Bubble Guppies  
23:52 Team Umizoomi



00:05 Little Loopers  
01:40 Lego DC Comics: Justice League Cosmic Clash  
03:05 Monte Carlo  
04:55 Capture The Flag  
06:35 Little Loopers  
08:10 Lego DC Comics: Justice League Cosmic Clash  
09:35 Scooby-Doo! And WWE: Curse Of Speed Demon  
11:00 Monte Carlo  
12:50 Pirates Who Don't Do Anything  
14:20 Step Dogs  
15:50 The Angry Birds Movie  
17:30 Mousehunt  
19:10 The Adventure Club  
20:40 Pirates Who Don't Do Anything  
22:10 Step Dogs  
23:40 Mousehunt



00:35 The Colossal Failure Of The Modern Relationship  
02:20 No Stranger Than Love  
04:00 My Super Ex-Girlfriend  
05:40 Summer Villa  
07:15 Barbershop: The Next Cut  
09:15 Six Dance Lessons In Six Weeks  
11:05 Big Momma's House  
12:50 The Guilt Trip  
14:30 Barbershop: The Next Cut  
16:30 Big Momma's House 2  
18:15 Undercover Brother  
19:50 Life Or Something Like It  
21:40 Barbershop 2: Back In Business  
23:35 My Man Is A Loser



01:40 Brick  
03:30 Land Of Mine  
05:25 The Benefactor  
07:05 The Shamer's Daughter  
08:50 East Side Sushi  
10:50 Land Of Mine  
12:50 The Great Gatsby  
15:20 Worlds Apart  
17:20 One True Thing  
19:30 The Remains Of The Day  
21:50 Stand By Me  
23:30 Babel



01:25 Moomin And Midsummer Madness  
02:55 A.R.C.H.I.E.  
04:25 Pacific Pirates  
05:55 The Adventures Of Scooter The Penguin  
07:25 The Happy Cricket And The Giant Bugs  
09:00 Ploddy Police Car  
10:25 A Town Called Panic  
11:50 The Happy Cricket  
13:20 A.R.C.H.I.E.  
14:50 Pacific Pirates  
16:20 Hocus Pocus Alfie Atkins  
17:50 A Town Called Panic  
19:15 Freddy Frogface  
20:45 The Incredible Adventures Of Professor Branestawm  
21:55 Hocus Pocus Alfie Atkins  
23:25 Ploddy Police Car



00:45 V/H/S Viral  
02:10 Avatar  
04:50 Dirty Dancing  
07:00 Eddie The Eagle  
08:50 A.I. Artificial Intelligence  
11:15 In The Heart Of The Sea  
13:20 Avatar  
16:00 The Finest Hours  
18:00 Taxi  
19:40 This Means War  
21:20 Our Brand Is Crisis  
23:10 Bram Stoker's Dracula



00:40 Mythbusters  
01:30 How Do They Do It?  
01:55 Food Factory USA  
02:20 Mysteries Of The Missing  
03:10 How The Earth Works  
04:00 The Future Of...  
04:48 Mythbusters  
05:36 How Do They Do It?  
06:00 Food Factory USA  
06:24 Mysteries Of The Missing  
07:12 How The Earth Works  
08:00 How Do They Do It?  
08:26 The Future Of...  
09:14 Mythbusters  
10:02 How The Earth Works  
10:50 How Do They Do It?  
11:14 Food Factory USA  
11:38 How Things Work  
12:26 The Future Of...

13:14 Mythbusters  
14:02 How Do They Do It?  
14:26 Food Factory USA  
14:50 How The Earth Works  
15:38 The Future Of...  
16:26 How Things Work  
17:14 Mythbusters  
18:02 How The Earth Works  
18:50 The Future Of...  
19:40 Mythbusters  
20:30 Gamechangers: Inventing The World  
21:20 How Do They Do It?  
21:45 Food Factory USA  
22:10 How The Earth Works  
23:00 You Have Been Warned  
23:50 The Future Of...



01:45 A Long Way Down  
03:15 Begin Again  
05:00 First Snow  
06:40 Find Me Guilty  
08:40 Traffic  
10:55 Ironclad  
12:55 Man About Town  
14:30 A Long Way Down  
16:00 Half Light  
17:45 The Painted Veil  
20:00 Amelia  
22:15 Union Square  
23:45 Ginger & Rosa



00:00 Married At First Sight  
02:00 Mom vs. Matchmaker  
03:00 Fashion Star  
04:00 MAFS: The First Year  
05:00 Project Runway  
06:00 Married At First Sight  
08:00 Mom vs. Matchmaker  
09:00 Fashion Star  
10:00 MAFS: The First Year  
11:00 Project Runway  
12:00 Married At First Sight  
13:00 Married At First Sight  
14:00 Mom vs. Matchmaker  
14:30 Mom vs. Matchmaker  
15:00 Fashion Star  
16:00 MAFS: The First Year  
17:00 Mistresses  
18:00 Devious Maids  
19:00 Devious Maids  
20:00 Married At First Sight  
21:00 Grey's Anatomy  
22:00 Grey's Anatomy  
23:00 Grey's Anatomy



00:20 Say Yes To The Dress UK  
00:42 Say Yes To The Dress UK  
01:05 90 Day Fianc?: Happily Ever After?  
01:50 The Spouse House  
02:35 Oprah: Where Are They Now?  
03:20 Outdaughtered: Busby Quints  
04:05 Toddlers & Tiaras  
04:50 Randy To The Rescue  
05:35 Say Yes To The Dress  
06:00 Kate Plus 8  
06:45 Kate Plus 8  
08:15 Outdaughtered: Busby Quints  
09:00 Say Yes To The Dress  
09:25 Extreme Cheapskates  
09:47 Extreme Cheapskates  
10:10 Obsessive Compulsive Cleaners  
10:55 Love At First Swipe  
13:10 Iyanla: Fix My Life  
13:55 Oprah: Where Are They Now?  
14:40 Cake Boss  
17:00 Hodges Half Dozen  
17:50 Meet The Putmans  
18:50 Outdaughtered: Busby Quints  
19:40 Cake Boss  
20:10 Say Yes To The Dress  
20:35 Say Yes To The Dress  
21:00 Outdaughtered: Busby Quints

21:50 My Kid's Obsession  
22:40 The Undateables  
23:30 Return To Amish



00:00 When Ghosts Attack  
01:00 Ghost Hunters International  
02:00 Mysteries At The Museum  
03:00 Top Secret Beaches  
04:00 Top Secret Swimming Holes  
05:00 When Ghosts Attack  
06:00 Bizarre Foods With Andrew Zimmern  
07:00 Mysteries At The Museum  
08:00 House Hunters International  
08:30 House Hunters International  
09:00 House Hunters International  
09:30 House Hunters International  
10:00 Salvage Dawgs  
10:30 Salvage Dawgs  
11:00 Hotel Impossible  
12:00 Mysteries At The Museum  
13:00 Mysteries At The Museum  
14:00 House Hunters International  
14:30 House Hunters International  
15:00 House Hunters International  
15:30 House Hunters International  
16:00 Hotel Impossible  
17:00 Salvage Dawgs  
17:30 Salvage Dawgs  
18:00 Bizarre Foods: Delicious Destinations  
18:30 Bizarre Foods: Delicious Destinations  
19:00 Bizarre Foods With Andrew Zimmern  
20:00 House Hunters International  
20:30 House Hunters International  
21:00 House Hunters International  
21:30 House Hunters International  
22:00 Off The Grid Living  
22:30 Off The Grid Living  
23:00 Building Off The Grid: Tiny House On A Lake



00:05 Broad City  
00:30 Idiotsitter  
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  
03:25 Russell Howard's Stand Up Central  
03:50 The Opposition With Jordan Klepper  
04:15 Lip Sync Battle UK  
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 Punk'd (Bet)  
09:20 Punk'd (Bet)  
09:45 Important Things With Demitri Martin  
10:10 Important Things With Demitri Martin  
10:35 Important Things With Demitri Martin  
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 The Dude Perfect Show  
14:20 The Dude Perfect Show  
14:45 Ridiculousness Arabia  
15:10 Ridiculousness Arabia  
15:35 Ridiculousness Arabia  
16:00 Important Things With Demitri Martin  
16:30 Important Things With Demitri Martin  
16:55 Lip Sync Battle UK  
17:20 Lip Sync Battle UK  
17:45 Friends



Stars



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

Aries, a new project will bring excitement and a need you to engage in extensive research. This new endeavor will push the limits of what your team can do; you will seek facts not theories. If you are in public relations or advertising, the heavens are smiling on your ability to reach out and touch the masses with your message. You will have a need to breakaway from the mundane; a free day is what you crave and this could just be the time to do it. You will see something today that will help formulate a commendable idea. Positive energy will open up for you this evening when you sit down to a meal with family or close friends. Watch your tongue later; everyone is doing their best! Tonight you may feel restless, but close your eyes and breathe, aries.



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

Taurus, your thoughts are on go but beware jumping into situations in haste; unpleasant confrontations could result. Your attitude will seem to be on a rollercoaster; yes i like it, no i don t will be the general struggle today. You may find yourself going in directions completely unlike you normally would. Someone will not care for the way you come across and you could take this too much to heart. Take this time to promote well wishes between yourself and others; you can do this with concentrated effort. Open your spirit up to the lovely things in life: art in any form, gardening or stargazing. You will find relief this evening by pursuing pleasurable things with a like-minded person. Work hard on transferring your thoughts to the positive, taurus.



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

Gemini, you are focused on working with the facts when dealing with work or home issues. You have a talent for matching people with assignments; wonderful results ahead! You will enter into an in-depth research routine for some time. It is the time to observe rather than speak; this will provide an accurate picture. Your humor and lighthearted comments will attract people and could even change the energy of the room. Catch up on your phone calls later today. You have risen in status through your hard work and immense study; others wish to follow in your footsteps. You proceed along the road less traveled every chance you have. An old friend you haven t seen or heard from in years could contact you this afternoon or evening, gemini.



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

Cancer, creating new systems and recruiting the people to operate them is indicated strongly according to the stars; this could be difficult to accomplish but your will prevail. You will put your creative mind to work. You want only facts; no theories or guessing will be accepted. You are entering a time of concentrated investigating and research. You may struggle to hold your temper today when opposed by someone. You are ready to gain new experiences personally and professionally. The energy of those you associate with will be very clearly known to you. Everyone will see the best side of you as you work toward a goal; you will have the encouragement you need to get things done. You have entered a prosperous cycle, cancer.



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

Leo, you will hear from someone that you have been anxious about. You are not interested in theories; you demand hard, solid facts that will work toward the desired outcome. Research and contemplation will be the hallmarks of your day. Because of your high standards, you may have set yourself up to be left out of a fun time. A feeling of being alone, on your own and discarded could overpower you; keep your chin up for this will not last long. You have a special, like-minded friend who also wants to make a real difference in the world on many levels; this is a good time for serious conversation on these issues. Take a long walk, attend a yoga class or have dinner on the water with someone you love; relax, be happy, leo.



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

Virgo, you are making profound changes in the ways your physical self reflects your spiritual self this is down to a cellular level, as though you are morphing into an entirely different person. You want to make the world a better place; as mahatma gandhi said, be the change you want to see in the world. You never want to step on toes but you will let your true feelings and opinions be known without apology; others will see the changes in you very clearly. You could weed out niggling, trivial people and tasks that get you nowhere. You will come to the aid of someone who has helped you in the past and you have never forgotten. Your generosity and care of other people is widely known and is deeply appreciated by more people than you realize, virgo.



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

Libra, you are coming out of a dark cycle of self-doubt and perhaps depression. Smile! You are on the straight path to understanding where you have been and where you are going in life, love and work. Your new interests could involve and opportunity to earn money in a new way, if not primarily then in addition to your job. Someone may comment that you have been hard to be around and they don t want to include you any longer; let this person go, for a true friend won t desert you. You will make special efforts to feel better about yourself; a new hair do or massage would help with this. Your finances are in better shape than you realized. Take a rest from the research and discovery you worked on today, perhaps stargazing with a friend tonight, libra.



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

Scorpio, just what you need, a flawless progression of your work day. A new project will finish before schedule and others will move up as a result; the new methods you employed have proven to be productive. Someone will gain your interest when they pay a quick visit to your work place. Everyone is on the same page and form a cohesive team. Keep home repairs up-to-date and manageable. You should have no problems with words or explaining your thoughts. If someone hurts your feelings or injures your ego try to see what the person s motivation is; have you been unkind or rude; perhaps this is a complete misunderstanding between friends. There could be fireworks tonight between you and a sweetheart or former sweetheart; tread lightly, scorpio.



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

Sagittarius, intelligence is high on your list of qualities in a friend, this will become even more important this year. You will be contacted to work with like-minded people to create a campaign for funding purposes. This could mean that you agree to help someone at an indoor flea market or auction this afternoon. Your mood could be quiet today and you may come across as tired or not feeling well. You will continue wishing for respect from a certain individual; think about this: is this person really so important you should start pulling your tax information together because one important item could be missing. Let your thoughts go to something fun and carefree this evening as you cook a delicious, culturally unique dinner for two, sagittarius.



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

Capricorn, opportunities are everywhere you turn as you enter a cycle of good luck. Circumstances seem almost too good to be true, but believe what you see and go for it. Your abilities are a perfect match for the opportunities before you right now. You may have to pursue new undertakings on your own as challenges arise with your network of available assistants. You are not interested in the ideas and points of view of others; you want the hard facts. Keep old, outmoded tendencies at bay by getting busy with a puzzle or good book. Let good mental, physical and spiritual health motivate you toward what you need to feel well. This is a time for deep thought and caution as you consider your options, capricorn.



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

Aquarius, getting people together for a group task will prove to be quite the chore. What people think is not important to you now. You want facts only with proven track records of accomplishment. You are entering a phase of learning and forming new understanding and opinions. You may feel a lack of enthusiasm from others regarding mutual efforts; the feeling of being segregated and alone will not be a long-standing issue. Something you left behind long ago crops up in your thoughts; you will overcome temptation. Keep your anger level at a minimum this evening and keep your emotions in check; while this is a tough time to rest and relax it is imperative that you do so. Focus on the positive and send out grateful vibrations, aquarius.



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

Pisces, someone could question your judgment and abilities to perform your duties. You will be taken off guard, but your clever sense of words and presentation will overcome your nerves. Saying no is not easy for you to do and as a result you may find yourself working with a friend on a surprise birthday party or this could be the celebration of a wedding. Your personality will shift even more to the shy side with the beginning of the new cycle you have entered. With the new year will come the desire to move toward doing new things in new ways to meet your freshly made goals. You could feel sluggish or lacking vitality, this could call for a change in diet or maybe sleep patterns are off. Let your mind rest this evening with no anxious worrying, 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  |
| Antigua                  | 001268  | Laos                  | 00856  |
| Argentina                | 0054    | Latvia                | 00371  |
| Armenia                  | 00374   | Lebanon               | 00961  |
| Australia                | 0061    | Liberia               | 00231  |
| Austria                  | 0043    | Libya                 | 00218  |
| Bahamas                  | 001242  | Lithuania             | 00370  |
| Bahrain                  | 00973   | Luxembourg            | 00352  |
| Bangladesh               | 00880   | Macau                 | 00853  |
| Barbados                 | 001246  | Macedonia             | 00389  |
| Belarus                  | 00375   | Madagascar            | 00261  |
| Belgium                  | 0032    | Majorca               | 0034   |
| Belize                   | 00501   | Malawi                | 00265  |
| Benin                    | 00229   | Malaysia              | 0060   |
| Bermuda                  | 001441  | Maldives              | 00960  |
| Bhutan                   | 00975   | Mali                  | 00223  |
| Bolivia                  | 00591   | Malta                 | 00356  |
| Bosnia                   | 00387   | Marshall Islands      | 00692  |
| Botswana                 | 00267   | Martinique            | 00596  |
| Brazil                   | 0055    | Mauritania            | 00222  |
| Brunei                   | 00673   | Mauritius             | 00230  |
| Bulgaria                 | 00359   | Mayotte               | 00269  |
| Burkina                  | 00226   | Mexico                | 0052   |
| Burundi                  | 00257   | Micronesia            | 00691  |
| Cambodia                 | 00855   | Moldova               | 00373  |
| Cameroon                 | 00237   | Monaco                | 00377  |
| Canada                   | 001     | Mongolia              | 00976  |
| Cape Verde               | 00238   | Montserrat            | 001664 |
| Cayman Islands           | 001345  | Morocco               | 00212  |
| Central African Republic | 00236   | Mozambique            | 00258  |
| Chad                     | 00235   | Myanmar (Burma)       | 0095   |
| Chile                    | 0056    | Namibia               | 00264  |
| China                    | 0086    | Nepal                 | 00977  |
| Colombia                 | 0057    | Netherlands (Holland) | 0031   |
| Comoros                  | 00269   | Netherlands Antilles  | 00599  |
| Congo                    | 00242   | New Caledonia         | 00687  |
| Cook Islands             | 00682   | New Zealand           | 0064   |
| Costa Rica               | 00506   | Nicaragua             | 00505  |
| Croatia                  | 00385   | 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

# Race to save Indonesian croc stricken by tire necklace

**PALU:** Indonesian conservation officials are racing to locate and rescue a saltwater crocodile that has had a motorbike tire wrapped around its neck for more than a year on the island of Sulawesi. The stricken crocodile, measuring around 13-foot long, has been regularly spotted in a river running through Central Sulawesi's capital, Palu, since 2016. But a recent video shot by a local showed the reptile gasping for air with officials fearing the tire is slowly killing the beast.

Conservationists believe someone may have deliberately placed the tire around the protected animal's neck in a

failed attempt to trap it as a pet. The animal has recently been spotted swimming under a bridge in Palu with excited locals trying to take selfies with the croc in the background. "In the past year, we saw that there's still enough room for the crocodile's neck to move around," head of the local conservation agency Haruna, who like many Indonesians goes by one name, said yesterday. "But we are not going to wait until the tire strangles the animal. We will rescue it."

Haruna said the agency lacked proper equipment to rescue the animal, adding that their attempts to locate the animal

have so far proved fruitless. Authorities are also opposed to using tranquilizer darts on the animal, fearing it might disappear back into the river that is home to more than 20 crocodiles before the drugs take effect. Instead Haruna said his team has built an iron trap which will be placed inside the river when the water level is low.

"We will definitely save the crocodile but at the same time I also need to consider my men's safety," he said. The huge Indonesian archipelago is home to a vast array of exotic wildlife, including several species of crocodile.—AFP



**PALU:** This picture shows a saltwater crocodile with a tire around its neck in the Palu river in Palu, Central Sulawesi. —AFP

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**Kuwait Times**

248 33 199

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Information



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

**DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION**

| Arrival Flights on Friday 12/1/2018 |      |                   |       | Departure Flights on Friday 12/1/2018 |      |                              |       |
|-------------------------------------|------|-------------------|-------|---------------------------------------|------|------------------------------|-------|
| Airlines                            | Flt  | Route             | Time  | Airlines                              | Flt  | Route                        | Time  |
| MSC                                 | 501  | Alexandria        | 00:01 | JAI                                   | 574  | Mumbai                       | 23:15 |
| JAI                                 | 572  | Mumbai            | 00:05 | ETH                                   | 3620 | Addis Ababa                  | 23:30 |
| JZR                                 | 267  | Beirut            | 00:30 | PIA                                   | 239  | Sialkot                      | 23:40 |
| KAC                                 | 504  | Beirut            | 00:30 | FDB                                   | 071  | Dubai                        | 23:45 |
| PIA                                 | 205  | Lahore            | 00:40 | Departure Flights on Friday 12/1/2018 |      |                              |       |
| JZR                                 | 539  | Cairo             | 00:50 | Airlines                              | Flt  | Route                        | Time  |
| KAC                                 | 102  | London            | 00:50 | AIC                                   | 982  | Ahmedabad/Chennai            | 00:05 |
| PGT                                 | 858  | Istanbul          | 00:55 | JAI                                   | 573  | Mumbai                       | 00:30 |
| THY                                 | 772  | Istanbul          | 00:55 | MSC                                   | 406  | Sohag                        | 00:30 |
| RJA                                 | 642  | Amman             | 01:05 | FDB                                   | 072  | Dubai                        | 00:35 |
| MSR                                 | 618  | Alexandria        | 01:35 | MSC                                   | 502  | Alexandria                   | 01:00 |
| DLH                                 | 625  | Bahrain           | 01:45 | JAI                                   | 571  | Mumbai                       | 01:05 |
| UAE                                 | 853  | Dubai             | 01:45 | JZR                                   | 556  | Alexandria                   | 01:20 |
| THY                                 | 764  | Istanbul          | 01:50 | BBC                                   | 144  | Dhaka                        | 01:30 |
| ETH                                 | 620  | Addis Ababa       | 02:15 | PIA                                   | 206  | Lahore                       | 01:40 |
| JZR                                 | 555  | Alexandria        | 02:15 | JZR                                   | 142  | Doha                         | 01:45 |
| QTR                                 | 1086 | Doha              | 02:20 | KAC                                   | 677  | Dubai                        | 01:55 |
| GFA                                 | 211  | Bahrain           | 02:30 | KAC                                   | 285  | Dhaka                        | 01:55 |
| KLM                                 | 446  | Bahrain           | 02:30 | KAC                                   | 363  | Colombo                      | 02:00 |
| OMA                                 | 643  | Muscat            | 02:55 | KAC                                   | 417  | Manila                       | 02:00 |
| KKK                                 | 1268 | Istanbul          | 02:55 | THY                                   | 773  | Istanbul                     | 02:30 |
| PGT                                 | 860  | Istanbul          | 03:05 | PGT                                   | 859  | Istanbul                     | 02:30 |
| KAC                                 | 414  | Bangkok           | 03:05 | MSR                                   | 619  | Alexandria                   | 02:35 |
| ETD                                 | 305  | Abu Dhabi         | 03:10 | DLH                                   | 625  | Frankfurt                    | 02:45 |
| MSR                                 | 612  | Cairo             | 03:15 | ETH                                   | 621  | Addis Ababa                  | 03:05 |
| QTR                                 | 1076 | Doha              | 03:50 | JZR                                   | 779  | Jeddah                       | 03:40 |
| FEG                                 | 931  | Alexandria        | 04:00 | JZR                                   | 779  | Jeddah                       | 03:40 |
| QTR                                 | 1090 | Doha              | 04:05 | FDB                                   | 051  | Dubai                        | 03:40 |
| KAC                                 | 382  | Delhi             | 04:15 | RJA                                   | 640  | Amman                        | 03:55 |
| THY                                 | 6536 | Istanbul          | 04:15 | KAC                                   | 542  | Cairo                        | 03:55 |
| KAC                                 | 418  | Manila            | 04:25 | SVA                                   | 510  | Riyadh                       | 03:55 |
| KAC                                 | 1544 | Cairo             | 04:25 | GFA                                   | 215  | Bahrain                      | 04:00 |
| KAC                                 | 784  | Jeddah            | 04:35 | JZR                                   | 777  | Jeddah                       | 04:00 |
| KAC                                 | 284  | Dhaka             | 04:50 | JZR                                   | 777  | Jeddah                       | 04:00 |
| FDB                                 | 069  | Dubai             | 04:55 | WAN                                   | 984  | Tbilisi                      | 04:05 |
| JZR                                 | 609  | Hyderabad         | 05:10 | UAE                                   | 875  | Dubai                        | 04:15 |
| DHX                                 | 170  | Bahrain           | 05:20 | FDB                                   | 063  | Dubai                        | 04:50 |
| JZR                                 | 143  | Doha              | 05:25 | JZR                                   | 177  | Dubai                        | 04:55 |
| THY                                 | 770  | Istanbul          | 05:25 | JZR                                   | 483  | Istanbul                     | 05:10 |
| KAC                                 | 346  | Ahmedabad         | 05:30 | MSR                                   | 620  | Cairo                        | 05:20 |
| KAC                                 | 332  | Trivandrum        | 05:40 | QTR                                   | 1080 | Doha                         | 05:25 |
| KAC                                 | 358  | Kochi             | 05:40 | KAC                                   | 744  | Dammam                       | 05:25 |
| KAC                                 | 344  | Chennai           | 05:50 | KAC                                   | 776  | Riyadh                       | 05:30 |
| KAC                                 | 302  | Mumbai            | 06:10 | ABY                                   | 123  | Sharjah                      | 05:40 |
| KAC                                 | 678  | Dubai             | 06:25 | GFA                                   | 217  | Bahrain                      | 05:40 |
| WAN                                 | 338  | Alexandria        | 06:40 | KA                                    | C156 | Istanbul                     | 05:50 |
| BAW                                 | 157  | London            | 07:10 | WAN                                   | 356  | Luxor                        | 06:10 |
| KAC                                 | 354  | Bengaluru         | 07:35 | KAC                                   | 674  | Dubai                        | 06:25 |
| FDB                                 | 053  | Dubai             | 07:35 | FDB                                   | 057  | Dubai                        | 06:40 |
| KAC                                 | 384  | Delhi             | 08:00 | KAC                                   | 616  | Bahrain                      | 07:10 |
| JZR                                 | 557  | Alexandria        | 08:15 | KAC                                   | 104  | London                       | 07:35 |
| UAE                                 | 855  | Dubai             | 08:35 | ICV                                   | 675  | Luxembourg                   | 07:35 |
| AHY                                 | 5101 | Baku              | 09:00 | KAC                                   | 166  | Rome                         | 08:00 |
| ETD                                 | 301  | Abu Dhabi         | 09:05 | KAC                                   | 620  | Doha                         | 08:15 |
| ABY                                 | 125  | Sharjah           | 09:05 | OMA                                   | 647  | Muscat                       | 08:35 |
| QTR                                 | 1070 | Doha              | 09:10 | SVA                                   | 500  | Jeddah                       | 09:00 |
| FDB                                 | 055  | Dubai             | 09:40 | KAC                                   | 692  | Muscat                       | 09:05 |
| IRA                                 | 675  | Lar               | 10:00 | DLH                                   | 624  | Frankfurt                    | 09:05 |
| WAN                                 | 342  | Sohag             | 10:15 | QTR                                   | 1088 | Doha                         | 09:10 |
| MSC                                 | 415  | Sohag             | 10:15 | KAC                                   | 514  | Tehran                       | 09:40 |
| GFA                                 | 213  | Bahrain           | 10:40 | KAC                                   | 162  | Geneva                       | 10:00 |
| JZR                                 | 125  | Bahrain           | 10:55 | ETD                                   | 307  | Abu Dhabi                    | 10:15 |
| WAN                                 | 114  | Bahrain           | 11:00 | ALK                                   | 229  | Colombo                      | 10:15 |
| AXB                                 | 890  | Mangalore/Bahrain | 11:10 | MEA                                   | 402  | Beirut                       | 10:40 |
| QTR                                 | 1074 | Doha              | 11:20 | KAC                                   | 786  | Jeddah                       | 10:55 |
| JZR                                 | 165  | Dubai             | 11:30 | KAC                                   | 172  | Frankfurt am Main, Frankfurt | 11:00 |
| WAN                                 | 134  | Doha              | 11:55 | UAE                                   | 859  | Dubai                        | 11:10 |
| MEA                                 | 404  | Beirut            | 11:55 | KAC                                   | 676  | Dubai                        | 11:20 |
| JZR                                 | 1333 | Najaf             | 12:00 | GFA                                   | 219  | Bahrain                      | 11:30 |
| THY                                 | 3904 | Istanbul          | 12:05 | KLM                                   | 445  | Amsterdam                    | 11:55 |
| RBG                                 | 553  | Alexandria        | 12:15 | WAN                                   | 116  | Bahrain                      | 11:55 |
| SAW                                 | 701  | Damascus          | 12:30 | KAC                                   | 564  | Amman                        | 12:00 |
| JZR                                 | 561  | Sohag             | 12:45 | QTR                                   | 1082 | Doha                         | 12:05 |
| UAE                                 | 871  | Dubai             | 12:50 | ETD                                   | 309  | Abu Dhabi                    | 12:15 |
| MSR                                 | 610  | Cairo             | 13:00 | AIC                                   | 975  | Chennai/Goa                  | 12:30 |
|                                     |      |                   |       | SVA                                   | 514  | Riyadh                       | 12:45 |
|                                     |      |                   |       | JZR                                   | 241  | Amman                        | 12:50 |
|                                     |      |                   |       | JZR                                   | 185  | Dubai                        | 13:00 |
|                                     |      |                   |       | JZR                                   | 185  | Dubai                        | 13:00 |



# Business

FRIDAY, JANUARY 12, 2018

**39** Greeks to strike over right-to-strike bill



**40** S Korea govt sends bitcoin on rollercoaster ride



**41** Spain international tourism breaks records for fifth time



**MANNHEIM:** An employee of EvoBus, a subsidiary company of Daimler AG, carries his daughter on his shoulders during a warning strike called by the country's largest union, the IG-Metall, in Mannheim, southwestern Germany. —AFP

## Powerful growth in Germany fuels calls to share wealth

### Warning strikes demand 6% pay rise

**BERLIN:** Strong growth data in Germany came as welcome news yesterday for politicians haggling over spending and unions battling for more pay, although observers warn the good times can't last forever.

Gross domestic product in Europe's top economy grew by 2.2 percent in 2017, the fastest rate since 2011, according to federal statistics authority Destatis. The performance, in line with forecasts from leading economic think-tanks and the OECD, was driven by a sharp pick-up in growth in investments and exports.

At the same time, expansion in private and government consumption slowed compared with 2016. Overall, growth was almost one percentage point higher than the 1.3-percent average recorded over the past 10 years. Germany also notched up a record government budget surplus of 1.2 percent of GDP, Destatis said. It was "a strong performance by an economy firing on all cylinders," commented ING Diba bank economist Carsten Brzeski, arguing that the same factors that have favored the economy will stay in place over the coming year.

Defying fears of a new era of protectionism after the US election of Donald Trump, exports grew by 4.7 percent in 2017, compared with 2.6 percent the previous year. Meanwhile, historic low interest rates set by the European Central Bank, a euro that has not strengthened against other currencies in step with the continent's economic recovery, high levels of employment and a broad-based upturn across the 19-nation eurozone all favor continued expansion for Germany.

But the picture is not entirely rosy for Berlin, Brzeski warned. "Strong growth performance has led to reform complacency. Under the surface of strong growth, deficiencies in areas like digitalization, services and education have emerged," he said. "The next government still has the unique opportunity to tackle these challenges in good times and

not wait until the bad times have started."

#### How to spend it

As the statisticians unveiled the nation's economic performance in Berlin's government quarter, Germany's leading politicians gathered in the

Social Democratic Party (SPD) headquarters across town. Chancellor Angela Merkel's conservatives are making a last-ditch attempt to strike a coalition deal with the centre-left SPD—a prospect greeted with reluctance on both sides after four years sharing power cost both parties

dearly in September elections. Nevertheless, politicians' mouths are watering at the prospect of having billions of euros of additional cash to pay for tax cuts, public spending or increased investment. Over four days of talks since Sunday, the negotia-

tors have racked up a wishlist totaling some 100 billion euros for the coming four years, newspaper Rheinische Post reported Wednesday. But many of those hopes could be dashed yesterday, as the finance ministry calculates that just 45 billion euros will be available in federal coffers.

It would be a "tough day" of talks, Merkel told reporters as she arrived, vowing to "work constructively to find the necessary compromises". Not to be left out, the powerful metalworkers' union IG Metall has taken to the streets with a series of "warning strikes" this week, demanding bosses grant them a six-percent pay rise and the option to switch to a 28-hour week for up to two years.

There has been little sign of movement from employers so far, who have labeled the workers' demands illegal and threatened to sue to prevent further industrial action. Employee representatives and company leaders will return to the negotiating table yesterday afternoon, with longer, more devastating strikes on the cards if talks go badly. —AFP

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**Economy firing on all cylinders**

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## Business

# Bonds bounce, stocks struggle, Bitcoin battered

## China cools US debt talk

**LONDON:** Worries about a US-led trade war put world stocks at risk of their first two day loss of the year yesterday, while bond markets bounced as China poured cold water on reports that it might stop buying US debt. Europe's main bourses dipped in and out of the red and MSCI's world index was down 0.2 percent after Asian and emerging market indexes had been pulled lower by warnings from Canada and Mexico that NAFTA's days could be numbered.

Bitcoin also took a major beating, falling as much as 11 percent as South Korea - one of the cryptocurrency's biggest markets - said it was drawing up laws to ban trading in it. Benchmark government bonds bounced though after China's regulator said a Bloomberg report that it was considering slowing or halting its U.S. bond purchases, was possibly "fake news".

It also helped the dollar to its fourth gain in the last five days against a basket of top world currencies, having suffered one of its worst years on record in 2017.

Against the yen, it added 0.4 percent to 111.83, after hitting a six-week low of 111.27 yen in the previous session when it skidded 1.1 percent, its largest decline in almost eight months. "The denial of the China story puts the dollar back where it was though the yen is still strong, so to me that is the interesting move and whether that is going to stick," said Saxo Bank's head of FX strategy John Hardy.

## Trade worries, dollar weigh on emerging stocks

**LONDON:** Emerging stocks fell for a third day and many currencies were under pressure, weighed down by a stronger dollar and jitters over trade protectionism as markets digested the recent rally. MSCI's emerging market benchmark declined 0.3 percent in a third day of falls, pulled lower by heavyweight South Korea where stocks fell 0.5 percent while bourses from Turkey to South Africa chalked up losses.

Markets were jittery following a Reuters report saying Canada increasingly believes US President Donald Trump will soon announce his intention to withdraw from the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) treaty. Nerves had also been frayed by a report that China was considering slowing or halting purchases of US Treasury bonds, which sent US yields higher, though Beijing's foreign exchange regulator said the report may be based on erroneous information.

Tom Hainlin, global investment strategist at Ascent Private Capital Management, said the move in Treasury yields was not expected to hit emerging markets, which had started to look "aggressive, if not overbought" following a stellar start to

"The 2.5 percent level on the Treasury is a line in the sand so US CPI (inflation) data tomorrow is going to be absolutely critical," he added, talking about the view that higher inflation will encourage more US interest rate hikes. US 10-year Treasury yields - which move inverse to prices and are one of the main drivers of global borrowing costs - pulled back to 2.544 percent from Wednesday's ten-month high of 2.597 percent. Euro zone bond yields eased 1-3 basis points (bps) too, with Germany's 10-year Bund yield 3 bps off a two-month high at 0.46 percent. GVD/EUR] The European Central Bank releases the minutes from its December meeting later in the day but there was also some relief from Japan, another source of pain for bond markets this week. The Bank of Japan (BOJ) maintained the amount of its bond purchases on Thursday. A cut in its buying of longer-dated debt earlier this week had fanned worries the BOJ may be moving to turn off its stimulus.

### Canadian dollar, Mexican peso weak

Canada's dollar and Mexico's peso remained firmly in the doldrums due to worries about the North American Free Trade Agreement which the two countries hold with the United States. Sources in Canada's government told Reuters on Wednesday that they were increasingly convinced Donald Trump could announce he is quitting the pact. Sources in Mexico then said it

the year. "This seems like a natural consolidation," he said, adding that fundamentals still looked good and he expected a decent 2018 in China, the biggest emerging market country. "As you move into 2018 you are seeing record upgrades on earnings estimates so that's a pretty solid base for emerging market investors," he said.

Emerging currencies painted a mixed picture on the day against a stronger dollar. South Africa's rand weakened 0.3 percent in a second day of losses after the new leadership of the ruling ANC said on Wednesday it did not discuss President Jacob Zuma's future, disappointing investors who hoped the party would seek to remove him from power. Mexico's peso weakened for a fourth straight session over concerns for the future of NAFTA. But Russia's rouble eked out small gains, propped up by rising crude oil prices while the Thai baht hit a 3-1/2 year high. However, currencies such as the yuan, the rand, the rouble, the peso and Turkey's lira were all on track for weekly losses following a multi-week rally.

In emerging Europe, Serbia's central bank was expected to keep rates on hold at 3.5 percent thanks to a strong currency and tame inflation. Hungary's central bank chief said interest rates must stay at a record low of 0.9 percent to reach the central bank's 3 percent target by mid-2019. Budapest also announced it would hold its 2018 parliamentary election on April 8. Prime Minister Viktor Orban's ruling Fidesz party holds a comfortable lead over the main opposition according to the latest polls.—Reuters



TOKYO: A pedestrian looks at an electronics stock indicator of the Tokyo Stock Exchange in Tokyo.—AFP

would also abandon ship if the US did so.

The euro traded at \$1.1945, nearly flat on the day, and holding above Tuesday's low of \$1.1916. There was more upbeat data for the shared currency though. German economy grew at the strongest rate in six years last year a preliminary estimate from the country's statistics office showed, although it was slightly under some peoples' forecasts. Commodity markets meanwhile were taking something of a breather after a flying start to the

year. Both Brent and US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) oil price futures were hovering just off three-year highs at just under \$70 and \$64 a barrel, while industrial metals dipped and gold ticked to \$1,317.76 after spiking to nearly four-month highs in the previous session. "In Q1, the balance of risk to Brent lies to the downside, with prices overheating, record net-length built into the futures market and fundamentals set to weaken seasonally," BMI Research said in a note.—Reuters



HONG KONG: Pedestrians walk past a board displaying the top gainers on the Hang Seng Index at a bank in Hong Kong.—AFP



## Business

# Greeks to strike over right-to-strike bill

## New law to raise strike requirement to 50%

**ATHENS:** Greek subway workers, dockers and state-employed doctors plan to strike today in the country's first major industrial action of 2018, to protest a new law that will restrict their right to walk off the job. Parliament is expected on Jan 15 to vote through the contentious reform, which would tighten rules on declaring work stoppages, a condition set by creditors who have loaned Greece billions since 2010.

At present, Greek unions can call strikes with the support of one third of their members. The new law would raise that requirement to 50 percent, which creditors hope would limit the frequency of strikes and improve productivity that lags about 20 percent behind the EU average, according to OECD data. Strikes are so common in Greece that there is a website dedicated to them. Today's stoppage is being backed by several unions, including GSEE, the largest private-sector one. "It is essentially scrapping the only weapon workers have left to protect themselves, particularly after collective working agreements were shelved," said GSEE

spokesman Dimitris Karageorgopoulos.

Stavros Kafounis, head of the Commercial Association of Athens, which represents retailers, said strikes amplified the country's economic problems. "Every time there is labor action in public transport it shuts businesses down, adding to already slow business," he said.

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If they don't like it, fire us

”

### Bitter pill

A majority of lawmakers are expected to vote in favor of the bill, which will be a bitter pill

to swallow for a government dominated by the leftist Syriza movement. With its roots in labor activism, the party swept to power in 2015 promising to end austerity, only to accept another bailout months later. Hundreds of Greeks marched through Athens on Tuesday and confronted authorities demanding the bill be rescinded. Labor Minister Effie Achtsioglou refused.

Greece needs to pass the regulation and a raft of other measures for lenders to sign off on a review of progress in its bailout program, which the country hopes to exit this summer.



**THESSALONIKI:** Protestors shout slogans as they march behind a banner during a rally against property foreclosure auctions outside the courthouse in Thessaloniki.—AFP

Monday's parliamentary bill also seeks to introduce electronic auctions that could facilitate foreclosures to wrestle down a mountain of toxic debts weighing on the country's banks, rationalize spending on state benefits, set targets for selling off assets of power utility PPC, and regulations on the operation of casinos.

One union leader said that, regardless of new legislation, workers would continue to strike. "If they don't like it let them fire us... or arrest us," said Spyros Revithis, head of a public transport workers' union that staged 15 strikes in 2017. "This government is a Trojan Horse of neo-liberalism on labor rights."—Reuters

## Brexit could cost nearly 500,000 UK jobs

**LONDON:** Brexit could cost the UK nearly 500,000 jobs in a worst-case scenario, according to a study published yesterday which was commissioned by the mayor of London. Britain could lose 482,000 jobs by 2030 if the country crashes out of the European Union, according to research by Cambridge Econometrics. A scenario in which the UK fails to agree a transition deal and future trading relationship with the bloc would also cost Britain £46.7 billion in investment over the same period. The report compares four possible post-Brexit scenarios to the option of maintaining the status quo—already ruled out by the British government—of staying in the European single market and customs union. The most optimistic Brexit scenario outlined, of a two-year transition period leading to single market membership without the customs union would still lead to a loss of 176,000 jobs and £20.2 billion in investment. London Mayor Sadiq Khan, who campaigned against Brexit, commissioned the study and said the findings show "the potential economic risks—and human costs—at stake in the negotiations" in Brussels.

In a statement the Europhile mayor accused the government of a "complete lack of preparation" in assessing the impact of Brexit, urging ministers to change their negotiating position and agree to remain in the single market and customs union. A spokeswoman for the Brexit department said the UK and Brussels believe they will "achieve an ambitious deal securing prosperity" for Britain and the bloc, having concluded the first stage of exit talks last month.



**LONDON:** This file photo shows a European Union flag flying in front of Elizabeth Tower, otherwise known as Big Ben.—AFP

"The UK wants a deep and special partnership with the European Union, a partnership that spans a new economic relationship and a new relationship on security," the spokeswoman said. Cambridge Econometrics also forecast that the worst-case scenario would lead to the largest drop in immigration, allowing the government to reach its target of under 100,000 arrivals from 2020 onwards but hitting productivity.

Comparatively, maintaining the status quo would see migration falling from 232,000 in 2020 to 220,000 a decade later. Transition arrangements, trade and security will be on the agenda of Brexit negotiations later this year before Britain leaves the bloc in March 2019.—AFP

## ECB chiefs 'concerned' at French credit growth

**FRANKFURT AM MAIN:** Members of the European Central Bank's governing council are concerned that rising private-sector borrowing in France could threaten financial stability, minutes from a December meeting published yesterday showed. "It was remarked that loan growth in the euro area's second largest economy had seen rather buoyant expansion," according to the minutes, which never identify individual speakers.

"Increasing leverage in conjunction with increased merger and acquisition and leveraged buyout activity raised concerns from a financial stability perspective," the record added. The rate of credit growth to non-financial businesses across the whole eurozone picked up to 3.1 percent year-on-year in November, a regular ECB survey recently showed. In France, firms' demand for loans leapt in the months following the election of President Emmanuel Macron, who swept to power in May on a platform of rejuvenating the economy and reorganizing the 19-nation eurozone.

July brought increases of more than 25 percent in demand for credit among both large and small-to-medium sized firms, Bank of France figures show, with a further 22-percent boost for big companies in October. Stoking increased lending across the single currency area has been one of the ECB's top priorities in recent years. It has set interest rates at historic lows, offered cheap loans to banks and bought almost 2.3 trillion euros of government and corporate bonds, aiming to fire economic growth and coax inflation towards its target of just below 2.0 percent. But some on the governing council have warned that keeping the money sluices open for too long might threaten financial stability, as firms, households and governments could be tempted to borrow more than they can repay.—AFP



## Business

# S Korea govt sends bitcoin on rollercoaster ride

## Govt plans to ban cryptocurrency exchanges

SEOUL: Bitcoin and other virtual currencies were sent on rollercoaster rides in South Korea yesterday as the government said it was planning to ban cryptocurrency exchanges, before later backtracking. Justice Minister Park Sang-Ki said Seoul was preparing a bill to shut down the country's virtual coin exchanges, sending bitcoin and other virtual unit prices into a tailspin.

"The ministry is preparing legislation that basically bans any transactions based on a virtual currency through the trading floor," he told journalists. Authorities had "grave concerns" over the craze and were "aiming to close virtual currency exchanges" in the country, he said. "It has started to resemble gambling and speculation," Park added, citing the fact that bitcoin prices are higher in South Korea than globally—the so-called "kimchi premium".

The hyper-wired South has emerged as a hotbed for cryptocurrency trading, accounting for some 20 percent of global bitcoin transactions—about 10 times the country's share of the world economy. A series of measures have failed to curb overheated virtual currency speculation in the country and Park said it would be "devastating if the bubble bursts". His remarks sent bitcoin prices plunging 18 percent on South Korean exchange Bithumb, while ethereum slumped 23 percent.

Investors flooded the presidential Blue House

website with hundreds of online petitions against the shutdown, which was swiftly reversed. A shutdown was "one of the measures that have been prepared by the justice ministry", chief press secretary Yoon Young-Chan said in a statement, "but it is not a finalized decision". Cryptocurrencies rapidly reversed course, with bitcoin climbing back to trade just 6.5 percent down, and ethereum off 12 percent.

### Blind speculation

A representative of Bithumb, one of around 20 virtual currency exchanges in South Korea, said the company was watching developments closely. "We're closely monitoring government moves. We have nothing further to say at this moment", she said. Bithumb was raided by tax authorities on Wednesday who inspected the company's documents. On the same day financial authorities inspected six local banks that offered virtual accounts for corporate customers.

Last month Seoul banned its financial firms from dealing in virtual currencies. Two weeks later, it announced a ban on opening anonymous cryptocurrency accounts and a crackdown on money laundering activities using them. It has also warned most cryptocurrencies were being traded in South Korea at far higher prices than elsewhere in the world, blaming factors including "blind speculation".

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Devastating  
if the bubble  
bursts  
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TOKYO: A man walks past a poster that informs customers that bitcoin can be used in this shop in Tokyo.—AFP

An official at the Financial Supervisory Service, South Korea's top financial regulator, said closing local exchanges would represent a "very strong measure" against virtual coins and would "effectively suffocate"

cryptocurrency transactions within the country. But a cryptocurrency analyst said he was "skeptical" that the justice ministry's proposal would go into force because of strong market resistance.—AFP

## Canada braces for possible US exit from NAFTA trade pact

OTTAWA: Canada is bracing for a possible US withdrawal from the tripartite North American Free Trade Agreement, a source said Wednesday, ahead of the next round of negotiations due to start in Montreal later this month. "The Canadian government is aware of the possibility that President Trump may announce the United States' withdrawal from NAFTA," a senior government official said on condition of anonymity. "We're prepared for that possibility."

In the meantime, the official said, the government is moving ahead with plans to host US and Mexican trade negotiators in Montreal January 23-28. The US, Canada and Mexico previously gave themselves a March deadline to finish talks. Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister Chrystia Freeland was in Washington to meet with senior US lawmakers and Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross on Tuesday. Her office was not immediately available for comment.

Reports of NAFTA's possible demise, meanwhile, sent the Canadian and Mexican currencies tumbling, and the US dollar rising from Can\$1.2432 at 1200 GMT to Can\$1.2554 at around 2030 GMT. In keeping with his campaign promise, Trump forced Canada and Mexico to sit down and renegotiate the 1994 trade pact, and said if a deal could not be reached he would withdraw the United States from NAFTA.—AFP

## Tesco reports sales boost, despite high UK inflation

LONDON: Supermarket group Tesco, Britain's biggest retailer, announced yesterday a rise in sales over the key Christmas period, despite high UK inflation weighing on consumer incomes. But its share price was the biggest loser on London's benchmark FTSE 100 index, shedding 3.3 percent to 204.9 pence in early deals as its update missed market expectations. Total sales grew 1.8 percent in the 19 weeks to January 6 compared with the corresponding period a year earlier, Tesco said in a statement.

They grew by the same amount in the four weeks leading up to December 25, the supermarket added. In the UK, its main market, sales grew more than two percent over the reporting periods. "Whilst inflationary pressures remain in the UK market as a whole, we have continued to work with our supplier partners to help mitigate the impact on our customers," Tesco said. "As a result, we have passed on less inflation to date than our competitors."

In Britain, wages are being eroded by Brexit-fuelled inflation according to recent data. Since Britain voted to leave the European Union in June 2016, a drop in sterling-making imported goods more expensive—has pushed up UK annual inflation to 3.1 percent, a near six-year high. Tesco said it hopes to complete a takeover of British wholesaler Booker by early March. By purchasing Booker for £3.7 billion, Tesco is bidding to become the nation's top food business, slash costs and take on German-owned discount retailers.

Tesco is already the world's third-biggest supermarket chain



LONDON: Signage is pictured at a branch of Tesco in south London.—AFP

after France's Carrefour and global leader Wal-Mart of the United States. Elsewhere yesterday, British food-to-clothing retailer Marks and Spencer said total sales dropped 0.1 percent in its third quarter ending on December 30. Shares were down 2.75 percent at 315.1 pence in morning London trade, making it the second biggest faller after Tesco.

"In recent years the food business has been the bright light of the M&S empire, but its glow has definitely dimmed of late," noted Laith Khalaf, analyst at stockbroker Hargreaves Lansdown. "That's probably a result of consumers tightening their belts when it comes to grocery shopping, and the strong performance of supermarket premium ranges suggests when customers are splashing out, they are increasingly doing it at (supermarkets) Sainsbury, Tesco and Morrison rather than at M&S." —AFP



## Business

# Spain international tourism breaks records for fifth time

## Tourist businesses expect a 5.6% growth

**MADRID:** The number of international tourists visiting Spain broke records for a fifth straight year in 2017, despite Islamist militant attacks in Catalonia and political uncertainty over its independence movement, government statistics showed. Spain, where tourism accounts for around 11 percent of the economy, has seen a surge in international visitors partly due to security concerns in other popular holiday destinations such as Egypt and Turkey.

Preliminary data released late on Wednesday showed the number of visitors arriving in Spain rose 8.9 percent year-on-year to 82 million tourists, which would make Spain the world's second most visited country after France and push the United States into third place. Figures showed that tourist spending also hit a new record in 2017, rising 12.4 percent in the year from 2016.

According to final data for the first 11 months of 2017, also released on Wednesday, British tourists remained Spain's largest group of visitors by nationality, accounting for 18 million tourists, up 7 percent from a year earlier.

Catalonia remained Spain's most visited region in 2017, despite two attacks at major tourist

haunts in August which left 16 people dead and more than 100 people injured. Tourism in the region's capital Barcelona dipped slightly after the attacks, then dropped again in October after an illegal independence vote prompted scenes of police violence and mass protests, but it has since rebounded. Tourism has also seen bene-

fited from a boom in renting flats out to tourists via web platforms such as Airbnb. However, this has prompted a backlash in popular destinations such as Barcelona, Palma de Majorca or San Sebastian as locals complain of a drop in long-term rentals and

rising prices. The tourism surge has raised business activity in the sector, including increased merger and acquisition interest between hotel groups and expected passenger records at Spanish airports.

On Wednesday, NH Hotels declined a takeover offer by rival Barcelo, an operation which would have created the country's largest hotel chain, though it said it would still analyze future strategic possibilities. The sector will continue to grow in the coming years due to expected economic improvement in visitors' home countries and increased flights and destinations,



**Catalonia, Spain's most visited region**



**BARCELONA:** People sunbathe on a hot day in Barceloneta beach in Barcelona, Spain.—Reuters

the tourism association Exceltur said yesterday.

"Spanish tourist businesses expect a 5.6 percent growth in their income and 5.3 percent growth in their profits in 2018," Exceltur vice-president Jose Luis Zoreda told a news confer-

ence. However, overall sector growth may ease slightly this year to 3.3 percent year-on-year from an annual expansion of 4.4 percent in 2017 due in part to many tourists returning to destinations in North Africa and Turkey, Zoreda said.—Reuters

## Tesla faces fresh Norway lawsuit over false advertising

**OSLO:** Nearly 80 Tesla owners in Norway have sued the US automaker over misleading advertising, saying their electric car did not deliver the promised performance, Norwegian daily Dagens Naeringsliv (DN) reported yesterday. The plaintiffs complained that the real power of their Tesla S P85D, a sedan with one of the fastest accelerations in the world, was 469 horsepower and not 700 horsepower as promised by the manufacturer. They want the same compensation as another group of 133 Norwegian Tesla owners who previously sued the company and reached a deal in December 2016.

Tesla agreed to compensate the 133 car owners by paying them 65,000 kroner or by providing them with new equipment, according to the financial daily. "It's the same kind of case that ended up in a compromise the last time," the plaintiffs' lawyer Christoffer Falkeid told the paper. "It's about the power of the car and the mistakes in marketing and in the sales process but I do not want to go into amounts," he added. Contacted by AFP, Tesla declined to comment.

A civil complaint will be examined in April by an Oslo court if no deal is reached until then. According to Norwegian media, another group of 38 motorists also filed a lawsuit against Tesla last fall. Norway, the world leader in electric cars in terms of market



**SHANGHAI:** This file photo shows a Tesla Model S P85d car displayed at the 16th Shanghai International Automobile Industry Exhibition in Shanghai.—AFP

share, is one of the largest markets in the world for Tesla. There are a total of 1,201 Tesla S P85Ds in Norway. Last year, Tesla sales in the Nordic country reached 8,465, all models combined.—AFP

## EU unveils supercomputer plan to rival China

**BRUSSELS:** The EU unveiled plans yesterday to raise one billion euros to build superfast computers that catch up with China and others to boost Europe's economy, make medical advances and fight hacking. China overtook the United States in numbers and performance for supercomputers in a ranking last November, followed by non-EU Switzerland and Japan in third and fourth place. "It is a tough race and today the EU is lagging behind: we do not have any supercomputers in the world's top ten," said Andrus Ansip, the European Commission vice president for the digital single market. The European Commission, the EU executive, said it would contribute around 486 million euros (\$580 million) for a "High Performance Computing (EuroHPC) infrastructure," that would then be matched by EU nations. "We want to give European researchers and companies world-leading supercomputer capacity by 2020," Ansip said in a statement. Brussels says it will help develop artificial intelligence and applications to improve health, security and engineering, plus help forecast hurricane routes and simulate earthquakes. —AFP



## Sports

# Williams scores 50, Durant reaches milestone in loss

## Butler shines as Wolves topple Thunder

**LOS ANGELES:** Lou Williams scored a career-high 50 points as the Los Angeles Clippers spoiled a milestone night for Kevin Durant with a 125-106 victory on Wednesday. Durant became the 44th player in league history to score 20,000 career points, reaching the achievement with a pull-up jump shot late in the second quarter. NBA finals MVP Durant needed 25 points to get to 20,000 and that is the number he finished on at the end of the first half. At age 29 he is the second youngest to do it behind LeBron James.

"He is one of the all-time greats," said Warriors coach Steve Kerr of Durant, who finished with 40 points. "There is going to be another one (milestone) in a month. He's Kevin Durant. The second youngest to do it ... Who is the youngest? LeBron, not bad company." Williams tallied 27 of his 50 points in the third quarter for the visiting Clippers who beat Golden State for the first time in more than three years. Williams also had eight three pointers and seven assists and rookie Tyrone Wallace came off the bench to score a season-high 22 points. "It was hard to stop him," Durant said of Williams.

"His pull-up three is a cash shot. We were too loose on him and let him go where ever he wanted." Elsewhere, Jimmy Butler finished with 26 points and eight assists on as the Minnesota Timberwolves defeated struggling Oklahoma City 104-88, handing the Thunder their third consecutive loss. Centre Karl-Anthony Towns tallied 18 points and 12 assists for the Timberwolves who are playing some of their best basketball of the season and have three straight resounding home wins in a row.

"When we start to compete on the defensive end like that we are tough to beat," said Butler.

### Veteran influence

Butler, who is in his first season with Minnesota after coming over from the Chicago Bulls, said he is trying to be one of the veteran leaders on a young team. "Last year this team didn't understand how important every possession is," he said. Andrew Wiggins finished with 19 points in 42 minutes of playing time for the Timberwolves. Thunder star Russell Westbrook had a game-high 38 points and 10 rebounds but he didn't get much help from his supporting cast. Carmelo Anthony continues to struggle with his new team as he finished with 15 points and one rebound. Paul George was the only other Thunder player in double figures with 13 points as Oklahoma City has lost five of their last seven games.

The loss drops the Thunder to 22-20 on the season and into sixth place as they dropped below Portland in the Western Conference standings. Minnesota is on the rise having beaten New Orleans, Cleveland and Oklahoma City in recent home games thanks to their improving defense and consistently solid offence. Minnesota had won seven of eight games before a disappointing East Coast road trip featured losses at Brooklyn and Boston. Then the Wolves beat New Orleans at home and led by as many as 34 points, a season-high mark to that point. Hosting James and Cleveland on Monday, Minnesota dominated play, led by as many as 41 points on its way to a 127-99 victory.—AFP



CALIFORNIA: Carmelo Anthony #7 of the Oklahoma City Thunder helps up Russell Westbrook #0 of the Oklahoma City Thunder at Staples Center in Los Angeles. — AFP

## Bjorn eyes EurAsia victory with Ryder Cup in mind

**PARIS:** Captain Thomas Bjorn will look to lead Europe to a victory over hosts Asia in this week's EurAsia Cup with the event also serving as a dress rehearsal for one of the teams contesting the 2018 Ryder Cup. Le Golf National in Paris will host the 42nd Ryder Cup in September when the Dane will lead a side trying to wrest the title back from the United States, who last won in Europe 25 years ago. With that longer-term goal in mind, Bjorn has six former Ryder Cup players at his disposal in a 12-man team that will take part in the third edition of the EurAsia Cup at the Glenmarie Golf and Country Club in Kuala Lumpur.

The last time the event was played, a European team led by Northern Irishman Darren Clarke romped to an 18 1/2-5 1/2 blowout win over their Asian counterparts in the second edition of the biennial matchplay contest in 2016. The current side includes Englishmen Tommy Fleetwood, who won last season's Race to Dubai, Tyrrell Hatton, Ross Fisher and Matthew Fitzpatrick, Spaniard Rafa Cabrera-Bello, Austrian Bernd Wiesberger, Ireland's Paul Dunne, Belgian Thomas Pieters, and the Swedish duo of Alex Noren and Henrik Stenson.

Experienced Englishman Paul Casey and France's Alex

Levy are Bjorn's two wildcard picks against an Asian side led by three-time European Tour winner Arjun Atwal of India. "We're very well aware that Asia has never fielded a stronger team than they do this time," the Dane told reporters this week. "Golf is a strange game. Whatever it says on the paper very rarely comes out on top. As golf in Asia continues to grow at a rapid rate, the amount of players from the region making a positive impact on tours around the world points to a bright future for the sport and adds credibility to the EurAsia Cup. "I think the commitment from the players early on, wanting to play in this event, shows where European golf is," Bjorn added.

"There's an excitement about representing Europe. That's something that says a lot about those 12 players in there. They want to win." Atwal believes his youthful team, which boasts 11 European Tour titles between them, including multiple winners Kiradech Aphibarnrat of Thailand and India's S.S.P Chawrasia, has the strength in depth to turn the contest in Asia's favor. "Definitely everybody knows we are underdogs, except my team," the 44-year-old said. "There is no such thing as an underdog in matchplay golf. You can be underdogs on paper, but once the matches start, anything can happen.

"I pretty much picked Tiger's (Woods) brain a little bit because we are really close. I saw Davis (Love III) at a range somewhere and I kind of told him that I was captaining. So I have an idea of what to deal with and what to expect." Current Asian Tour Order of Merit leader Gavin Green of Malaysia, his compatriot Nicholas Fung, India's Anirban Lahiri, South Korea's Kang Sung-hoon and An Byeong-un, Thai pair Phachara Khongwatmai and Poom Saksansin, China's Li Haoteng and Japanese duo Yuta Ikeda and Hideto Tanihara complete the side. — Reuters

## Golf merges as Britain's dullest sport in a survey

**LONDON:** Golf has emerged as Britain's dullest sport in a survey confirming the historic phrase wrongly attributed to Mark Twain that it is "a good walk spoiled". The YouGov poll-published in Thursday's edition of The Times-found 70% of the 1,616 adults asked for their opinion adjudged golf to be the dullest only 11% considered it to be exciting. Despite attracting sell out crowds at Wembley for NFL games American Football is considered the second dullest (59%) whilst after the 4-0 Ashes drubbing by Australia

there is more bad news for English cricket as it is just behind in third with 58%.

English golfer Matthew Southgate—who finished joint sixth in The British Open last year—concurred with the findings and was not surprised athletics topped the poll in terms of being considered the least dull (28%) and 47% found it exciting. "I probably agree with them," Southgate told The Times. "The coverage needs to be better. Running is first to the line—that's pretty self-explanatory—but in golf there's a lot of time when no one is hitting a shot. Unless you know the rules and the players, it can be difficult to watch."

However, golf officials hit back at the survey. "Golf is unique in that any golfer can play against the best players in the world thanks to the handicap system," Martin Slumbers, chief executive of the R&A, told The Times. "I would encourage anyone to take up golf and enjoy a true sport for life." —AFP



## Sports

# Champion Federer to face Bedene at Australia Open

## World number one Nadal takes on Estrella Burgos

**MELBOURNE:** Roger Federer will open his Australian Open title defense against Slovenian Aljaz Bedene next week, while top seed Rafa Nadal, the losing finalist last year, was paired with Dominican Victor Estrella Burgos at the draw yesterday. Women's top seed Simona Halep of Romania faces Australian wildcard Destanee Aiava in the first round, with second seed Caroline Wozniacki starting out against Halep's compatriot Mihaela Buzarnescu. Serena Williams will not defend the women's title having had her first child last year but 2008 champion Maria Sharapova, who failed a drugs test at the tournament in 2016, is back unseeded after a ban and will face Germany's Tatjana Maria.

Williams's sister Venus, who lost to her sibling in the final last year, is seeded fourth and the 37-year-old was handed a tricky first encounter against Swiss former world number seven Belinda Bencic, who is 17 years her junior. Men's third seed Grigor Dimitrov will face a qualifier, with Alexander Zverev, ranked fourth, playing Italian Thomas Fabbiano but with 2014 champion Stan Wawrinka, returning after surgery, in his section of the draw. Young gun Zverev had little luck in his first Australian Open draw as a top five seed with either Wawrinka, who plays Ricardas Berankis, or Novak Djokovic potentially standing in his path in the quarter-finals.

Six-times Melbourne Park champion

Djokovic, seeded 14th after missing the back end of last season with an elbow injury, will take on American lefthander Donald Young in his first match with mercurial Frenchman Gael Monfils looming in round two. Federer also has Milos Raonic, Juan Martin del Potro, David Goffin and Tomas Berdych in his quarter of the draw, while Nadal would appear to have the easier section, although former US Open champion Marin Cilic looms as a last-eight opponent. If the draw goes to seeding, Dimitrov would face American Jack Sock in the last eight, with ailing world number five Dominic Thiem, who withdrew from Kooyong because of illness on Thursday, taking on Zverev.

Britain's Andy Murray and Japan's Kei Nishikori have already withdrawn from the championships and women's world number three Garbine Muguruza has twice pulled out of tournaments over the last two weeks due to leg cramps and a thigh problem. The Wimbledon champion is scheduled to take on France's Jessica Ponchet in the first round, while French Open champion Jelena Ostapenko was paired with veteran Francesca Schiavone and US Open champion Sloane Stephens will take on China's Zhang Shuai. Australia's sole men's seed, Nick Kyrgios, takes on Brazilian Rogerio Dutra Silva and local women's 18th seed Ashleigh Barty takes on Belarusian Aryna Sabalenka. —Reuters



**MELBOURNE:** Switzerland's Roger Federer hits a return during a training session ahead of the Australian Open tennis tournament in Melbourne. — AFP

## Bouchard puts buttock pain behind for first win of 2018

**MELBOURNE:** Struggling star Eugenie Bouchard won her first match of the year yesterday, posting a 6-2, 6-0 defeat of Australian teen Destanee Aiava at the Kooyong Classic in Melbourne. The Canadian had gone down in three group matches last week at the Hopman Cup in Perth, where she suffered a buttock injury, and was eliminated in the first round at Hobart on Monday, denting her Australian Open preparations. "I was happy to be out there in a pretty official-feeling match," said the 23-year-old. "There were stands, a crowd, and an umpire. It was like a practice match but kind of real."

With time running out for her to be ready for the opening Grand Slam of the year, the 2014 Wimbledon finalist, now ranked 83rd after a dismal last season, eagerly accepted a late invitation for a hit-out at Kooyong, a non-tour event. Bouchard, who made the Australian Open semi-finals in 2015 and the quarters a year later, said her game was a work in progress after changing her routine and

coaches in the off-season. "It's progressing," she said. "I was just focusing on myself and the things I have to work on throughout the match."

The Canadian, who said her buttock injury was now fine, added that she was keen to eliminate all memories of a poor 2017 campaign. "I don't want to feel any continuation of 2017, it really wasn't a good year for me. I worked hard in the off-season, changing some things," she said. In other matches at the exhibition event, France's Richard Gasquet won his second match, overcoming Australian Matthew Ebden 6-4, 7-6 (7/4). "It was perfect in these conditions," the 31-year-old said. "I'm preparing my game to be ready for the Open and to perform there." Gasquet, who has never gone past the Australian Open fourth round, added: "I'll keep up the training. I have no injuries and am feeling great."

World number five Dominic Thiem, meanwhile, withdrew from his scheduled match as he recovers from illness, disrupting his Grand Slam plans. The Austrian arrived late in Melbourne from Doha after pulling out prior to last weekend's Qatar Open semi-final with Gael Monfils after contracting a virus. He lost in straight sets to Novak Djokovic on Wednesday and decided against playing any more matches. Thiem's substitute, Russian Andrey Rublev, beat Lucas Pouille of France 3-6, 6-1, 6-4. "I only arrived yesterday," said Rublev, who made the Doha final. "I'm happy to be here and pleased with my preparation after this match. "We'll see what happens in a couple of days (at the Open)."—AFP



**MELBOURNE:** Eugenie Bouchard of Canada hits a forehand return to Destanee Aiava of Australia during their match at the Kooyong Classic tennis tournament in Melbourne yesterday. — AFP



## Sports

# Clouds lift; North Korea boosts Pyeongchang Winter Olympics

## Outlook is suddenly much brighter for 'Peace Olympics'

**SEOUL:** Pyeongchang Winter Olympics organizers are entering their final preparations with renewed confidence after neighboring North Korea ended months of speculation by confirming its attendance, immediately easing fears over security and ticket sales. With one month to go, the outlook is suddenly much brighter for the "Peace Olympics", which had been rocked by the drugs ban on Russia's team and concerns over potential disruption by the nuclear-armed North. North Korea, which boycotted the 1988 Seoul Summer Games, this week agreed to attend its first Olympics in the South, during talks which defused soaring tensions over its nuclear programme and missile tests.

France, Germany and Austria had all voiced fears about competing in Pyeongchang during the stand-off with North Korea, which lies just 80 kilometers (50 miles) away from the Olympic site across a heavily fortified border. "Security concerns over the North's nuclear threats during the Pyeongchang Olympics have evaporated at a stroke," Park Sung-Bae, a sports industry expert from South Korea's Hanyang University said. "No one would now think the North could lob nuclear bombs over the heads of its own athletes."

North and South Korea's Olympic officials will meet at the International Olympic Committee's headquarters in Switzerland next week to hammer out the details of the North's participation. The North Korean delegation is expected to run into the hundreds, even though figure skaters Ryom Tae-Ok and Kim Ju-Sik are their only two athletes who qualified to compete—and subsequently missed a deadline to register for

the Games. The IOC has said it will consider offering wildcards to North Korean athletes. Cross-country skiers and speed skaters are understood to be among those who could benefit.

According to reports, the North Koreans—including its "army of beauties" female cheering squad—could be accommodated on a cruise ship off the nearby coastal city of Sokcho. "There has been plenty of speculation on whether North Korea would participate or not, but now that it's been confirmed, we'll have to be prepared that much more," said Lee Hee-Beom, head of the organizing committee, according to Yonhap news agency. "Accommodation for athletes and other officials is all ready. Since the cheering and performing squads will also make their way, we'll have to make our preparations accordingly."

### Missing in action

The news of North Korea's involvement is highly welcome for Pyeongchang after Russia's team was barred en masse by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) last month over a wide-ranging doping conspiracy. Pyeongchang will also be missing top ice hockey stars, as the National Hockey League (NHL) is snubbing the event after the International Olympic Committee refused to pay costs such as travel and insurance. According to organizers, about 703,000 Olympic tickets had been sold as of January 9, nearly 60 percent of the 1.18 million available. About half of all Olympics tickets are normally sold in the last two months and during the Games, they say.

The Games are being held in a remote, pre-

viously low-key corner of South Korea, far from the traditional winter sports markets of Europe and North America. But Scott Snyder, of the Council on Foreign Relations think tank in the US, said North Korea's participation "will be an enormously reassuring signal to athletes, officials, and spectators who might otherwise have

those figures and it doesn't encourage bids, especially if they are put to referenda as the cost can be dangled as an argument against." Payne said the error could have been nipped in the bud if then IOC president Jacques Rogge had stepped in and clarified the difference between the cost of the event and the funds used for developing the region. "Of course the alpine valleys in Austria and Germany, they say 'we watch the Games and we love to participate in them but we can't afford to host them at that price'," said Payne.

Payne, who moved on after the 2004 Olympics to fulfill a similar role for Bernie Ecclestone in Formula One, said the IOC had to seize the initiative in the battle of social media and the airwaves. "I just don't think they have got control of the communications debate, which is critical to the referenda," he said. "The Games are in good shape but the road to finding hosts is a work in progress and they are fixing it but it isn't yet fixed." Payne says a more volatile electorate—as shown in the Brexit result—has complicated the process and neither political parties nor sports organizations understand the new dynamic. Robertson, a former soldier who served as a junior Foreign Office minister before stepping down from parliament at the 2015 election, said Bach needs to take the Games back to their old values. —AFP



**PYEONGCHANG:** Members of the South Korean air force Black Eagle aerobatic team perform above the ski jump venue of the Pyeongchang 2018 winter Olympics, in Pyeongchang. —AFP

hesitated to come to South Korea due to rising inter-Korean tensions". Although Russia's team is banned, "clean" Russian athletes who pass strict protocols will be allowed to compete under a neutral flag. Russia's Olympic chief, Alexander Zhukov, has said about 200 athletes could compete in this way.—AFP

that was underlined when Rome, Hamburg and Budapest all withdrew from the running to hold the 2024 Summer Games. Last September, 2024 hopeful Los Angeles lost out to Paris but was instead awarded 2028, four years ahead of the normal schedule—a move perceived as the International Olympic Committee locking in a high-profile bidder while it still could.

Beijing-based Mark Dreyer, an expert on China's sports industry, said Asia's Olympic hat-trick signals "a global shift of power". "If we had three consecutive Olympics in the West, people would not say it was so remarkable," Dreyer, founder of the China Sports Insider website, said. "But the fact that it is in Asia—these are the countries that are able to bid for these events because they cost a hell of a lot of money and often lose a hell of a lot of money. "The Asian countries are able to do this in a way that a lot of the Western countries are no longer able to.

"The vibrancy of these economies, particularly China and Japan, versus the West, where people have been struggling, that's why we are seeing a shift towards the East." —AFP

## Putin's Sochi price tag cost Winter Games dear

**LONDON:** The 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics skewed the future of the Games because the estimated \$50 billion budget bankrolled by Russian President Vladimir Putin's government has put off future bidders. The view is shared by Hugh Robertson, the then British sports minister responsible for delivering the 2012 London Summer Games and former International Olympic Committee (IOC) marketing director Michael Payne, speaking ahead of next month's Pyeongchang Games.

A St Moritz and Davos 2026 candidacy in Switzerland and bid by Austria's Innsbruck were last year fatally holed by adverse results in referendums. "Stories emanating out of Sochi costing \$50 billion were misleading as the vast majority — \$48 billion—lay in regeneration of the region not the Games," said Robertson, who is now chairman of the British Olympic Association (BOA).

"People can draw the wrong conclusions from

## 'Global shift' as Olympics set up shop in Asia

**SHANGHAI:** When the cauldron ignites in Pyeongchang on February 9, it will open a sequence of three Olympic Games in Asia over the next four years—highlighting the region's growing clout, and also the declining interest among Western powers in holding the multi-billion dollar events. After next month's Winter Games in South Korea, Tokyo will take centre stage in 2020 and Beijing will organize the 2022 Winter Olympics—becoming the first city to hold both a Winter and Summer Games.

South Korea (Seoul 1988), Japan (Tokyo 1964, Sapporo 1972, Nagano 1998) and China (Beijing 2008) have all hosted Olympics before, but clearly the appetite remains strong. Outside the region, enthusiasm is patchier—a fact



# Troubled Real stumble against Numancia but reach quarters

## Spanish champions book Cup quarter-finals on aggregate

**BARCELONA:** Troubled Spanish champions Real Madrid stumbled to a 2-2 draw with third tier Numancia on Wednesday but qualified for the King's Cup quarter-finals 5-2 on aggregate. With a comfortable first-leg advantage, Zinedine Zidane rested much of his first team, making 10 changes from the line-up that struggled to a disappointing draw at Celta Vigo on Sunday to fall 16 points behind league leaders Barcelona.

Madrid opened the scoring in the 11th minute, Vazquez heading home Dani Carvajal's deep cross when left unmarked at the back post. Numancia hit back in the 45th minute, however, with substitute Guillermo, just on for the injured Higinio Marin, applying the finishing touch to a stunning breakaway goal. Dani Nieto charged into space and fed Marc Mateu on the left, who delivered the perfect low cross for Guillermo to finish and delight the small band of travelling fans at the Santiago Bernabeu.

Vazquez, who won two penalties for Madrid

in the first leg, slammed home his second from close range in the 59th minute, but Guillermo pegged back Madrid again with a brilliant header to cap a superb display and a fine result for his team. Numancia's Dani Calvo was sent off in the dying minutes for a cynical foul to stop Isco that earned him a second yellow card. Earlier, Leganes reached the quarter-finals for the first time in their history after losing 2-1 at Villarreal but progressing on away goals after their 1-0 first-leg win at Butarque.

Leganes winger Nabil El Zhar scored a delicious chip to break the deadlock, with Dani Raba's well-taken strike and Denis Cheryshev's late winner completing a Villarreal comeback that was not enough to send the hosts through. Last season's King's Cup runners-up Alaves beat third division Fomentera 2-0 to wrap up a 5-1 aggregate win thanks to second-half goals from Ermedin Demirovic and Alfonso Pedraza. Yesterday, Levante hosted Espanyol, Cadiz traveled to Sevilla and holders Barcelona welcomed Celta Vigo to the Nou Camp. —Reuters



**SORIA:** Real Madrid's Spanish midfielder Lucas Vazquez (left) vies with Numancia's defender Dani Calvo during the Spanish Copa del Rey (King's Cup) round of 16 first leg football match CD Numancia vs Real Madrid CF on January 4, 2018. —AFP

## Olympics: Winter sports explained

**PARIS:** A record 102 gold medals will be awarded in 15 sports disciplines at the Winter Olympic Games in Pyeongchang, South Korea from February 9-25. AFP takes a brief look at the medal events and how those sports disciplines work.

### Alpine skiing

Alpine skiing is divided into speed events and technical events. The downhill and super-G, run over one leg, provide the speed while the giant slalom and slalom, held over two legs, showcase technique. The alpine combined brings together the downhill and slalom. A new event in 2018, the National Team Event, sees teams of four (two men, two women) competing against one another on parallel slalom courses. Alpine skiing accounts for a total of 11 medals.

### Biathlon

Eleven gold medals (five for men, five for women, one mixed)



### Matches on TV (Local Timings)

#### SPANISH LEAGUE

**Getafe v Malaga** 23:00  
beIN SPORTS HD 3

#### GERMAN LEAGUE

**Bayer 04 Leverkusen v Bayern** 22:30  
beIN SPORTS HD 5

#### FRENCH LEAGUE

**Strasbourg v Guingamp** 22:45  
beIN SPORTS

are also on offer in biathlon, a sport that combines cross-country skiing with rifle shooting over an array of distances. Speed on skis is crucial but shooting accuracy at designated targets along the way counts significantly towards the final tally.

### Bobsleigh

In the four-man bobsleigh, two-man bobsleigh and two-woman's bobsleigh, competitors ride a steerable sled down an ice track at speeds averaging 135 kph. A brakeman and pilot make up the two-person bob to which two pushers are added for the four-man format.

### Cross-country skiing

Competitors compete for a total of 12 gold medals—six for men and six for women—over snowfield courses that include an equal measure of climbing, descending and flat racing in various race formats. Two styles of skiing are on show—classic style which involves competitors pushing their skis ahead in a forward movement, and skate style, whereby competitors move ahead by pushing sideways in a skating motion.

### Curling

Curling offers three gold medals at the 2018 Games—men's team, women's team and mixed doubles (introduced for the first time in Pyeongchang). Four competitors in the team events each glide polished granite stones along a so-called curling sheet of flat ice with the aim of placing their stones closer to the target, or house, than the opposition. Each team has eight stones per round, or end. Games usually run to 10 ends. Players can use brooms to sweep the ice to ease the passage of their stones.

### Figure skating

Skill and grace combine as competitors compete for marks from an international jury who rule on accuracy and artistry. Five gold medals are at stake in men's and women's singles, ice dance, pairs, and the team event.

### Freestyle skiing

Unlike alpine skiing, the freestyle version belongs to the extreme sports category and is all about artistry — aerial acrobatics including flips, spins and twists performed while gliding down the ski slopes on various course formats. Ten gold medals are on offer in Moguls, Aerials, Ski Halfpipe, Ski Cross and Ski Slopestyle. —AFP

## Zidane's credit running out for failing to shake Real up

**MADRID:** Zinedine Zidane's ability to manage the tempestuous Santiago Bernabeu dressing room has always been seen as one of his main strengths but with Real Madrid struggling, his good relations with his "galacticos" is starting to look like a liability. Real have slipped a remarkable 16 points behind Barcelona in the Spanish league and sit in the unfamiliar position of fourth in the standings, with their hopes of retaining the title long gone. A place in next season's Champions League is also far from secure as sixth-placed Villarreal, who have a strong record against Real, visit the capital on Saturday trailing the faltering European and Liga champions by only four points.

Anything but three points against Villarreal, who have taken seven off them in their last four games, would pile more pressure on Zidane despite his eight trophies in two years as Real coach. The Frenchman was slammed in the Spanish media after the 3-0 loss at home to Barcelona and there was no let up after Sunday's 2-2 draw with Celta Vigo or Wednesday's 2-2 draw with second-tier Numancia in the King's Cup — even if Real won on aggregate.

An article in Wednesday's edition of newspaper El Pais berated the coach for persisting with the same team selections and tactics after disappointing results. "Zidane has preferred to not anticipate risks and has bypassed any uncomfortable diagnosis, no matter how obvious," it said. "Zidane has kept faith in his starting players, with (Karim) Benzema despite the anger of the supporters, with Marcelo and his intrepid adventures, with Kroos and his downward displays."

The coach's declaration on Tuesday that he would not "throw anyone in the mud" has been taken as another sign that he is not strong enough to make the tough decisions his team need. Zidane's unwillingness to shake things up can be traced to Real's limited activities in the last transfer window. According to media reports, the club pulled out of a bid to sign French teenage sensation Kylian Mbappe to avoid upsetting Cristiano Ronaldo, Karim Benzema and Gareth Bale, who have only mustered up 10 league goals between them this term. —Reuters



## Sports

# Chelsea frustrated by Arsenal 0-0 stalemate

## Wilshere suffered ankle injury in Chelsea draw

**LONDON:** Chelsea wasted a chance to take control of their League Cup semi-final against Arsenal as the misfiring Blues were forced to settle for a 0-0 draw in Wednesday's first leg. Antonio Conte's side dominated possession for long periods at Stamford Bridge—where the Video Assistant Referee system (VAR) was in operation—but lacked the killer instinct required to take a step towards the final. They had 21 shots to just eight from Arsenal, yet the tie remains on a knife-edge heading into the second leg at the Emirates Stadium on January 24. "We are not so clinical despite creating chances. If you want to win you have to score," Conte said. "We didn't concede a goal, but we know we play away at Arsenal and we must be ready to fight if we are to play the final."

While it was a frustrating evening for Chelsea as they chase a first League Cup final berth since 2015, the stalemate was a welcome tonic for their London rivals. Arsenal, who also drew both Premier League encounters with Chelsea this season, suffered one of the most chastening defeats of Arsene Wenger's reign on Sunday as second tier Nottingham Forest won 4-2 in the FA Cup third round. While Arsenal were well below their best once again, in contrast to their surrender in Nottingham, the Frenchman will be encouraged that they showed enough spirit to keep Chelsea at bay.

"I felt there was great togetherness. I am pleased with the spirit and determination," Wenger said. "You want first to be solid, but ideally you want to score as well." Conte had mostly fielded fringe players en route to the last four, but Eden Hazard, back

from a calf injury, N'Golo Kante and Thibaut Courtois were called upon with a Wembley showdown against Manchester City or Bristol City in sight. Wenger surprisingly left Alexis Sanchez on the bench amid talk of the unsettled Chile forward joining Manchester City, while Mesut Ozil missed out with a knee injury.

Wenger was watching from the press box as he serves his touchline ban and the Gunners boss was shifting anxiously in his seat early on when Hazard's pass gave Alvaro Morata an opportunity that he drove into the side-netting. After a tepid opening from Arsenal, Alexandre Lacazette escaped the Chelsea defense to collect Jack Wilshere's pass, but the French striker wasted the chance as he scuffed a hurried shot wide. Chelsea wing-back Victor Moses forced David Ospina into action with a stinging drive that the Arsenal goalkeeper fumbled before recovering to snatch the ball away from Morata.

### Wilshere's ankle injury

Meanwhile, Arsenal midfielder Jack Wilshere sustained an ankle injury during Wednesday's goalless draw with Chelsea in the first leg of the League Cup semi-final and is doubtful for Sunday's Premier League trip to Bournemouth, manager Arsene Wenger said. The England international appeared to have finally overcome an extended period of injury frustration by starting Arsenal's last six league games and captaining the side at Stamford Bridge but he was substituted in the second half.

Wenger rued his side's injury woes in midfield as Wilshere joined playmakers Aaron Ramsey (ham-



**LONDON:** Chelsea's Belgian goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois catches the ball as Arsenal's English striker Danny Welbeck (left) vies with Chelsea's German defender Antonio Rudiger during the English League Cup semi-final first leg football match between Chelsea and Arsenal at Stamford Bridge on January 10, 2018. —AFP

string) and Mesut Ozil (knee) along with long-term absentee Santi Cazorla on the sidelines. "I don't know if he'll be available on Sunday but it's definitely an ankle sprain," Wenger told reporters after the match. "At the moment we have five big injuries and we're hoping to get some back. The earliest to come back is Ramsey and that is quite welcome because it's an area we're a bit short. "If we didn't lose Jack tonight then we would have had Ramsey back and then maybe Ozil on Sunday, but we could look a bit short."

Moses was proving a problem for young left-back

Ainsley Maitland-Niles and the Nigerian found space for another shot moments later, this time his low shot hit Ospina's near post before Arsenal scrambled it away. Alex Iwobi was selected despite Wenger saying he could be fined for reportedly partying until the early hours of Saturday morning and the Arsenal winger almost repaid his manager's faith with a drive that Courtois pushed away. When Maitland-Niles went down under pressure from Moses in the area, referee Martin Atkinson consulted the video assistant referee, but no penalty was given. —Agencies

## Liverpool, without Coutinho, out to halt City march

**LONDON:** The form table suggests Liverpool have realistic hopes of disrupting Manchester City's waltz towards the Premier League title when they meet on Sunday, although they must quickly learn how to cope without Philippe Coutinho. The Brazilian playmaker completed a 142 million-pound (\$192 million) move to Barcelona on Monday, meaning Juergen Klopp's "fab four" up front is now just a three.

Unbeaten City are 15 points clear at the top of the table, having scored more goals than anybody with 64, but fourth-placed Liverpool come second on that count with 50. Klopp's side are unbeaten in 17 games in all competitions since they were thrashed 4-1 by Tottenham on Oct 22. Egyptian winger Mohamed Salah is set to return from injury and he and Sadio Mane are likely to play either side of striker Roberto Firmino.

Although Coutinho will no longer be able to provide the trio with ammunition, they still have the speed and guile to trouble Pep Guardiola's side at the back. Former Liverpool midfielder

Jason McAteer believes the Reds can get at City's defense. "We know Manchester City's quality, we know that they're running away with (the league) at the minute, but I think, on their day, Liverpool can match anybody," McAteer told the Liverpool website. "They're so good going forward. You've got to be (wary) of the attacking prowess that they've got but there are areas of weakness.

"If you can get in between the lines and at the two centre-halves, which I feel we can, then there are chances and goals there." City, however, will look to repeat their dominant 5-0 victory over Liverpool at the Etihad in September, although they will be without injured striker Gabriel Jesus, who scored a brace that day. This time they will have Virgil van Dijk in their way with the Liverpool defender set to make his Premier League debut after his move from Southampton. Van Dijk enjoyed a dramatic debut for his new team in the FA Cup, scoring late on against Everton to earn Liverpool a derby victory.

City's Belgian midfielder Kevin De Bruyne said his team would just focus on their own performance. "We go there to win the game," he said. "They will have a very strong team and they want to be there for the Champions League (places). "We just try to do the things that we do well and then we will see what happens." —AFP

## Mancini wants to fulfill dream as Italy's coach

**MILAN:** Former Italy international Roberto Mancini said Wednesday he wanted to take over as Italy national football coach to fulfill his dream of winning the World Cup. Mancini, 53, is positioning himself among the favorites to manage the four-time World Cup winners, with Chelsea manager Antonio Conte and former Bayern Munich coach Carlo Ancelotti, also being touted as candidates. "I have a dream, to win as national coach what I couldn't win as a player - a World Cup," Zenit Saint Petersburg coach Mancini said in an interview with Italian daily Gazzetta dello Sport.

"I've been working on the pitch every day for 40 years as a player and a coach. Besides, I'm young, I could always return to clubs after the national team. "I've worked in big clubs and won. Coaching the national team is a beautiful thing. It would be an honor, a source of pride. "And winning a World Cup or European Championships even more." Mancini never became a regular with Italy during his ten-year international career during which the former Lazio and

Sampdoria forward won 36 caps and scored four goals. He reached the semi-finals of Euro 1988, and was on the squad that finished third in the 1990 World Cup in Italy.

Giampiero Ventura was fired as coach last November days after Italy's shock failure to reach the World Cup final for the first time in 60 years. His successor will be appointed after elections for Italian Football Federation (FIGC) president on January 29, with outgoing boss Carlo Tavecchio saying he did not expect that before June. Mancini joined Zenit, currently second in the Russian league, last June and is under contract until 2020. "Money wouldn't be a problem," continued Mancini when asked of the 5 million euro (\$5.6m) budget reportedly set aside by FIGC for the coaching role. "Let's make it clear though, we're just talking here: I have a contract with Zenit, who are doing well."

Mancini has won silverware with all clubs he has managed. He led Manchester City in 2012 to their first English title in 44 years, and won three Serie A titles with Inter Milan and Italian Cups with Inter, Fiorentina and Lazio, and a Turkish Cup with Galatasaray. And despite their recent woes he sees potential in the demoralized Azzurri. "There are good young people there, I like (Andrea) Belotti, (Lorenzo) Pellegrini, and (Alessio) Romagnoli, who can still grow a lot. And more are coming through every season. —AFP



# Neymar strikes as PSG book League Cup semis

## Montpellier snatch a 1-0 win at Angers

**PARIS:** Neymar scored a second-half penalty as four-time defending champions Paris Saint-Germain toiled before overcoming 10-man Amiens 2-0 to reach the semi-finals of the French League Cup on Wednesday. PSG were again without leading scorer Edinson Cavani, who also missed Sunday's French Cup rout of Rennes after returning late from his Christmas and New Year break in Uruguay.

Amiens' hopes of springing an upset were heavily undermined by the dismissal of goalkeeper Regis Gurtner on 34 minutes for a foul on Kylian Mbappe after charging out of his area. And Neymar eventually made the visitors' numerical advantage count by winning and converting a spot-kick eight minutes into the second half at the Stade de la Licorne. Mbappe, earlier denied by a fingertip save from Jean-Christophe Bouet, was then thwarted by a combination of the substitute keeper and the crossbar before firing another effort narrowly wide.

Marquinhos also struck the woodwork after connecting with a cross from Giovanni Lo Celso, but Adrien Rabiot wrapped up a remarkable 35th consecutive win in domestic cup ties for PSG with a glancing

header from an Angel Di Maria corner on 78 minutes. The goal was given following consultation with the video assistant referee (VAR) - being used for the rest of the competition as a test ahead of its expected arrival in Ligue 1 next season - after goal-line technology failed to award it. "Our team worked hard but we didn't shine like on Sunday, but we also didn't concede chances. It was easier to win because we played with an extra man," said PSG coach Unai Emery.

PSG will travel to Rennes, who they thrashed 6-1 in the last 64 of the French Cup, in the semi-finals at the end of the month, with Monaco set to host Montpellier in the other last-four tie. "All teams prefer to play at home. But we will make another trip to Rennes full of desire to reach the final and win the title," Emery added. Isaac Mbenza scored with four minutes left as Montpellier snatched a 1-0 win at Angers, while Adrien Hunou struck twice late on as Rennes defeated Toulouse 4-2. Monaco became the first side to reach the last four of the competition on Tuesday as goals from Thomas Lemar and Adama Diakhaby saw Leonardo Jardim's team overcome Cote d'Azur rivals Nice 2-1 at the Allianz Riviera.—AFP



**SOMME, France:** Paris Saint-Germain's Brazilian forward Neymar (center) vies for the ball with Amiens' French midfielder Guessouma Fofana (left) and Amiens' Beninese defender Khaled Adenon during the French League Cup quarter-final football match between Amiens (ASC) and Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) on January 10, 2018. —AFP

## Technological innovation the key for Squash's Olympic dream

**LONDON:** Squash chiefs have long held a desire for the sport to be a part of the Olympic Games and thanks to innovations in technology, their dream may be closer to becoming a reality. Squash has failed on three occasions to be included in the Games, most recently as part of the program for Tokyo 2020. Yet the sport hopes that the adoption of new data systems will make it a more appealing product as it seeks inclusion in the Paris 2024 Olympics.

Next month, squash will pioneer a statistical tracking system for the first time at a world tour event at the Swedish Open in Linköping between Feb. 8-11, which the Professional Squash Association (PSA) says will allow the elite game to be analyzed in greater depth than ever before. Four cameras and a series of sensors will be erected around and above the all-glass court, led by a motion tracking system called "MoTrack", allowing

for instant analysis of player and ball behavior. "We feel certain this will add a new dimension to squash's global appeal," Alex Gough, the PSA's chief executive, told Reuters in an interview.

"Squash is one of the most physically demanding sports in the world and being able to illustrate the supreme fitness of our players with scientific data, that is easy to understand and display, is key to helping improve our sport." Physical characteristics such as movement, speed and distance covered by players during games will also be shown, alongside tactical elements such as heat maps and ball tracking data. German developers interactiveSQUASH (iSquash) launched new technology last year that can project interactive training modules on the front wall of the court.

The system was conceived by Markos Kern, a Munich-based creative entrepreneur. "With our system, squash will in time become the first to achieve a full merger between sport and technology in truly real time - with data instantly available to fans and players," he said. Tour chiefs hope to incorporate technology for automated calls on the out lines, as well as the tin, if the trial concept proves successful. Plans are also in place to combine iSquash's front wall technology with the tour system, meaning that statistical data can be projected onto the court wall in between games for spectators. —Reuters

### GERMAN LEAGUE PREVIEW

## Bayern resume title quest with Leverkusen trip

**BERLIN:** Franck Ribery warned Bayern Munich face a tricky test at Bayer Leverkusen today as they resume their march towards a sixth straight Bundesliga title following the German winter break. Jupp Heynckes's team are 11 points clear of second-place Schalke but Leverkusen, who are two points further back in fourth, are unbeaten in 14 matches dating back to September under ex-Dortmund coach Heiko Herrlich.

Bayern rounded out 2017 with six successive wins in all competitions, surging into the new year firmly on course to retain their title after a brief wobble that cost Carlo Ancelotti his job in September. But Leverkusen are looking to become only the third club after Hoffenheim and Borussia Mönchengladbach to beat Bayern in the league this season. With six goals and four assists, Leverkusen's outstanding player in the first half of the season was 20-year-old Jamaican winger Leon Bailey, who has thrived since joining from Belgian club Genk last January. Both Bayern striker Robert Lewandowski and defender Mats Hum-

mels are recovering from knee and groin injuries respectively, while right-back Joshua Kimmich has a cold.

Leverkusen warmed up for Bayern with a 2-2 draw in a friendly against third-tier Preussen Muenster as Argentina striker Lucas Alario netted both goals following his recovery from a groin injury. Bayern stepped up their preparations with a 5-3 win over third-division Grossaspach on Tuesday when veteran winger Franck Ribery, 34, scored three goals in a starring display. "It will be tough at Leverkusen and we will have to give our all to win there," said the Frenchman. Ribery and Arjen Robben are out of contract at the end of the season, but both hope to be offered an extension in the coming months. "I have five months left and there are always many options," said Ribery.

### Heynckes to stay on?

Likewise, Bayern are trying to talk Heynckes into staying on as head coach past the end of the season. The 72-year-old insists he will leave in May, having turned the team's fortunes around since replacing Ancelotti when Bayern were five points adrift of then-leaders Borussia Dortmund. Germany forward Thomas Mueller said Bayern are back at their best after struggling with fatigue through the final weeks of last year, even if results did not show it. "The joy of playing is back again," said Mueller. —AFP





LONDON: Arsenal's English defender Calum Chambers (left) vies with Chelsea's Spanish striker Alvaro Morata during the English League Cup semi-final first leg football match between Chelsea and Arsenal on January 10, 2018. — AFP

## Chelsea frustrated by Arsenal 0-0 stalemate