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# Govt agrees to appoint officials to rights body

## MPs meet again on jailed lawmakers

### Kuwaitization of public sector jobs urgent priority

KUWAIT: The finance ministry has begun work on executing the plan to Kuwaitize government jobs, and is sending letters to ministries and other government entities in coordination with the Civil Service Commission to make each entity prepare lists of the number of expat employees who will be terminated during the coming fiscal year (April 2018-March 2019).

Al-Anbaa daily said a document shows the decision commits government bodies to reduce the

Continued on Page 11

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: State Minister for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh said yesterday that the government will complete the formation of the National Commission for Human Rights by appointing a chairman and a deputy within one month. He said after meeting with the National Assembly's human rights panel that the government will nominate two officials for the posts and seek the approval of the Assembly in accordance with the law.

The panel meeting was held to discuss why the government has not yet completed the formation of the rights commission. Saleh told the committee that the government believes that the formation of the rights commission is an international and a legal requirement and will take the necessary measures to do this.

Kuwait has a number of independent and popular human rights organizations, in addition to the Assembly committee. The commission is an official rights body overseen jointly by the government and the Assembly.

Head of the Assembly's interior and defense committee MP Askar Al-Enezi said yesterday the panel discussed at a meeting draft laws to naturalize children of Kuwaiti widows and women divorced from foreign spouses, in addition to reducing the voting age to 18 from the current 21 and allowing servicemen to vote. He said interior ministry representatives asked for a period of two weeks to prepare answers to the issues, especially those related to citizenship.

He said the draft law under discussion stipulates that children of Kuwaiti women who are divorced or widowed will be

granted Kuwaiti citizenship automatically when they reach 21 years of age. The bill also states that naturalization for these cases will no longer be optional. Enezi said 10 lawmakers have submitted a motion about debating the numbers to be naturalized this year, adding that there is an agreement with the interior minister that the number will not exceed 4,000. The panel has taken no decision on the amendment of the election law, delaying it for future meetings.

Nine lawmakers in the meantime met yesterday to discuss the case of the two jailed MPs after the court of cassation did not start hearing their case because the public prosecution has not sent the case to the court yet. The opposition MPs in the meeting criticized the government's promises on the issue, saying nothing has been fulfilled.



Anas Al-Saleh

## No survivors as Iran tanker sinks engulfed in flames

BEIJING: An Iranian oil tanker burst into flames from end to end and sank yesterday, eight days after it caught fire following a collision with a cargo ship off China, state media said. Earlier, a Tehran official said there was no hope of saving some 29 missing crewmen before the ship sank, amid concern over an oil spill as Chinese officials played down fears of a major environmental disaster.

The Sanchi, carrying 136,000 tonnes of light crude oil from Iran, had been burning since colliding with the CF Crystal, a Hong Kong-registered bulk freighter, on Jan 6. At around mid-day yesterday, the ship "suddenly ignited", with the entire vessel burning fiercely and a pall of smoke between 800 and 1,000 m high, China's transport ministry said, releasing dramatic pictures of the entire vessel obscured by thick black smoke. The ship later sank, the official news agency Xinhua cited the State Oceanic Administration as saying.

"There is no hope of finding survivors among the members of

the crew," Mohammad Rastad, spokesman for the Iranian rescue team dispatched to Shanghai, told Iran's state broadcaster in Tehran before the tanker went down. Rastad said information from members of the Crystal crew suggested all the personnel on the Sanchi died in the first hour of the accident "due to the explosion and the release of gas". "Despite our efforts, it has not been possible to extinguish the fire and recover the bodies due to repeated explosions and gas leaks," he said.

The Sanchi, which had been headed to South Korea to deliver its cargo, had a crew of 32 - 30 Iranians and two Bangladeshis. Only three bodies have been recovered. Scenes of anger and grief erupted in Tehran as news of the deaths reached dozens of family, friends and colleagues of the crew, who were waiting desperately for information about their loved ones at the National Iranian Tanker Company headquarters. Labor Minister Ali Rabiei was shown crying on state television as he tried to comfort the wife of one crewman, telling her to "hold your child close and be strong".

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani sent messages of condolence to the families of the crew and called for an investigation into the accident, Iranian state media reported. Iran's government declared a day of national mourning today to honor "the brave mariners who died in the course of their mission to advance the country's goals and suffered a terrible disaster and

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Smoke and flames are seen from the burning oil tanker "Sanchi" at sea off the coast of eastern China yesterday. — AFP

### News in brief

#### Qatari sheikh 'detained' in UAE

DOHA: A controversial member of Qatar's royal family says he is being detained in the UAE, media reported yesterday, eight months into a crisis between Gulf states. Sheikh Abdullah bin Ali Al-Thani, a little-known royal, emerged as an unlikely mediator in August, weeks after Riyadh and Abu Dhabi cut ties with Doha. A video circulating online, also broadcast by Qatar-based Al-Jazeera television, shows the sheikh seated in an armchair warning that he was "afraid something could happen to me that will be blamed on Qatar". "I am now in Abu Dhabi, where I was a guest of (UAE crown prince) Sheikh Mohammed" bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, he said.

#### Alwaleed in settlement talks

DUBAI/JEDDAH: Saudi Arabia's billionaire Prince Alwaleed bin Talal, detained for over two months in an anti-corruption crackdown, is negotiating a possible settlement with authorities but so far has not agreed on terms, a senior Saudi official said. Prince Alwaleed, whose net worth has been estimated by Forbes magazine at \$17 billion, is chairman and owner of international investment firm Kingdom Holding, and one of the country's most prominent businessmen. "He offered a certain figure but it doesn't meet the figure required from him, and until today the attorney-general hasn't approved it," the official said.

#### Bomb wounds Hamas member

BEIRUT: A bomb blast wounded a member of the Palestinian group Hamas in the Lebanese city of Sidon yesterday, destroying his car as he was about to get in. The target, Mohamed Hamdan, was not a publicly known Hamas figure in Lebanon. A statement from Hamas, the Islamist group that controls Gaza, confirmed he was a member of the group, without detailing his role, and said "initial indications" suggested Israel was behind the bombing. (See Page 11)

## Turkish airplane skids off runway onto seaside cliff

ANKARA: A plane with 168 people aboard skidded off a runway onto a seaside cliff after landing at an airport in northern Turkey at the weekend, but no one was injured in what one passenger called a "miracle". The Pegasus Airlines flight had taken off smoothly from the capital Ankara bound for Trabzon, where the accident occurred as the plane was landing late Saturday. Dramatic images from CNN Turk broadcaster showed the plane lying on the cliffside, its nose just meters from the waters of the Black Sea and its wheels stuck in mud.

"There was panic, people shouting, screaming," one of the passengers, Fatma Gordu, told state-run Anadolu news agency. "When they told us to leave from the rear exit, everyone tried to push ahead of everyone else. It was a terrible situation." She said they could smell fuel and feared that a fire would break out. "That is why we were scared," she said, adding that there were pregnant women and children on board. Passenger Yuksel Gordu said it was a "miracle" they were saved. "We could have



TRABZON: A passenger plane is seen stuck in mud on an embankment yesterday after skidding off the airstrip while landing at Trabzon's airport on the Black Sea coast. — AFP

burned, it could have exploded, we could have fallen into the sea... Every time I think about it, I feel I might go crazy," she said.

Images from the Dogan news agency showed smoke

emanating from the trapped plane and an engine that appeared to have fallen into the water. According to the agency, the plane was 25 m away from the sea.

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## New protests as Tunisia marks uprising 'versary

TUNIS: Tunisians yesterday marked seven years since the uprising that launched the Arab Spring, with fresh protests after days of unrest over persisting poverty and unemployment. The North African country is seen as having had a relatively smooth democratic transition since the January 14, 2011 toppling of President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali after 23 years in power. But seven years later, anger has risen over new austerity measures after a

year of rising prices, with protests again chanting the 2011 slogans of "Work, Freedom, Dignity".

Yesterday, hundreds gathered in the capital Tunis, responding to calls to protest from a powerful labor union and several political parties. Security was tight as protesters poured through checkpoints into the capital's Habib Bourguiba Avenue, which was the epicenter of the 2011 protests. Demonstrators chanted against "poverty and hunger" as they marched up the avenue, accusing "thieves" of having stolen the country.

Outside the offices of the powerful UGTT trade union, demonstrator Foued El-Arbi waved an empty basket marked 2018.

Continued on Page 11



TUNIS: Tunisians wave their national flag and the flag of the Ennahda party as they gather on Habib Bourguiba Avenue yesterday. — AFP

## Local

# Company signs \$1.38 billion logistics contract with US Defense Department

## Capital spending increase eyed for development projects

By A Saleh

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait and Gulf Link Transport Company (KGL) yesterday announced signing a contract with the US Defense Department's logistics defense agency with a total value of \$1.38 billion. KGL Catering Company, which is 99 percent owned by KGL, will provide foodstuff and logistic services for US troops in Kuwait, Iraq and Jordan for 24 months, renewable for up to 60 months, the company said in a statement issued for Boursa Kuwait.

### Capital spending

The government plans to increase capital spending by 10 percent to KD 3.5 billion in the current fiscal year with the aim of overcoming relative weakness which slowed development rates in 2016-2017, said informed sources. The sources added that this comes in view of the anticipated expansion in construction projects listed as development assets in the 2018-2019 budget, coinciding with the launch of economic reform policies through enhancing the role of the private sector in boosting national economy by public-private-partnership (PPP) projects.

According to financial reports, the government seeks to activate economic development by focusing on production sectors and enhancing their contribution to the GDP to achieve over six percent growth in 2019-2020, as well as economic growth and sustainable development, taking into

consideration that the oil sector contributes around two thirds of the GDP.

### Bourse's privatization

Well-informed sources expected that the bourse's privatization committee will meet Thursday to discuss the offers made by companies applying to Boursa Kuwait's assessment tender as declared by the Capital Markets Authority (CMA). The committee headed by Dr Faisal Al-Fahd, who succeeded Nayef Al-Hajraf after the latter was appointed finance minister, will study the offers and select the best ones. The sources added that CMA and the bourse's board of directors are keen on completing the privatization process this year after evaluation of market assets was delayed several times.

The sources said 50 percent of Boursa Kuwait shares will be offered to citizens in an initial public offering, six to 24 percent of the shares will be offered to government bodies like the investment and social security authorities,

while 26 to 44 percent of the shares will be owned by a company listed with an international operator. "This is the likeliest scenario for privatizing the stock exchange," the sources said.

### Supervisory tangles

Following the steps of a memorandum of understanding recently signed with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI), supervisory sources said the CMA is about to sign a similar one with the Central Bank of Kuwait to undo supervisory tangles between them. The sources added that the new memo will be an update of the one signed in 2011 to cope with the changes that took place over the past few years, especially in terms of listed and licensed companies supervised by CMA. The sources said that signing the memo was done according to article 202 of CMA law number 7/2010, which calls for signing memos of understanding between various supervisory bodies to avoid double supervision.

### Bank deduction

Official sources at the services ministry said that the ministry plans to deduct its dues such as unpaid landline phone bills from subscribers' bank accounts to avoid accumulating their debts. The source said the ministry will consult the fatwa and legislation department and banks on implementing the decision with the aim of avoiding problems like those the ministry had faced on collecting overdue bills worth millions of dinars from subscribers before the Iraqi invasion.

### Shuaiba refinery

Kuwait has taken the first official step towards offering the Shuaiba refinery for international public auction due to be held in May, almost a year after it was shut down, said Mohammed Saud Al-Shemmari Deputy chairman of the committee entrusted with selling Shuaiba refinery at Kuwait Oil Company (KOC). Shemmari added that companies from Nigeria, India, US and Germany had shown interest in purchasing certain units, while Sri Lanka and the Philippines showed interest in purchasing the entire refinery, before they later decided to purchase units. Shemmari added that the auction date will be advertised in the local and international press soon and stressed that the purchase prices will be confidential. He said the auction might be cancelled if no reasonable prices are offered.



## Phone bills deducted from bank accounts?

## Fire kills girl in Al-Oyoun



**KFSD Director General Lt Gen Khalid Al-Mikrad visits fireman Ahmad Buftain who was injured while tackling the blaze.**

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

**KUWAIT:** A girl died while her six sisters were injured in a fire reported in Al-Oyoun district of Jahra, a statement by the Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFSD) said. Occupational Jahra and Jahra fire stations responded to an emergency call, and firemen rescued seven people who were trapped inside the house, but one of them lost her life. A fireman was injured during the rescue and was rushed to hospital. KFSD Director General Lt Gen Khalid Al-Mikrad visited the injured fireman Ahmad Buftain at Jahra Hospital.

### Fatal crash

A citizen was killed in a horrific car accident on Fahaheel Expressway, and two others were injured. Firefighters, paramedics and police rushed to the scene shortly after the accident was reported, but discovered that one motorist had already succumbed to his injuries. His body was taken to the coroner, while the two injured people were rushed to hospital. A case was filed to investigate the cause of the accident.



**KUWAIT: A picture taken from inside the house in Al-Oyoun after the fire was extinguished.**



**A heavily damaged vehicle pictured following an accident on Fahaheel Expressway.**

## 12-hour water supply cuts due to maintenance

**KUWAIT:** Water supply will be disconnected or affected in certain areas for 12 hours starting Friday night as a result of periodic maintenance to the water supply network, a Ministry of Electricity and Water (MEW) official said yesterday. As a result of maintenance, water supply will be disconnected in Sabhan Industrial for 12 hours starting from 8:00 pm on Friday, while water pressure will be weak during the same period in Hateen, Al-Salaam, Al-Shuhadaa and Al-Zahra, said Undersecretary Assistant for Water Maintenance and Operation Khalifa Al-Fraji.

In other news, Minister of Oil and Minister of Electricity and Water Bekheet Al-Rishidi signed yesterday a contract worth KD 12 million (\$36 million) for annual maintenance of equipment at Western Doha power station. The Ministry added in a press release that this project aims at conducting periodical maintenance for the ministry's equipment to guarantee high performance flexibility for secure and stable operation. Maintenance works at the power plant will take a maximum period of 60 months as of the date of signing the contract, it added. —KUNA

## Don't buy food from unlicensed vendors: Authority

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

**KUWAIT:** The public authority for food and nutrition announced confirming the contents of its decision number 4/2017 issued on Dec 5, 2017 pertaining individuals and companies advertising food products on social media, dailies and other media without prior license from the authority and other relevant state departments. The authority urged consumers to avoid dealing with such sellers or purchasing their products, and to cooperate with relevant supervisory and monitoring bodies on that matter.

## Off day

Legalese

By Attorney Fajer Ahmed



I have been receiving questions on what seems to be a proposed new law going around social media, and people do not seem to understand whether the law has been promulgated, i.e. is it in effect. The proposed law simply states all holidays in Kuwait are no longer public holidays except for Eid Al-Fitr, Eid Al-Adha, National and Liberation Days, and a new holiday to be introduced, which is the last 10 days of Ramadan to give people the chance to fast, stay up nights praying and devote their day to worship. In other words, no more New Year holiday celebrations! There seems to be quite some lobbying for this new law and it is receiving great attention from the public.

I understand that Kuwait is a Muslim country, but Kuwaitis being Muslim does not mean not allowing others to practice their faiths or their celebrations. Kuwait is a diverse and multi-faith society and we should be making it easier for other people to live in Kuwait, not more difficult. Many Christians celebrate the Gregorian New Year, but also many Kuwaitis celebrate the new year! In fact, I think that Christians in a utopian Kuwait should be able to get Christmas and Christmas Eve off.

The new purposed law in Kuwait is for the public sector only and is yet to be promulgated. Should I have more information, I will inform you. I honestly hope that Kuwait becomes the best version of itself, allowing all faiths while still keeping its identity as a Muslim country. As for today's column, I have decided to answer questions generally from readers regarding off days.

### Work hours

**Question:** I manage a small company of around 15 employees and the employees do not work 48 hours a week, because we have not been asking them to come to work on Saturday. They are also not working eight hours on weekdays - they work seven hours a day. Can I now make them work on Fridays to make up for the missing hours? There is no mention of their weekly work hours in their contracts.

**Fajer:** Fridays by law are an off day, so no - you cannot make them work on a Friday, unless it is overtime and with their consent. It is also very common in Kuwait for employees to work less than 48 hours a week with Saturday being off. Forty-eight hours are the maximum, so if you do not really need your employees 48 hours a week, then it is okay for them to be working 40 hours or less - this depends on your work culture. Also, something to make clear about the Kuwaiti labor law - you do not have to stick to the laws if it is to the benefit of the employees. So if your employees are used to working 35 hours a week, it is very difficult to convince them to start working 48 hours!

### 45 days

**Question:** Is it true that now we can take 45 days off instead of 30 days annually?

**Fajer:** Article 70 before the amendments used to state: "The worker shall be entitled to a 30-day paid annual leave. However, the worker shall not be entitled to a leave for the first year of work except after at least nine months of service for the employer. Official holidays and sick leaves during the year shall not be counted as annual leave. The worker shall be entitled to leave for the fractions of a year in proportion with the period he spent in actual service, even the first year of service."

It now states (rough translation as there is no official English version yet): "The worker shall be entitled to a 30-day paid annual leave. However, the worker shall be entitled to a leave after six months of service for the employer. Weekends, official holidays and sick leaves during the year shall not be counted as annual leave. The worker shall be entitled to leave for fractions of the year in proportion with the period he spent in actual service, even the first year of service." Some people have done the calculation that with weekends, you will be able to take 45 days off in total.

Questions or queries can be sent to ask@fajerthelawyer.com

## Ahli United Bank holds special environmental initiative at Salwa Park



**KUWAIT:** Over the weekend Ahli United Bank (AUB) employees headed to Salwa Park and rolled up their sleeves to collect a huge amount of waste and swept the place clean of plastic bags and empty plastic bottles. The team joyfully worked together while expressing the importance of maintaining the cleanliness of all public facilities.

The activity reflects the bank's values that stress social volunteering and philanthropic activities which aim to benefit the community. AUB's initiative highlight-

ed the significance of minimizing waste both on an individual and social level to maintain a clean and healthy environment. This is both a local and global concern.

Commenting on the awareness drive, AUB announced in a press statement, "We continue to organize environmentally friendly initiatives as part of the bank's social responsibility framework. This framework not only focuses on preserving and investing in the environment but also ensures the promotion of social work and development of strong

team players socially." The bank added, "There will be more socially and community conscious activities this year as the bank has approved an integrated CSR program for 2018, which focuses primarily on incorporating its workforce into social activities. We aim to create a social footprint that serves valid causes and which directly impacts society in a positive way. There will be more ways for our bank staff to contribute this year. We look forward to being a continued force for good."

## Local

# KPI acquires 50% ownership of mega Omani refinery

## Premier heads Supreme Petroleum Council meeting



KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah chairs the 115th meeting of the Supreme Petroleum Council yesterday. — KUNA

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Petroleum International (KPI), a Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) subsidiary, now owns a 50 percent share of Oman's Duqm refinery, the Supreme Petroleum Council confirmed yesterday.

Ownership of Oman's key refinery was finalized during the 115th meeting of the Supreme Petroleum Council which took place yesterday at Seif Palace, Oil Minister Bakheet Al-Rashidi said in a statement. His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber

Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah headed the meeting.

Rashidi touted the Omani Duqm refinery project as a highly lucrative enterprise, saying that the deal with the Omani Oil Company (OOC) "would prove equally beneficial for both nations." "This partnership represents a step towards bringing one of the most monumental projects in the region to fruition," Rashidi said. Meanwhile, His Highness the Prime Minister expressed hope that the project "would help put

Oman directly on the path to prosperity."

The refinery, run by the joint venture between OOC and KPI, will be able to process 230,000 barrels of crude oil per day and occupy 900 hectares in the Duqm industrial zone, with expected investments of up to \$15 billion over the next decade.

### Municipality's role

Separately, His Highness the Prime Minister has expressed his great pride in Kuwait Municipality's role in promoting the



(From left) Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Hussam Al-Roumi, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and Director General of Kuwait Municipality Ahmad Al-Manfouhi.

urban development process. This came in a statement by His Highness the Premier to Kuwait Municipality's magazine during his reception to Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Hussam Al-Roumi and Director General of Kuwait Municipality Ahmad Al-Manfouhi.

His Highness the Premier praised the obvious development in the municipality's performance in recent years, and its efforts in facilitating citizens' procedures, stressing the importance of implementing the law on

everyone. He pointed to the fourth structural plan of the State of Kuwait because it represents a cultural leap in the field of urban development, taking into account population growth and ambitious plans to promote economic and social development projects that will show the bright face of Kuwait. He also expressed his great confidence in Kuwait's youth, stressing the government's keenness in supporting them and providing the appropriate environment to develop their skills and energies. — KUNA

## Kuwait marks 12th anniversary of Sheikh Jaber's death

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait marks the 12th anniversary of Sheikh Jaber's death today. All Kuwaitis have been recalling the deeds and achievements by the 'Amir of Hearts' who spent his life serving his country and people. Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, who was born in 1926 in Kuwait and died on January 15, 2006 after being in power for 29 years, was the country's 13th ruler, and the third Amir in the state's constitutional era which began with signing of the constitution on November 11, 1962, by the late Amir Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah. Since he came to power in 1977, the late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad, known also as the 'Amir of Hearts,' led the country to development and progress in all domains and on all levels, and enhanced its status on political, economic and charitable arenas across the globe.

The late Amir was so keen to establish balanced bilateral relations with the world; his wise leadership helped Kuwait overcome challenges and address crises it faced, mainly in the 1980s and 1990s of the last century.

During his tenure, Kuwait has remarkably witnessed an urban renaissance and development in all sectors and general utilities, with a successive pace. The late Amir devoted most of his life to the country and the Kuwaiti people, and this was affirmed during his speech delivered following a terrorist assassination attempt on May 25, 1985.

After he survived the assassination, Sheikh Jaber said during the speech to the nation that the most important thing is that the "safety of Kuwait" and "Kuwait will remain." For Sheikh Jaber, youth was the "renewable current in a river called Kuwait and a source of power that will never dry up."

### Kuwaiti youth

He paid much attention to the Kuwaiti youth. This was manifested in 1992 when the Public Authority for Youth and Sports was founded and entrusted with caring for the affairs of the Kuwaiti young people and promoting their physical and mental capabilities. On the plight of the Iraqi invasion 1990, Sheikh Jaber's wisdom and experience managed to mobilize big support by sisterly and friendly countries to drive the Iraqi troops out of the country and liberate the entire homeland. Due to his wisdom and the support of Kuwaitis, the State of Kuwait resumed the renaissance march, achievements and reconstruction, and removed all traces of the Iraqi invasion. He paid much attention to the martyrs' children through establishing the Martyrs Bureau on June 19, 1991. He also spared no efforts on the release of the Kuwaitis held by the Iraqi regime.

He cared about the Kuwaiti women,



The late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah

and issued in 1999 a decree giving women citizens' full political support. He prioritized orphans and allocated a marriage grant as well as helped Kuwaiti women who got married to non-Kuwaiti men. Among the prominent institutions established during Sheikh Jaber's reign were the Public Authority for Social Insurance to secure dignified living conditions for the elderly, and the Reserve Fund for Future Generations, which benefited the Kuwaiti people during the Iraqi invasion.

### Gulf Cooperation Council

On political level, the late Amir launched several initiatives on Gulf, Arab and international levels, and suggested the idea of establishing the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), which mirrored his keenness on the joint cohesion and common destiny to face foreign challenges and political blocs. In the 1996 GCC Doha Summit, Sheikh Jaber suggested the formation of a 30-member consultative council in order to provide proposals to the GCC leaders to promote the process of decision-making.

The late Amir also prioritized Muslim and Arab issues as he proposed the establishment of the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development in 1961. He chaired the board of directors of this institution, which offered financial support to development efforts not only in the Arab world but in many others. He also dropped interest of debts due on poor countries.

The late Amir was keen on taking part in several conferences and meetings across the globe, and paid many official visits to enhance Kuwait's status globally. In a poll conducted by a London-based media institution in 1995, Sheikh Jaber was chosen as the humanitarian personality of the year among five million Arabs, in recognition of his charitable actions and financial support for many global institutions. "The Amir of Hearts" was engraved in all people's minds and hearts; as several places were named after him like Jaber Al-Ahmad Hospital, Jaber Al-Ahmad Armed Forces Hospital, Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium, Jaber Al-Ahmad City, Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Center, Jaber Al-Ahmad Causeway and others. Many places also in several countries were named after him, in recognition of his status in the hearts of many people not only in Kuwait but also in many Arab and Muslim states. — KUNA



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## Local

## Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: Grey Heron birds spotted in Shuwaikh Beach. —Photo by Ghazi Qafaf (KUNA)

# KFH main partner of KFAS ‘Innovation Challenge 2018’

## Carstens: Unique training opportunity to develop innovation capabilities

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Finance House (KFH) takes part in the annual ‘Innovation Challenge 2018’ event organized by the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) in collaboration with The University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA).

This prestigious event is tailored for companies in Kuwait’s private sector in efforts to foster innovation capability to keep abreast of rapid developments while coping with today’s fast-paced converging world. “Innovation is the cornerstone of comprehensive development and business sustainability, which urges KFH to take part in such important events in an attempt to raise the bar for employees, enhance their expertise and unleash the power of their innovation”, said Group Chief Human Resources Officer at KFH, Frederick Jacobus Carstens.

He added, in a press release, that the ‘Innovation

Challenge 2018’ program is divided into three modules hosted in Kuwait and in UCLA campus taught over a period of four months. It is centered on the use of innovation to respond to real-world business challenges. Throughout the program teams are required to spend an estimated five hours a week on deliverables including innovation readings, project work and assignments.

Meanwhile, Group Chief Retail and Private Banking Officer at KFH, Waleed Mandani said “It is of great importance to us at KFH to take advantage of this unique training opportunity to develop innovation capabilities and to deliver superior innovation and customer service excellence as part of KFH mission.” KFH candidates for this

edition are: Abdullah Al-Qadaibi- Real Estate Finance, Faleh Al-Bader- Corporate Financing Risk and Saleh Al-Shaya- Large Corporate Banking.

### Four-month program hosted in Kuwait, US



## UK shows commitment to Kuwait aviation show with strong presence

**KUWAIT:** The United Kingdom is reflecting its continuing commitment to Kuwait by sending a strong government delegation and company presence to the inaugural Kuwait Aviation Show. The United Kingdom is keen to encourage UK and Kuwaiti companies to identify areas of joint industrial and technological cooperation. The UK offers a range of world class products and services across the military, security and aviation sectors and UK industry is keen to establish enduring and mutually beneficial partnerships with the very capable industrial and technological base in Kuwait.

The UK Government delegation is led by Fleur Thomas, Regional Director in the Department of International Trade’s Defense and Security Organization. Fleur Thomas said: “Kuwait continues to be an important strategic partner with our armed forces enjoying a very close

relationship, reflected in the decision by Kuwait to buy the Typhoon aircraft. The strong UK presence at the aviation show reinforces the importance of this strategic bilateral relationship. I am also delighted that so many UK companies across the military and security sectors have identified Kuwait as an important area to do business and tie up with Kuwaiti partners. We continue to work together to help support Kuwait’s strategic vision 2035.”

The British Ambassador to the UK Michael Davenport said: “I am delighted that the United Kingdom is able to support this inaugural Aviation Show. This reflects the important defence and security relationship between Kuwait and the United Kingdom. This is an excellent opportunity for UK companies to engage with the Kuwaiti armed forces and industry to develop and nurture long term relationships.”

## ABK participates in design exhibition at Kuwait University

**KUWAIT:** Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) recently participated in the 33rd College of Engineering’s Design Exhibition at Kuwait

University (KU), which was held on 10th and 11th January, 2018 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel.

ABK reinforced its active role in supporting Kuwait’s youth and the education sector by sponsoring five different projects exhibited by graduating students. The bank’s corporate communications team attended the exhibition and viewed the different projects as the students presented their work.

ABK is committed to supporting students and encouraging them to maximize their poten-

tial. The bank strongly believes that the role these students will play in the future of Kuwait is invaluable and it is a duty to support them through the most critical phases of their education and to show them the options they have, in terms of career choice.

The bank continuously supports students through the ‘ABK Academy’, which focuses on developing students banking skills and equips them with the necessary training to prepare them for the work place.



KUWAIT: Frederick Jacobus Carstens and Waleed Mandani pose with the KFH delegation at KFAS event.



# Kuwaiti adventurers tour the world to assert themselves

Defying risks to slip from the grasp of daily routine



Abdullah Al-Shahin climbs Jebel Shams - the highest mountain in Oman and the Gulf region.



Abdullah Al-Gattan, a mountaineer and diver, climbs Mount Kilimanjaro - the highest mountain in Africa.

KUWAIT: Driven by the desire to break routine and explore the world, several Kuwaitis set out on journeys around the globe to gain experience, defy risks and assert themselves. As Paulo Coelho, a world-renowned Brazilian lyricist and novelist, puts it: "If you think adventure is dangerous, try routine; it is lethal," the main motive of the Kuwaiti adventures is to slip from the grasp of daily routine. Some adventurers were interviewed for information on their respective experiences and motives; some of them were so enthusiastic that they suggested launching a travel agency specialized in organizing adventures and build the capacity of adventurers.

Abdullah Al-Shahin, a parachutist and motorcyclist, said his father implanted in him the love for wildlife, nature, geography and geology. "To satisfy my curiosity, I toured the scenic areas, islands, beaches, forests and countryside of Spain and the Philippines with my motorcycle," he said. "There is much to be gained from adventures. My trips in Spain and the Philippines helped me know a lot about the peoples, the cultures and areas of both countries. "These tours also enhanced my patience and endurance," Shahin asserted. "Curiosity is inherent in man; it motivates people to explore new areas of the universe and help them to be self-reliant," he added.

Training center

He expressed hope that a government

agency would help finance the initiative to launch a center for training the young adventurers on various kinds of adventures including endurance sports and mountaineering.

Abdullah Al-Gattan, a mountaineer and diver, said he climbed Jebel Shams - the highest mountain in Oman and the Gulf region, twice, and Mount Kilimanjaro - the highest mountain in Africa.



Spokesman of the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs Nasser Al-Afraj

photos that tell about the peculiarities of nature and the marine life over the 14 years. He plans to visit The Galapagos Islands in the Republic of Ecuador and climb the mountains of Costa Rica and Peru.

Kuwaiti youths

Fatima Matar, a tour organizer, said she organized adventures for groups of Kuwaiti youths to Iguassu Falls in Argentina, Patagonia - a rocky region, called "the end of the world" between Argentina and Chile, Jebel Shams in Oman and Mount Everest.

Over the last five years, she took advantage of social media to network with adventurers and organize trips for young people who have the a great zest for discovering the world and get in contact with people with different cultures. Matar added that she organized trips twice a year and takes stock of all possible risks adventurers could face in the various parts of the world in order to ensure their safety.

Suleiman Al-Roudhan said he joined a group of youth adventurers in trips to Madagascar, Senegal, Portugal and Iceland. He plans to set out on a journey by train from northernmost to the southernmost of India and another journey to the North Pole. In this connection, spokesman of the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs

Nasser Al-Afraj said the Ministry is keen on fostering the skills of talented youth particularly the adventurers. — KUNA



Suleiman Al-Roudhan raises Kuwait's flag while climbing Mount Everest.

## Call for center to train young adventurers



He spoke also about his diving experiences in various seas and oceans around the globe.

During his adventures, Gattan took a lot of



Fatma Al-Mattar crosses a bridge during an adventure in Madagascar.



Abdullah Al-Shahin is seen during his trip to Al-Jabel Al-Akhdar in Oman.



Abdullah Al-Shahin participates in a trip to Kawasan falls - Cebu in the Philippines.



Abdullah Al-Shahin climbs Al-Hajar Mountains in Oman.



Fatima Al-Matar takes part in an adventure in Zambia.



Israel destroys attack tunnel under border

## Netanyahu trip highlights India’s Jewish community

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HAWAII: A morning view of the city of Honolulu, Hawaii is seen on January 13, 2018. Social media ignited after apparent screenshots of cell phone emergency alerts warning of a ‘ballistic missile threat inbound to Hawaii’ began circulating, which US officials quickly dismissed as ‘false.’ — AFP

# Hawaii ‘missile alert’ sparks anger

## Panicked Hawaiians scramble to find shelter

HONOLULU: Authorities faced anger and demands for answers yesterday after a false alarm about an incoming ballistic missile caused panic in Hawaii, a Pacific archipelago already on edge over fears of a North Korean attack. The notification was sent out just after 8:00 am (1800 GMT) on Saturday, lighting up phones with a disturbing alert urging people to “seek immediate shelter.” Emergency management officials later admitted “the wrong button was pushed” during a shift change. But it took nearly 40 minutes for a corrected message to be issued-with Hawaii’s governor saying there was no automatic way to cancel the false alarm, meaning it had to be done manually.

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC), which is responsible for standards, procedures and testing protocols for the Emergency Alert System that delivered the false alert, promised a “full investigation”. The alert, which read “BALLISTIC MISSILE THREAT INBOUND TO HAWAII. SEEK IMMEDIATE SHELTER. THIS IS NOT A DRILL”, sparked panic, with people rushing for safety whether in a bathtub, a basement, a

manhole or cowering under mattresses. And after it was declared a false alarm and the panic had subsided, there was anger, with many asking how such an error could have happened.

### ‘Terrified and angry’

“Everyone in America needs to understand that if you had to go through this, you would be as angry as I am,” Representative Tulsi Gabbard of Hawaii wrote on social media. “We’re terrified and angry. Called my parents. Called my sister. Husband and I were shaking, verge of tears. Waited 40 minutes for a correction. No confidence in this emergency alert system,” photographer Aislinn Victoria said on Twitter. Adventurer Alison Teal called it “the worst moment of my life.” The erroneous message came after months of soaring tensions between Washington and Pyongyang, with North Korea claiming it had successfully tested ballistic missiles that could deliver atomic warheads to the United States,

including Hawaii’s chain of volcanic islands.

### ‘We made a mistake’

“I deeply apologize for the trouble and heartbreak that we caused today,” said Vern Miyagi, administrator of Hawaii’s Emergency



## Ballistic missile warning sent in error by Hawaii authorities

Management Agency. “We made a mistake,” he acknowledged at a press conference. “We’ve spent the last few months trying to get ahead of this whole threat, so that we could provide as much notification and

preparation to the public,” he said, pledging to investigate what happened “so that this doesn’t happen again.”

As screenshots of the cell phone warning went viral on social media, Gabbard quickly tweeted that it was a “FALSE ALARM” with Hawaii’s EMA confirming “there is NO missile threat to Hawaii.”US military spokesman David Benham later said US Pacific Command “has detected no ballistic missile threat to Hawaii. Earlier message was sent in error.” When a corrected message was eventually sent out, it read: “There is no missile threat or danger to the state of Hawaii.” “What happened today was totally unacceptable,” Hawaii Governor David Ige said. “I’m sorry for that pain and confusion that anyone might have experienced.” The White House said President Donald Trump was briefed about the incident, calling the alert “purely a state exercise.”

### ‘Terrifying’

Teal, the adventurer and Hawaiian native,

said “everyone was in a panic.” “Traveling the world as an extreme adventurer, I’ve been in very scary situations from snowstorms to sharks to hot lava. Nothing as terrifying as a missile coming to kill everyone you know and love,” she told AFP. Lauren McGowan, who was on holiday in Maui with family and friends, was heading for breakfast when the alert came through.

They returned to their hotel, where staff quickly took them to a basement cafeteria and distributed water and food, with the rush to the shelter causing “confusion,” particularly for the children in the group, she said. Writing on Twitter, Andy Priest said his parents thought they were going to die. “My mom started to get up to go, and my Dad told her that if it was their time to go, he wanted to be looking at the ocean and enjoying the view,” he wrote. Several golfers participating in the US PGA Tour’s Sony Open in Honolulu were also caught up in the false alarm. “Under mattresses in the bathtub with my wife, baby and inlaws,” American golfer John Peterson tweeted. “Please lord let this bomb threat not be real.” — AFP

## Former top judges join criticism of India Chief Justice

NEW DELHI: Four former senior Indian judges yesterday released a letter in support of a group of Supreme Court judges who on Friday openly criticized the way the top court was functioning. The retired judges - including a former Supreme Court judge and a chief justice of the Delhi High Court - confirmed they had issued an open letter to the Chief Justice of India after four Supreme Court judges held a press conference on Friday in which one of them warned that the nation’s democracy was under threat because of the way the top court was being run. The four sitting judges of the Supreme Court had criticized distribution of cases to judges and raised concerns about judicial appointments in the nation’s highest

court under Chief Justice Dipak Misra.

Misra has not responded to their allegations. “We agree with the four judges that though the chief justice of India is the master of roster and can designate benches for allocation of work, this does not mean that it can be done in an arbitrary manner such that sensitive and important cases are sent to hand-picked benches of junior judges by the chief justice,” the former judges said in the open letter yesterday. Reuters was able to confirm that the letter was drafted and signed by four former judges P B Sawant, AP Shah, K Chandru and H Suresh.

Two of the retired judges said it was important to support the group of Supreme Court judges because they had taken the bold step of speaking out publicly to protect the sanctity of the most important institution of India. Friday’s public outburst by judges prompted Prime Minister Narendra Modi to hold an emergency meeting with his law minister on Friday but the government has refused to comment. The four former judges said in the statement that all rules and norms must be laid down clearly for allocation of cases. “This must be done immediately to restore public confidence in the judiciary and in the Supreme Court,” the former judges said. — Reuters

## Netanyahu in India; first visit by Israeli leader in 15 years

NEW DELHI: Benjamin Netanyahu arrived in New Delhi yesterday for the first visit by an Israeli leader to India in 15 years, promising closer ties with the regional power. Netanyahu and his wife Sara were welcomed at the international airport in New Delhi by Prime Minister Narendra Modi who made history in July when he became the first Indian leader to visit Israel. “This visit is an opportunity to enhance cooperation with a global economic, security, technology and tourism power,” Netanyahu said in a statement ahead of his visit. “Indian Prime Minister Modi is a close friend of Israel and of mine.”

Modi-who will accompany Netanyahu for large parts of his five-day tour-embraced the Israeli prime minister on the tarmac before the pair set off to pay homage at a war memorial in the Indian capital. “Your visit to India is historic and special. It will further cement the close friendship between our nations,” Modi said on Twitter. Netanyahu will be only the second Israeli PM to visit India and the first since Ariel Sharon in 2003. He is accompanied by the largest-ever business delegation to travel with an Israeli leader. Executives in technology, agriculture and defense are among those making the journey as Tel Aviv pursues deals with Asia’s third-largest economy.

The build up to Netanyahu’s visit was soured this month when India called off a deal to buy 8,000 anti-tank guided missiles from Israel’s state-owned defense contractor Rafael. The Indian army and the government are discussing ways to revive the \$500 million order, which was scrapped when the country’s own state-run defense contractor offered to build similar missiles locally. Israel is a major weapons supplier to India, exporting an average of \$1 billion of military equipment each year, but Modi wants to end India’s status as the world’s top defense importer. Netanyahu and Modi kicked off the visit with a stop at a memorial to Indian soldiers who fought in World War



NEW DELHI: Indian Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi welcomes the Prime Minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu, on his arrival, at Air Force Station, Palam, in New Delhi. — AFP

I to help liberate the Israeli city of Haifa.

The Israeli leader will later meet with Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj before a private dinner with Modi. Netanyahu expects to sign new agreements in fields of energy, aviation and cinema production, with stops at the Taj Mahal, a visit to Modi’s home state of Gujarat and meetings with Bollywood luminaries in Mumbai. But he will also make an emotional visit to a Jewish centre targeted in the 2008 Mumbai attacks during his tour, a symbolic gesture to India’s tiny and shrinking Jewish community. Netanyahu will accompany 11-year-old Moshe Holtzberg as the boy returns for the first time to the house where his parents were killed in the attacks that left 166 people dead. — AFP

International

# Israel destroys Gaza tunnel under Israel, Egypt border

## Tensions high since Trump’s Jerusalem declaration

**GAZA:** The Israeli military said yesterday it had destroyed a cross-border attack tunnel that ran from Gaza into Israel and Egypt, dug by the Hamas, the Islamist group that controls the Palestinian enclave. Residents in Gaza said Israeli jets bombed an area east of the southern town of Rafah, by the Egyptian and Israeli borders, late on Saturday night. Israel confirmed the attack immediately after, but gave no details.

There was no immediate comment from Hamas or Egypt, or any reports of casualties. Tensions have risen since President Donald Trump reversed decades of US policy on Dec 6 by recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital. Gaza militants have launched 18 cross-border rockets or mortar bombs, causing no fatalities or serious injuries in Israel, and 15 protesters and two gunmen have been killed by Israeli fire.

The attacks from Gaza, which Israel has blamed on groups not affiliated with Hamas, have drawn Israeli air strikes, usually on targets that have been evacuated. “There are those who say the Israeli military attacks sand dunes – that is incorrect,” Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, addressing criticism from lawmakers who have called for a stronger armed response, told reporters after the tunnel was targeted. Netanyahu cautioned Hamas that Israel “will respond with even greater force” if rocket strikes continue. Israel has said Hamas, as the dominant

force in Gaza, bears overall responsibility for any attacks from the enclave.

But Yoav Galant, a member of Netanyahu's security cabinet, said on Army Radio that Israel is “not looking for confrontation with Hamas”. Nonetheless, he said Israel “could not abide by a situation in which Israelis are harmed by fire (from Gaza)”. Colonel Jonathan Conricus, an Israeli military spokesman, described the target hit on Saturday as 1.5 km (one mile)-long “terror tunnel” running the Kerem Shalom border crossing into Israel, and into Egypt. “It could also have served to transfer terrorists from the Gaza Strip into Egypt in order to attack Israeli targets from Egypt,” he said.

Kerem Shalom, the main passage point for goods entering Gaza, was shut down on Saturday before the Israeli attack. Underground tunnels are used to smuggle in all manner of commercial goods to Gaza, and to bring in weapons for militants from Hamas and other groups. They have also been used by Hamas to launch attacks inside Israel. During the last Gaza war, in 2014, Hamas fighters used dozens of tunnels to blindside Israel's superior forces. The Israeli military said it has destroyed three tunnels in the past two months. Israel has been constructing a sensor-equipped underground wall along the 60-km (36-mile) Gaza border, aiming to complete the \$1.1 billion project by mid-2019. —Reuters



**RAFAH:** Palestinians ride a donkey cart near the Kerem Shalom crossing, the main passage point for goods entering Gaza, after it was closed by Israel following the discovery of smuggling tunnels underneath the crossing, in the southern Gaza Strip town of Rafat yesterday.—AFP



### Attack on tunnel follows surge in rocket strikes

## 25 killed in Iran unrest

**TEHRAN:** A total of 25 people were killed in the recent unrest that hit several towns and cities across Iran, the judiciary said yesterday, with 465 still under arrest. “Twenty-five people, ordinary citizens and our own forces, were killed during the recent troubles,” said judiciary spokesman Gholamhossein Mohseni Ejeie, according to the Mizanonline news agency. “None were killed by shots from the security forces because they were ordered not to use their weapons,” he added. He provided no details on how the members of the security forces or civilians were killed, including six protesters who died while trying to storm a police station in the central province of Isfahan. The figure was four more than the death toll announced during the unrest that spread across the country between December 28 and January 1.

“At most, there were 465 people under arrest across the country as of yesterday, while a certain number have probably been released since then,” Ejeie said, adding that the number included 55 in Tehran. Reformist lawmaker Mahmoud Sadeghi had said on Tuesday that 3,700 people were arrested during the protests, without saying how many were later released. The unrest began over economic issues, but quickly grew into protests against the Islamic regime as a whole, with attacks on government and police buildings. The government has said a total of 42,000 people participated in the unrest a figure that is hard to verify due to limited information from the provinces where most of the unrest took place.

#### Block on Telegram

Meanwhile, Iran has lifted restrictions imposed during recent protests on the country's most popular social media app Telegram. AFP journalists were able to access the service yesterday and officials confirmed it has been restored. “The information concerning the end of filtering on Telegram is correct,” a spokesman for the telecoms ministry told AFP. Telegram, which counts some 25 mil-



**TEHRAN:** Iranian motorists drive past the Azadi Tower in the capital Tehran yesterday. —AFP

lion users in Iran, was blocked on mobile phones during the five days of unrest that hit dozens of cities over the new year.

The semi-official ISNA news agency said the restrictions on Telegram had been “entirely lifted under orders of (President Hassan Rouhani).” The government accused “counter-revolutionaries” and foreign groups of inciting violence via social media during the unrest, and also temporarily cut mobile access to photo sharing app Instagram. They also blocked some VPN privacy apps, which are commonly used to get around longstanding bans on sites such as Twitter, YouTube and Facebook. Rouhani said during the unrest that the restrictions were necessary, but should not be “indefinite”.

He accused conservative opponents of using the protests to impose widespread censorship. “You want to take the opportunity to shut down this social media for eternity. You might sleep well, but 40 million people

had problems... 100,000 people lost their jobs,” Rouhani said on January 9, referring to complaints that many businesses were hit by the Telegram shutdown. The head of the country's cybercrime committee, Abdolsamad Khoramabadi, had earlier criticized the government for not blocking Telegram sooner, and said officials should be “punished” if it was found they deliberately failed to act against online “trouble-makers and enemies”.

Conservatives have also called for the development of local apps to replace Instagram and Telegram. Rouhani's support for temporary restrictions still represented something of a reversal for a president who has vowed to end all online censorship. Just three weeks before the unrest, on December 19, Rouhani told the country's first conference on civil liberties: “We will not seek to filter social media. Our telecoms minister promises the people he will never touch the filtering button.” —Agencies

## Iran rules out any change to nuclear accord

**TEHRAN:** Iran yesterday rejected any modification of its nuclear deal with world powers after US President Donald Trump demanded tough new measures to keep the agreement alive. Iran “will not accept any amendments in this agreement, be it now or in the future, and it will not allow any other issues to be linked to the JCPOA”, the foreign ministry said in a statement, using the 2015 deal's technical name. It has the backing of all the partners to the agreement apart from the United States, with Russia warning Washington on Saturday that withdrawing would be “a big miscalculation”.

“We are gradually coming to the conclusion that an internal decision by the US to leave the JCPOA has already been made or is close to being made,” Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov told the Interfax news agency. “This could be one of Washington's big foreign policy mistakes,” he added. Trump again waived nuclear-related sanctions on Friday-as required every few months to stay in the agreement-but demanded that European partners work with Washington to “fix the deal's disastrous flaws, or the United States will withdraw”.

He said the new deal should curb Iran's missile program and include permanent restrictions on the Islamic republic's nuclear plants, remov-

ing expiration dates due to kick in after a decade. The other parties to the agreement-Britain, China, France, Germany, Russia and the European Union-have all said the deal is working and that Iran is complying fully with its commitments. Britain and Germany said Friday they had taken note of Trump's latest decision and would confer with France before responding.

#### ‘It makes no difference’

On Saturday, French President Emmanuel Macron stressed the “necessary respect by all parties” of Iran's nuclear deal with world powers, in a telephone call with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. However, Israel's leader, a fierce critic of the deal, told Macron that changing the nuclear deal would increase the chances of it remaining in place. “Trump's remarks should be taken seriously, and whoever wants to keep the nuclear deal would be wise to fix it”, a statement from Netanyahu's office read. On the streets of Tehran, many people have grown cynical and exasperated by the endless pressure from the United States.

“It doesn't make any difference. We have been under US sanctions for the last 40 years,” said Farshad Aryan, a 26-year-old law student. “Two years ago when the JCPOA was signed we were so hopeful. We don't have that hope any more.” Iran argues that continued US sanctions on non-nuclear areas such as human rights and missile testing have effectively barred it from gaining many of the financial benefits expected from the deal. Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has said Trump's aggressive stance on the deal and Iran generally have also violated the commitment to “refrain



**TEHRAN:** Iranians cross the road in Sadeqyeh Square in the capital Tehran. Iran rejected any modification of its nuclear deal with world powers after US President Donald Trump demanded tough new measures to keep the agreement alive. —AFP

from any policy specifically intended to directly and adversely affect the normalization of trade and economic relations with Iran” in the accord.

#### New sanctions criticized

Many analysts agree. “Trump has once again avoided the nuclear option on the nuclear deal. But the clear reluctance with which he has issued the sanctions waivers will continue to weigh on the business community,” said Esfandiyar Batmanghelidj, founder of the Europe-Iran Forum,

a business network. “However, if the ‘adults in the room’ prevailed this time and kept Trump from exiting the deal, there remains hope they will prevail in the end,” he added. Responding to Trump's speech late Friday, Zarif tweeted: “Rather than repeating tired rhetoric, US must bring itself into full compliance-just like Iran.” Saturday's statement from Iran's foreign ministry further criticized new sanctions on 14 individuals announced by the US Treasury on Friday over human rights issues and Iran's missile program. —AFP

#### News in brief

##### Fire kills 8, injures 38

**LISBON:** Fire ripped through a local community centre in northern Portugal where dozens of people were watching a weekend football match, killing eight and injuring another 38, nine seriously, officials said yesterday. Nine people with severe burns were taken by helicopter to hospitals in Porto and Lisbon, emergency response chief Carlos Pereira said. Civil protection official Paulo Santos earlier said between 50 and 60 people were hurt. “It happened very fast. The whole floor was in flames within five minutes,” survivor Julio Dias told the daily Publico. “In the panic, a lot of people massed against the doors and it was impossible to open them.” He said a few minutes later rescue workers forced open a door using ropes tied to an all-terrain vehicle. Portuguese President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa was heading to the scene on Sunday. Officials said the fire broke out at around 9 pm Saturday on the first floor of the building in a village near Tondela, which lies between the northern towns of Coimbra and Viseu.

##### Liberia party expels Sirleaf

**MONROVIA:** Liberia's ruling Unity Party has expelled the country's outgoing president, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, who is accused by party leaders of meddling in last year's presidential elections in which its candidate suffered a bruising defeat. Johnson Sirleaf, a Nobel Peace Prize laureate who has been in power for 12 years, denies the party's allegations that she held inappropriate private meetings with election magistrates before the Oct 10 vote. Four other party officials were also expelled, the party said in a statement distributed yesterday. “The behavior of the expelled persons ... constitutes sabotage and undermined the existence of the party,” said the statement announcing the decision, which was taken by the party's executive committee late on Saturday. A senior official in Johnson Sirleaf's office declined to comment on the decision. The president and other officials were not immediately available yesterday. Former soccer star George Weah defeated the Unity Party's Joseph Boakai in a landslide, marking the first democratic transition of power in Liberia - a nation founded by freed American slaves - in over 70 years.

##### Guinea-Bissau PM resigns

**BISSAU:** Guinea-Bissau's Prime Minister Umaro Sissoco Embalo has submitted his resignation to the president, in a bid to end a two-year political crisis in the poor west African nation. Guinea-Bissau has been in the throes of a power struggle since August 2015, when President Jose Mario Vaz sacked former prime minister Domingos Simoes Pereira. Embalo, who became prime minister in December 2016, tendered his resignation to Vaz last week, he told AFP late Saturday. “I am not someone who clings to power. If the president does not trust me, I won't wait to be fired, I will leave,” he said. A source at the presidency confirmed the resignation had been submitted. At its latest summit on December 16, the ECOWAS west African bloc urged Guinea-Bissau's leaders to resolve the crisis marring their tiny nation within two months, or else face sanctions. Vaz and former prime minister Pereira—who heads the ruling party—have accused each other of blocking the implementation of an accord reached in October 2016, following talks mediated by Alpha Conde, president of neighboring Guinea.

# The terror attack survivors who refuse to be silenced

## Artists, journalists vow to continue fighting for free speech

**COPENHAGEN:** Gathered in the Danish capital for a conference of terror attack survivors, artists and journalists vowed to continue fighting for free speech, despite a wave of violence targeting critical voices. "We are all targeted, indiscriminately, and the more of us choose to stay silent, the more dangerous it becomes for the few who continue speaking out, like me," said Zineb El Rhazoui, a 35-year-old journalist from French satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo. She was on holiday on January 7, 2015, when jihadists broke into the Paris offices of the magazine, massacring 12 people in an attack that shook France and the world. The assault sparked mass protests and a wave of solidarity, with people across the world adopting the slogan "Je suis Charlie" (I am Charlie).

"The more of us speak out, defend our freedom and refuse to give up on our liberties, the less the danger will be ... focused on certain people," El Rhazoui told AFP on the sidelines of a conference hosted by the Danish parliament on Saturday. Her commitment to her beliefs has not come without a cost: everywhere she goes, she is accompanied by security guards. Swedish cartoonist Lars Vilks, who in 2007 sparked controversy with his drawings of Muslim Prophet Mohammad (PBUH), said nothing would change if he stopped working. "If you stop, the things going on will not stop," Vilks said. He has also been the

target of several attempted assaults, the latest in Copenhagen in February 2015, during a conference dubbed "Art, blasphemy and freedom".

### 'That was it'

Like El Razhoui, Vilks leads a complicated life. Under constant surveillance, he must coordinate with his security guards in order to plan his day. "If I have forgotten to buy some milk, I cannot actually go out and buy the milk, and I cannot in practice call the bodyguards and say 'I want to buy some milk'," he said. "As a film ... you have to plan your days in a certain way," the 71-year-old added. But after surviving an attack, some people choose to move away from activism. Patrick Piscot was just 18 years old when he survived the July 2011 bomb and gun massacre by Norwegian neo-Nazi Anders Behring Breivik that left 77 people dead. Breivik was sentenced in 2012 to 21 years behind bars. "If you survive something I believe that it is your responsibility to get over it in your own way, you have the key to how you want to change your life," said Piscot, who decided to ended his political activism soon after the attack. "I continued to participate in AUF (the Workers' Youth League in Norway) for three weeks or months after the massacre, but that was it. I wanted to be me," he added.—AFP

'If you stop, the things going on will not stop'



PARIS: A man takes a picture of portraits (left to right) of late French satirical weekly Charlie Hebdo's deputy chief editor Bernard Maris, French cartoonists Georges Wolinski, Bernard Verlhac (aka Tignous), Charlie Hebdo editor Stephane Charbonnier (aka Charb) and Jean Cabut (aka Cabu) near the magazine's offices at Rue Nicolas Appert, in Paris, on the third anniversary of the jihadist attack on French satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo. —AFP

## Angola's Lourenco keeps pressure on Dos Santos cronies

**LUANDA:** The first major scalp claimed by Angola's new president Joao Lourenco in his war on corruption and nepotism was that of his predecessor's daughter, who was sacked as head of the state oil company. The next big name linked to former president Jose Eduardo dos Santos was that of his son, Jose Filomeno, who was removed from his post at the top of the African nation's \$5 billion sovereign wealth fund. Quick work for a president with barely 100 days on the job. Lourenco's manoeuvring against the nepotistical vestiges of Angola's last president began in earnest in November with the toppling of Isabel dos Santos said by Forbes to be Africa's richest woman.

The shake-up at the Sonangol oil giant marked a watershed moment in Lourenco's young presidency as he sought to assert his authority and clear out the legacy of his controversial predecessor. During his presidential campaign, the former defense minister vowed to distance himself from Dos Santos who remains head of the ruling People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) party. Just a month after Isabel dos Santos was fired, Sonangol announced it was opening an investigation into "possible misappropriation" of funds during her time as chief executive.

Angolan media outlets have accused her of ordering suspect transfers and payments worth tens of millions of dollars. But although her sacking caught some Angola watchers off-guard, Lourenco's dismissal this week of Jose Filomeno as head of the oil-rich country's vast wealth fund did not. Lourenco, 63, had hinted he might sack Filomeno during a speech to mark his first 100 days in office after winning August's election on an anti-graft, reformist platform.

### Sideline

"Lourenco has sidelined all of those over whom he doesn't have control," said Benjamin Auge, an analyst at the French Institute of International Relations (IFRI). "The members of the Dos Santos family fall into this category, which is why they've been cast-off, one by one." Like his sister, Jose Filomeno was the embodiment of the political-financial empire built by their father that funneled the nation's wealth to friends and relatives of the all-powerful Dos Santos clan.

But the new sheriff in town appears determined to end the family's grip on the nation's purse strings. "No one is above the law," Lourenco said before being sworn in. For weeks now, Angolan media have been running stories alleging corruption by the Dos Santos family, which had previously been seen as untouchable. As well as the corruption probe facing Isabel, her half-brother was implicated in the "Panama Papers" scandal which showed how the world's wealthy shift profits around the globe to drastically cut tax. Also this week, state television revealed the lavish terms of a government contract awarded to another of Dos Santos' daughters, Welwitschia.

### 'Might dig his feet in'

Facing official scrutiny is proving to be an uncomfortable new experience for the former first family. Isabel has huffily denied the allegations against her and accused her critics of a "campaign of defamation" and "fake news". And even Dos Santos himself waded in, admitting in a rare public appearance last month that while "the changes are necessary, they should not be so radical". Angola's opposition has been quick to praise the government's campaign against "nepotism"—an issue it has long campaigned about. Urging Lourenco see the process through to the end. "All of these sackings will be irrelevant if they aren't followed by legal action," said Lindo Bernardo Tito, vice president of the Casa-CE party. "The president should order judicial inquiries without delay." Few observers thought that Lourenco would push his fight against nepotism and corruption as far as he has. "I don't imagine any serious case will emerge against the family (although) the Sonangol probe is clearly a warning of what could happen," said Alex Vines, an analyst at Britain's Chatham House think-tank. —AFP

## UKIP leader under fire over lover's racist royal slur

**LONDON:** The leader of Britain's anti-EU, anti-immigration UK Independence Party (UKIP) faced calls to resign yesterday after his girlfriend reportedly made racist remarks about Prince Harry's fiancée Meghan Markle. Henry Bolton, who was elected in September, said his 25-year-old partner Jo Marney had been suspended from the party after the text messages were published in the Mail on Sunday newspaper.

But one party politician said she should have been expelled, while a UKIP member of the European Parliament said it was time for the "inexperienced" leader to "go quietly". According to the tabloid, Marney wrote messages to a friend complaining that Markle—an American actress of mixed race who is due to marry Harry in May—would "taint our royal family" with her "seed". "Next will be a Muslim PM (prime minister). And a black king," she was reported to have written. In a statement, Marney said her remarks were "deliberately exaggerated to make a point" and were taken out of context, but "I fully recognize the offence they have caused".

### 'Disgraceful remarks'

Bolton is the third elected leader of UKIP since Nigel Farage resigned after helping secure a vote to leave European Union in June 2016, and the party has struggled to find a role. UKIP chairman Paul Oakden said that Bolton, who recently made headlines due to his decision to leave his wife and date Marney, had some "difficult decisions to make". The party's governing board will meet next weekend and will consult with the former army officer



LONDON: File photo shows Britain's Prince Harry and his fiancée US actress Meghan Markle arriving for their visit to Represent 107.3FM community radio station in Brixton, south west London. —AFP

"if he is still the leader at that point", he told the BBC.

Oakden said the coming year would be "crucial" for Brexit negotiations, adding: "We need to be behind our leader 100 percent in taking that battle forward." Whether or not the party decides it willing to give that support to Henry is for the party to decide." UKIP MEP Bill Etheridge said: "We are seeing UKIP resources used to defend

Henry's private life. "Henry does not have the experience, the political nous or advice to deal with the issues he faces.... He must go, he must go quickly, he must go as quietly as possible." Peter Whittle, a UKIP member of the London Assembly, tweeted: "These are disgraceful remarks. This person should not just be suspended from @UKIP but expelled altogether."—AFP

## Whistleblower Manning seeks US Senate seat

**WASHINGTON:** Whistleblower Chelsea Manning, jailed for leaking classified information, is seeking election to the US Senate in the state of Maryland, a document seen on Saturday says. Manning has now gone from prison to US senatorial candidate in less than a year during which she often made headlines, as the fame and infamy she gained by leaking a trove of classified documents follows her after release. The Federal Election Commission document, filed Thursday, lists Chelsea Elizabeth Manning of North Bethesda, Maryland, as a Democratic candidate for the Senate.

Manning, now 30, was an army intelligence analyst sentenced to 35 years in prison in 2013 for leaking more than 700,000 classified documents related to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The revelations by Manning, who is transgender and was then known as Bradley Manning, exposed covered-up misdeeds and possible crimes by US troops and allies. Her actions made Manning a hero to anti-war and anti-secrecy activists but US establishment figures branded her a traitor.

Then-president Barack Obama commuted Manning's sentence, leading to her release in May. During her incarceration Manning battled for, and won, the right to start hormone treatment. On Twitter she identifies herself as a "trans woman," and carries the slogan: "Make powerful people angry." The Democratic Senate incumbent is Ben Cardin, who was first elected in 2006 and is the senior Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. In elections last year, transgender candidate Danika Roem was elected to the Virginia state House of Delegates, becoming the first openly transgender lawmaker in the United States.

### No going back

US President Donald Trump has labeled Manning a traitor. He also tried to bar transgender personnel from the military but federal courts ruled against that ban. Following her release, Harvard University offered Manning a Kennedy School visiting fellowship along with several other people, including former White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer and Hillary Clinton campaign manager Robby Mook. But the offer to Manning sparked sharp criticism—including from CIA director Mike Pompeo, who pulled out of a Harvard forum, and former acting director Mike Morrell, who quit the university in protest—and it was later rescinded.

Manning wrote on Twitter in September that she was barred from entering Canada due to criminal convictions in the United States and posted an image of a document. The document said Manning had committed a crime outside the country that "would equate to an indictable offense, namely treason" in Canada and which carries a maximum sentence of 14 years imprisonment.

Manning made waves in a different way when she posed in a red one-piece bathing suit for Vogue's September issue, eliciting both supportive and critical comments. Speaking at the New Yorker Festival in October, Manning said she fears for her safety but does not plan to lay low. "I've had people telling me, 'Maybe you shouldn't be so vocal.' And that's the reason why I'm out here," she said, explaining that she "can't imagine doing anything else right now." "I had this image of going (back) to a life that I had before," she said. "And that's not possible. And I realize now that that's OK."—AFP



Chelsea Manning

## Germany's SPD at odds over coalition plan

**FRANKFURT AM MAIN:** Leading members of Germany's Social Democrats voiced skepticism yesterday over a preliminary coalition agreement reached with Chancellor Angela Merkel's conservatives, days after the hard-fought deal was hailed as a breakthrough. Berlin's SPD Mayor Michael Mueller said he was "very critical" about entering into another government with Merkel's CDU/CSU bloc after all three parties slumped to their worst results in decades in last September's election.

"The same coalition with the same policies is not the right answer," the centre-left politician told the Tagesspiegel daily, calling for "further talks" to win more concessions on key SPD demands. Party leaders on Friday announced after tortuous negotiations that they had signed off on a policy blueprint paving the way for formal coalition discussions to begin after months of paralysis in Europe's top economy.

In the 28-page document, the parties agreed to join France in a push to "strengthen and reform" the euro-zone, to limit the influx of asylum seekers to Germany to around 200,000 a year, and to refrain from tax hikes. But Mueller lamented the SPD's failure to secure a tax hike for the rich or a restructuring of the country's two-tier health care system—two major campaign pledges. Those concerns were echoed by the SPD's Malu Dreyer, premier of Rhineland-Palatinate state, who also slammed the compromise to cap immigration. The migration stance outlined in the roadmap was "very difficult" for the SPD, she told the German newspaper group Funke Mediengruppe.

### 'No GroKo'

The criticism will make for uncomfortable reading for SPD chief Martin Schulz, who has promised to give party members the last word on a third stint as Merkel's junior coalition partner. In a sign of the difficulties ahead, SPD delegates at a regional party conference in Saxony-Anhalt on Saturday narrowly voted against starting formal coalition talks. Spiegel news weekly said the non-binding vote was "hugely symbolic" coming just a day after the in-principle agreement "that Schulz is trying to sell as a success". The stakes will be higher next Saturday, when 600 party delegates will be asked to give the green light at a congress, followed by a final vote by more than 400,000 rank-and-file members.

The SPD's youth wing chief Kevin Kuehnert has vowed to spend the coming days criss-crossing the country to press his case against a new grand coalition, known as "GroKo" in German political shorthand. The SPD initially vowed to go into opposition after scoring a humiliating 20.5 percent in the September ballot. —AFP

International

# Anti-jihadist coalition looks to future role after IS defeat

## Islamic State vanquishes from its ‘caliphate’

**WASHINGTON:** With the Islamic State group all but vanquished from its self-proclaimed “caliphate” in Iraq and Syria, the US-led coalition that has been fighting the jihadists for more than three years is transforming its mission. Eager to avoid a repeat of 2011, when America completed its troop withdrawal from Iraq only to watch in horror as IS later overran swathes of the country, the coalition is focusing on what it must do to stop a jihadi re-emergence.

Defense Secretary Jim Mattis recently told reporters the mission now is shifting towards stabilization and making sure an “ISIS 2.0” can’t pop up, using an alternate acronym to refer to the jihadist group. Already, the Pentagon has said it will stay in Syria “as long as we need to.” “The longer term recovery is going to take a lot of effort and a lot of years after what (IS) did, because they forcibly kept innocent people in the midst of the combat zone, and that meant the residential areas took damage, the public areas—everything took damage,” he said, adding that a most pressing need is to clear cities and terrain of innumerable bombs, mines and booby traps.

America hastily convened a coalition in 2014 after IS swept across vast tracts of Iraqi and Syrian territory, terrorizing residents and leaving a trail of murder and atrocity in their wake. The US military began bombing them that summer with the immediate goal of stopping IS from reaching Baghdad after they’d seized a string of major cities including Mosul and Tikrit. Today, the coalition boasts 70 nations as well as international organizations like NATO and Interpol.

Though some alliance members are there in name only, bigger countries like Britain, France, Canada and Australia are helping in the skies and on the ground. A State

Department official said some coalition members can play an increased role now that the main campaign is over, including by countering IS propaganda, sending in police trainers and providing funding. Nicholas Heras, a fellow at the Center for a New American Security, said that ideally, “you are going to have different partners taking on many different aspects of the stabilizing mission, the part that they do well.”

With IS now cleared from 98 percent of the terrain they once held, nations like France and Australia have begun pulling some military assets—including planes and artillery—from Iraq and Syria, and the Pentagon has said the tapering off of bombing missions means it has more resources to fight the Taliban in Afghanistan. But the coalition is keeping an indefinite presence to help Iraqis get the support and training they need, and to protect a Kurdish-Arab alliance who fought against IS in Syria. “If we were to repeat the mistakes that we made when the Iraq War came to a close then we are very much likely to see a repeat of the tragedies that followed,” warned Steve Warren, a retired Army colonel who was top spokesman for the coalition between 2015 and 2016. “They need to morph into a stabilization force, there’s no question.”

“Skin in the game” America has about 2,000 troops in Syria and more than 5,000 in Iraq, augmented in both countries by coalition members who have provided commandos and military trainers. But where Iraq now has a cohesive military and some degree of political stability, Syria is mired in civil war and President Bashar al-Assad is working with Russia and Iranian militias to maintain control of areas once in the



**MOSUL:** An Iraqi man walks amidst the rubble of destroyed buildings in the old city of Mosul. Along the waterfront of the Tigris River in Iraq’s war-torn Mosul, gaping holes in hotel walls reveal little but enormous heaps of rubble. Six months since Iraqi forces seized the country’s second city from Islamic State group jihadists, human remains still rot in front of the Al-Nuri mosque. —AFP

hands of rebels or IS. That means the US must keep boots on the ground in Syria to protect fighters from the Syrian Democratic Forces who it backed to fight IS. “Unless we want to cede eastern Syria to the Iranians, (the coalition) needs to be there,” Warren told AFP. “Not necessarily the US—it’s other partners who have skin in this game, which includes every country in Europe,” he added, referring to

the refugee crisis that has gripped the continent in part because of Syria. Additionally, extremist groups the world over are rebranding themselves under the IS banner, meaning the anti-IS coalition will have a role beyond the Middle East, including in African nations. Last year, four new African nations signed up to the coalition: Djibouti, Niger, Cameroon and Chad. —AFP

## Who’s doing what in anti-IS coalition

**WASHINGTON:** The international coalition fighting the Islamic State group was formed in late 2014 and has since conducted thousands of bombing missions while also helping train local forces on the ground. Though it is made up of 74 nations and organizations, the coalition is a US-led and dominated enterprise. The United States is by far the largest contributor to the coalition, and has conducted the bulk of the more than 25,000 strikes in Iraq and Syria. Here is a look at what some of the other larger countries in the alliance are doing as the coalition focuses on stabilization efforts to prevent a return of IS.

### France

The French military has just pulled two of the 12 Rafale fighters it had operating in the region, but for now is keeping the rest in theater. Officials say they will be used for intelligence gathering and surveillance. The French are also training Iraqi special forces and working to assist internally displaced people and refugees.

### Britain

Royal Air Force aircraft have flown more than 10,400 missions and carried out over 1,700 strikes against IS in Iraq and Syria since 2014. Over 600 British soldiers are on the ground in Iraq helping to train security forces.

## Netanyahu trip highlights India’s Jewish community

**MUMBAI:** Israeli leader Benjamin Netanyahu makes an emotional visit this week to a Jewish centre targeted in the 2008 Mumbai attacks, in a trip that India’s tiny and shrinking Jewish community hopes will boost its profile. Netanyahu will talk trade in New Delhi and marvel at the Taj Mahal before rounding off his visit in Mumbai, where the majority of India’s estimated 4,500 Jews live. There he will accompany 11-year-old Moshe Holtzberg as the boy returns for the first time to the house where his parents were killed in the 26/11 terror attacks that left 166 people dead.

At Mumbai’s Magen David synagogue, worshippers are excited about the first visit to India by an Israeli leader in almost 15 years. “It’s very good news for us. We’re very lucky to get to see the prime minister over here,” Joel Gershon Awaskar told AFP after concluding his morning prayers. Netanyahu will be only the second Israeli PM to visit India and the first since Ariel Sharon in 2003. It comes six months after Indian leader Narendra Modi toured Israel.

For Jonathan Solomon, chairman of the Indian Jewish Federation, the reciprocal visits and warm ties between the two countries are of the “utmost importance” to Jews in India. “The closer the co-operation, the closer the Jewish community in India feels to Israel. So we feel recognized and we feel secure,” he said. It is not just recognition from abroad that many Indian Jews crave. Although historians believe Jews first arrived in India 2,000 years ago, their descendants today say they are virtually unknown in a country where they are hugely outnum-

bered by Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Buddhists, Jains and Zoroastrians. Nor are Jews officially recognized as a minority community by India’s government.

### Unknown

India is in fact home to several distinct Jewish groups. These include Bene Israelis, who have the longest history in India, and Baghdadi Jews, who fled persecution in the Middle East in the 18th and 19th centuries. Although there are no official figures, academics say India’s Jewish population peaked at around 20,000 in the mid 1940s. Numbers have dwindled rapidly because of emigration since the creation of Israel in 1948. “Many people here don’t know about the Jewish community, about our customs and festivals,” said Awaskar, who hopes Netanyahu’s visit will help increase awareness amongst Indians about the Jewish faith. “It will be good for us, we’ll become well known,” he added, a black-and-white checked, round cloth “kippah” resting on the top of his head.

Magen David, light blue in colour and situated in Mumbai’s historic Byculla district, is one of eight synagogues in India’s financial capital and surrounding suburbs. Every morning some 15 men—a few swaying back and forth—recite prayers there, in a space which could easily hold hundreds. Afterwards they sit down for a breakfast consisting of bread, eggs and cheese, washed down with a cup of milky Indian tea. More prayers are read and then bananas and slices of apple are served. “This whole area used to be Jewish,” recalls Ellis Jacob David, an official at the synagogue. “But many migrated to Israel, UK, Canada, Australia and the USA.”

### ‘Emotional’

India’s Jewish community hasn’t experienced the discrimination seen in other countries, a fact that Jewish historian

### Canada

A group of 20 Canadian army engineers has started training the Iraqi security forces in dealing with booby traps and mines, and the Canadians have a special operations contingent working in Iraq. The Royal Canadian Air Force also has two CC-130J Hercules transport aircraft to Iraq and has an air tanker in the region. Canada is sending a contingent of Royal Canadian Mounted Police to help train local cops in Iraq.

### Australia

Last month, the Royal Australian Air Force announced it was bringing home six hornet jets after a three-year mis-

sion. While the hornets are returning, a Wedgetail Airborne Early Warning and Control aircraft and a refueling plane will continue to support coalition operations and around 380 personnel will stay to train Iraqi forces.

### Italy

Italy has sent 1,400 soldiers to Iraq, 500 of them deployed to protect the Mosul dam. With work at the dam wrapping up, these troops are likely to be replaced by trainers to help local police forces. Italy’s carabinieri military police force has already rotated scores of trainers into Iraq and has instructed about 30,000 Iraqi police officers.—AFP



**MOSUL:** Combo picture shows (left) members of the Iraqi Counter-Terrorism Service (CTS) cheering as they carry upside-down a black flag of the Islamic State (IS) group and two men walking at the same place, six months after Iraqi forces seized the city from Islamic State. —AFP



**MUMBAI:** Members of the Indian Jewish community attend a morning prayer service at the Magen David Synagogue in Mumbai. —AFP

Leora Pezarkar partly attributes to its adoption of Indian customs, dress and language. “The community has mixed really well with the local population while not deviating from who they are as Jews,” she said. David, whose parents fled persecution in Iraq to come to India 125 years ago, says he has never experienced or heard of anyone being a victim of anti-semitism in India. “There was just one attack and that took place from outside the country, not internal, at all,” he told AFP, referring to November 2008.

Six people were killed at Chabad House, a Jewish centre in south Mumbai, when Pakistani militants carried out co-ordinated attacks across the city. Moshe Holtzberg was just two years old when his parents, who ran the centre, were gunned down. He was saved by his nanny who managed to escape and now lives in Israel.

On Thursday, Moshe, along with

Netanyahu, will visit his former home where a memorial to the victims is to be unveiled. “His visit is going to be very emotional for us. This is the place where he got his last hug from his father and mother,” Israel Kozlovsky, the centre’s rabbi said.

Netanyahu will also travel to Modi’s home state of Gujarat and host a party for Bollywood producers where he will trumpet Israel as a filming location. Jewish leaders hope the visit will help persuade India’s government to officially recognize them as a minority community, meaning they would be included in the census.

In 2016, Maharashtra state granted Jews minority status, making it easier to register marriages and acquire funding for institutions, but the central government is yet to follow suit. “Although it is just a symbolic recognition it is important for the community,” said Solomon.—AFP

## News in brief

### ‘Sexist’ 39-year ban lifted

**COLOMBO:** Sri Lanka has lifted a 39-year ban on women buying alcohol or working in places that sell or manufacture liquor, an official said yesterday. The 1979 law prohibiting the sale of any type of alcohol to women on the island of 21 million people was overturned in an effort to strike sexist bills from the statute books, said a spokesman for the finance ministry. “The idea was to restore gender neutrality,” Ali Hassen told AFP of the decision Wednesday to roll back the ban. The move also repeals a ban on women working in places where alcoholic drinks are made or sold, like bars. Liquor vendors are still forbidden to sell spirits to police or members of the armed forces in uniform, Hassen said. Sri Lanka in its November budget unveiled steep tax rises on hard liquor, but greatly reduced tariffs on wine and beer.

### Quake in southern Peru

**LIMA:** A strong earthquake struck the coast of southern Peru yesterday morning, the US Geological Survey (USGS) said, leaving one dead and around 20 injured and causing homes and roads to collapse. The 7.1 magnitude quake hit at 4:18 am local time at a depth of around 10 km, the USGS said. Peru’s government Geophysical Institute said the earthquake was of magnitude 6.7 with its epicenter in Lomas, in the southern region of Arequipa. Arequipa Governor Yamila Osorio said on Twitter that one 55-year old man died in the town of Yauca after being crushed by rock, while 20 people were injured in the town of Chala. Several municipalities were without electricity, and many roads and adobe houses had collapsed, Osorio said. Many residents of Lomas were evacuated after feeling an after-shock, she said. Earthquakes are common in Peru, but many homes are built with precarious materials that cannot withstand them.

### 4 soldiers killed in Congo

**KANANGA:** Men armed with machetes killed four soldiers in an attack yesterday near the main Kananga airport in Kasai, an opposition stronghold in the south of the Democratic Republic of Congo, residents said as tensions returned to the restive region. The assailants attacked the soldiers as they were sleeping in their tent, the sources said, adding that they then set fire to the tent. “An army vehicle arrived not far from my house and I saw four bodies of soldiers that they were transporting as well as another soldier with blood all over his body and wounds,” one resident said by telephone. The regional army commander, Brigadier General Marcellin Assoumani Issa Kumba, confirmed the attack but said he could not confirm the death toll. “We are in full pursuit of these bandits,” he said, adding that “the situation is under control for the moment.” A large contingent of soldiers could be seen patrolling the Kananga airport, while the streets of the city of around one million inhabitants were deserted and churches called off Sunday services.

### Double murder at hotel

**HONG KONG:** A foreign man has been arrested for the suspected murder of a woman and a boy yesterday at the luxurious Ritz-Carlton hotel on Hong Kong’s harbourfront, police said. Officers rushed to the hotel after receiving a report yesterday morning that a man and a woman were fighting. The woman and a boy were found dead at the scene and the man was arrested on suspicion of murder and sent to a hospital. Police did not confirm the relationship between the three people but told AFP they were all foreign nationals. According to local news site Apple Daily, the couple, in their 40s, and their seven-year-old son were of Korean nationality and had checked into the five-star hotel a few days before. The upscale hotel is located on the top floors of Hong Kong’s tallest skyscraper—the ICC—and is famous for panoramic views of the city and its Victoria Harbor.

## Analysis

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P.O.Box 1301 Safat, 13014 Kuwait.  
E MAIL: info@kuwaittimes.net  
Website: www.kuwaittimes.net

## Aussie plans for cannabis market dominance more smoke than fire

When Australia said this month it would allow exports of medicinal cannabis in a bid to dominate a global market set to be worth \$55 billion by 2025, investors scrambled to buy shares in marijuana companies - pushing several of them, and the sector as a whole, to record highs. But convoluted and restrictive licensing demands, substantial finance requirements and a guarded medical profession means even Australia's largest marijuana companies are at least a year away from a commercial crop. And doubts linger about the prospects for smaller entities, belying the government's ambitious plans to be the world's leading exporter.

"There will be more cannabis used in Australia and overseas over the next 10, 20 and 50 years but it is not clear that any of the local market can capture that, let alone make money from it," said Scott Phillips, director of research at investment company Motley Fool. "Look at the gold rush: sure, some made money, but the biggest winners were the sellers of the shovels."

Australia's medicinal cannabis sector, with 12 listed companies, produces a range of products that include chronic pain management and acne creams with extracts of marijuana to aid acne. The businesses acknowledge some barriers to growth but say they are primed to profit from a maturing market. Australia already produces 50 percent of the world's legal poppies, which are processed into pharmaceutical opiates such as morphine and codeine. Last year, it expanded its legal drug market by legalising medicinal marijuana use, a move that spurred a wave of IPOs and backdoor listings on the Australian Stock Exchange (ASX).

Contradicting the hype, however, only several hundred patients in Australia have so far been prescribed medical cannabis, data from the country's Ministry for Health show, as local doctors remain wary of the benefits of marijuana. The reluctance of doctors has curtailed the growth of Australia's cannabis market. Australian law requires the seven companies licensed to grow medicinal cannabis to produce only enough to meet domestic demand.

But when the Australian government said it planned to allow medicinal cannabis exports - perhaps within months - the three largest companies, AusCann Group, Cann Group and Hydroponics Company immediately looked for ways to expand production. Cann Group's chief executive, Peter Crock, said the company hopes to complete a new 16,000- to 20,000-square-metre medicinal cannabis facility this year, while Hydroponics Company's chief executive, David Radford, said a new production site to produce enough marijuana for 16,000 patients was "95 percent" complete.

Even once the facilities are built, however, both companies might not be allowed to grow an exportable crop right away. Australia said it will only allow exports of processed or manufactured cannabis products such as oil extracts, which require a separate manufacturing license. "Obtaining a licence is an exhaustive and complicated process," Crock said. Cann Group hopes to have full regulatory approval by the time its new facility is ready at the end of 2018. Only AusCann Group has all required licences. But the company has not yet finalised its production plans, managing director Elaine Darby told Reuters.

### Growing Market

Despite licensing issues, Australia's largest medicinal companies say they have secured sufficient capital for expansion. Analysts warn that capital restraints could hamstring the smaller players as a wave of IPOs, which fuelled the growth of Australia's medicinal cannabis industry in the past year, may be threatened by US regulatory uncertainty. The administration of US President Donald Trump has moved to allow federal prosecutors to more aggressively enforce marijuana laws. That throws uncertainty into what is expected to be the world's most lucrative market.

The ASX in December said it would require would-be public marijuana companies to provide evidence that their business could be lawfully carried out in the United States, under both federal and state law. Lawyers said that could deter potential listings. The newfound US government resistance to cannabis bucks a global trend, as a growing number of countries not only legalize its use but also take aim at the export market.

Canada dominates global production and exports, worth C\$6.2 billion in 2015, according to the country's statistics office. But recent moves to legalize recreational cannabis could create opportunities for other countries to capitalize. Australia will join Uruguay, Israel and the Netherlands in looking to fill the potential shortfall in supply. With demand skewed toward North America and Europe, Australia's export supplies will face a freight disadvantage. But like the country's agriculture sector, it is positioning itself as a producer of a premium product.

"The Australian cannabis market is akin to the wine industry: You'll have your premium, Grange hermitage wines, and then you will have goon bags. We will at the premium end," said Radford, referring to the difference in price between one of the world's top vintages and cheap, boxed wine. —Reuters



## Turkey and the EU: Time for plan B?

After an over half century accession bid, Turkey and the European Union are moving into a new period of relations where tighter cooperation in specific areas will be prioritised over Ankara's drive for full membership, analysts say. Ties between Turkey and the EU reached a low point in 2017 with the membership process grinding to a halt and President Recep Tayyip Erdogan accusing some key members, including Germany, of behavior reminiscent of the Nazis.

But Erdogan has begun 2018 in a different spirit, bounding off in the first week of January on a visit to Paris and his foreign minister making a key fence-mending trip to Germany. Meanwhile, EU leaders have urged a new spirit of realism, with French President Emmanuel Macron saying during Erdogan's January 5 trip it was time to end the "hypocrisy" that progress could be made on Turkish membership.

"There is an understanding on both sides that the accession process is dead and won't go anywhere soon," said Asli Aydintasbas, a fellow at the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR). "So we are essentially talking about a new format and a more transactional relationship with European member states," she told AFP, adding this would mean more emphasis on trade. "Ankara sees this as such and entertains no illusions about revitalizing the accession process," she added.

### 'Downsizing the relationship'

The July 2016 failed coup marked a watershed moment in the history of Turkey-EU relations, with Ankara accusing the bloc of failing to show solidarity and Brussels sounding alarm over the mass post-coup crackdown. Erdogan has repeatedly huffed and puffed over the length of Turkey's EU bid, complaining that Ankara has been "kept waiting at the door" for 50 years as it watched ex-Communist states being let in without fuss. Accession talks

began in Oct 2005. Out of the total of 35 chapters needed to be closed to join the EU, 16 have been opened with just one closed. No new chapter has been opened since financial and budgetary provisions was opened in June 2016.

"It's clear that we must move away from this hypocrisy of thinking a natural progression towards the opening of new chapters is possible when this is not true," Macron said after his talks with Erdogan. Bulgarian Foreign Minister Ekaterina Zaharieva, whose country holds the EU presidency, said Friday it was better to have a "realistic"



### EU leaders have urged a new spirit of realism

discussion with Turkey about membership without "hiding the problems". Marc Pierini, a visiting scholar at Carnegie Europe and a former EU ambassador to Turkey, said Ankara "by its own choices" was no longer meeting the necessary criteria, especially on rule of law, in the wake of the post-coup crackdown. "Essentially what we are witnessing now is the downsizing of the relationship from one between political allies to one between partners cooperating in a number of fields such as counter-terrorism, trade and refugees," he told AFP. Hurriyet daily columnist Sedat Ergin wrote Friday Macron's words signalled a "paradigm

change" in Turkey's relationship with the EU which, for the French leader, would now be defined "cooperation in pursuit of common goals" rather than enlargement. "Just a name has not been given to this new format of cooperation," he said. Incentives for Turkey without full membership include visa liberalization and an upgrading of the existing customs union. But EU Affairs Minister Omer Celik said Ankara would perceive an offer of a so-called "privileged partnership" as an insult, saying Turkey would never accept a "second class status".

### 'Warming up to Europe'

Elsewhere, Turkey's hopes of a strong relationship with US President Donald Trump have been scuppered by rows including the arming of Syrian Kurds and a New York court case. Meanwhile Ankara is aware its current pragmatic partnerships with Turkey's historic Ottoman rivals Iran and Russia are precarious while the rise of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in Saudi Arabia has reshuffled the cards in the Gulf region. For all the rows of the last year, the EU is still by far Turkey's largest trading partner, while Turkey is the EU's fourth largest export market and fifth largest provider of imports.

The meeting between Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu and German counterpart Sigmar Gabriel at least changed the mood music in a bumpy relationship, with Berlin's top diplomat hosting his guest in his folksy Lower Saxon hometown and treating him to a cup of home-brewed Turkish tea. Gabriel had late December suggested a deal for Britain's relationship with the EU after Brexit could be a model for the future relationship of Turkey with the bloc. "Turkey is warming up to Europe and there is a deliberate effort from leaders in Ankara to distance themselves from the acerbic language and accusations," said Aydintasbas. —AFP

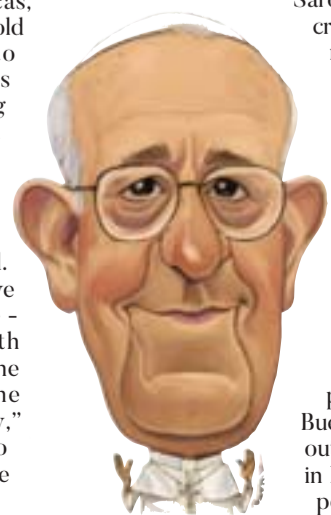
### 'Link between worlds'

The Archbishop of Buenos Aires was virtually an unknown when he was elected on March 13, 2013, becoming the first pope to choose the name Francis - a homage to St Francis of Assisi, who dedicated his life to the poor. The Argentine hails from a family of Italian immigrants and became "a sort of link between the Old World and the New World", says Giovanni Maria Vian, editor of the Vatican's L'Osservatore Romano newspaper.

However, "the dramatic history of Argentina at the end of the 20th century is what shapes his personal trajectory", he says in the preface to a book called "Francis, the American pope". In 2007, Jorge Bergoglio was elected by his fellow bishops in Aparecida in Brazil to draw up the final document of the Latin American Episcopal Council, which can be read as a guide to many of the themes dearest to him.

Bergoglio stressed the ills of a "scandalous inequality which wounds personal dignity", a theme which "clearly guides his actions at the head of the church today", Vatican specialist Nicolas Seneze writes in "The Words of the Pope". The Aparecida conference "prioritized the poor", Sarondo said. "The pope is very critical of capitalism which sacrifices human rights - a typical stance of the Latin American episcopate," he added.

While Polish pope John Paul II had denounced "wild capitalism", Francis has taken more concrete steps, such as calling for "a poor church for the poor" and turning down a luxurious papal apartment for a humble hotel room, he said. Bergoglio was an active pastor, taking the bus around Buenos Aires and heading without a second thought into slums in Latin America to comfort the poor. —AFP



## GOP powerbrokers: Intensely private Mercer family

He is a reclusive hedge fund billionaire who made a fortune using complicated algorithms to bet on things other people could not see. One of his gambles was on Donald Trump. And his backing of the long-shot presidential candidate has made Robert "Bob" Mercer, the former co-CEO of Renaissance Technologies, the top powerbroker in Republican politics today. The Mercer family is not nearly as well known as the industrialist Koch brothers or the Las Vegas casino magnate Sheldon Adelson when it comes to supporting right-wing causes in the United States.

And they are more than happy to keep it that way. Mercer, 71, who worked as a computer scientist at IBM before joining Long Island-based Renaissance Technologies, has always shunned the limelight. According to numerous accounts, Mercer is socially awkward and intensely private. He is described in Michael Wolff's bombshell new book "Fire and Fury" as "almost nonverbal, looking at you with a dead stare and either not talking or offering only minimal response."

In November, Robert Mercer abruptly announced that he was stepping down as co-chief executive of Renaissance Technologies because of the unwanted press scrutiny brought about by his political activities. In his resignation letter, Mercer also made his most expansive public comments to date, outlining the core principles of his libertarian philosophy.

### Advocate of small government

"I believe that individuals are happiest and most fulfilled when they form their own opinions, assume responsibility for their own actions, and spend the fruits of their

own labor as they see fit," he said. "This is why I support conservatives, who favor a smaller, less powerful government." In his book about the Trump White House, Wolff expanded further on what he claimed was the Mercer family doctrine. He said they were attempting to build a "radical free-market, small-government, home-schooling, antiliberal, gold-standard, pro-death penalty, anti-Muslim, pro-Christian, monetarist, anti-civil-rights political movement in the United States."

With the silver-haired Mercer patriarch remaining behind the scenes, it is up to Rebekah, 44, the second of his three daughters, to channel the family money to conservative causes and maintain the direct line to the White House. While the Koch brothers and other Republican mega-donors sat out the 2016 presidential race because of a distaste for Trump, the Mercers threw their considerable resources behind the brash real estate tycoon after initially backing Texas Senator Ted Cruz.

They donated millions to Trump's co-fers and persuaded his then floundering campaign to take on board two figures seen as instrumental to his upset victory over Democrat Hillary Clinton - anti-establishment ideologue Steve Bannon and pollster Kellyanne Conway. Robert Mercer, who reportedly has an abiding hatred of the Clintons, is a long-time patron of Bannon, who headed the right-wing website Breitbart News until becoming chief executive of Trump's election campaign.

When President Trump angrily severed ties with Bannon recently over comments he made in the Wolff book, it was a damaging blow to his former White House chief strategist. But the coup de grace to any remaining political ambitions Bannon may have had came a few days later, when the Mercer family pulled the plug on their long-time ally. "I support President Trump and the platform upon which he was elected," Rebekah Mercer said in a rare public statement. —AFP

## News



**SIDON:** Lebanese security forces secure the area following a car bomb blast in this southern Lebanese port city yesterday. — AFP

## Car bomb wounds Hamas official in southern Lebanon

**SIDON, Lebanon:** An official of the Palestinian Islamist movement Hamas was wounded yesterday in a car bomb blast in Lebanon's southern port city of Sidon. Hamas's Lebanon branch named the wounded man as its "staff member" Mohammed Hamdan. "The blast wounded his leg, destroyed his car and damaged the building. Preliminary evidence points to Zionist (involvement) behind this crime," it said in a statement.

A military source told AFP that a BMW "detonated, wounding Hamas official Mohammed Hamdan", and Lebanon's army said a "500-gramme bomb" had been placed in his vehicle. An AFP journalist in Sidon saw the burnt-out vehicle, a silver BMW, in a parking lot of an apartment building where Hamdan lived. Firefighters arrived to put out the flames and Lebanese security forces quickly cordoned off the area. "All civilians get back!" shouted an officer, ushering curious residents away from the charred car. The Red Cross confirmed

there was only one person wounded in the blast and said he had been transported to hospital in a civilian vehicle.

Hamdan did not appear to have a public or political role in Hamas, but a Palestinian security source told AFP that he was a member of the organization's security apparatus. "Hamdan is an official in Hamas's security service. His work is linked to internal Palestinian affairs," the source said. "Because of the nature of his work, the fingers are pointed to the Israeli enemy."

Hamas has fought three wars with Israel in the last decade and is based in the Gaza strip, but it operates branches elsewhere in the Middle East including Lebanon. Tens of thousands of Palestinian refugees live in Lebanon, many of them in 12 camps across the country. The most densely-populated is Ain al-Hilweh, which lies near Sidon and is home to an estimated 61,000 Palestinians, including 6,000 who have fled the war in neighboring Syria.

By longstanding convention, Lebanese authorities do not enter Palestinian camps, where security is instead left to joint Palestinian security forces. These units - which include Hamas, rival Palestinian faction Fatah and other groups - have fought several battles with jihadist groups inside Ain al-Hilweh. — AFP

## Turkish airplane skids off runway...

Continued from Page 1

Pegasus Airlines confirmed in a statement yesterday there were no injuries among the 162 passengers, two pilots and four flight attendants. The cause of the incident was unknown but an investigation is under way, the Trabzon governor's office said. A crisis center for the incident was set up at the airport.

"The plane will be removed while all measures have been taken for other work and procedures. These will

be carried out step-by-step," Trabzon governor Yucel Yavuz told Anadolu. He added that a small number of people asked to go to hospital but did not give further detail. The Trabzon public prosecutor has launched a separate criminal probe. Dogan agency said the prosecutor would seek statements from the six crew onboard. The airport was temporarily shut before reopening early yesterday, while an operation to remove the plane continued.

Professor Atakan Aksoy from Karadeniz Technical University's civil engineering department said that the construction of a second runway needed to be "accelerated". "These kinds of accidents can happen due to the narrow ground surface in the northern part of the airport and because it is near a cliff," he told Dogan agency. — AFP

## New protests as Tunisia marks...

Continued from Page 1

"This empty basket sums up our situation seven years after the revolution," said the philosophy professor. A wave of peaceful protests and night-time unrest hit cities and towns across the country this past week, after hikes in value-added tax and social security contributions introduced in early January. The interior ministry says it has arrested more than 800 people suspected of taking part in violence, theft and looting since the start of the unrest. Protester demands have included a review of the 2018 austerity budget and more efficient measures to fight enduring corruption.

More than 1,000 people took part in the protest outside the UGTT offices. "The people want the fall of the 2018 budget," some chanted, echoing 2011 calls for the fall of the regime. Hundreds more gathered after Ennahdha, an Islamist party that is part of the ruling coalition, and Prime Minister Youssef Chahed's Popular Front party also called for demonstrations.

President Beji Caid Essebsi marked the anniversary by attending the opening of a youth center in the working-class Tunis suburb of Ettadhamen, which saw night-time clashes between young protesters and police this

week. "This year we will start to take care of the young," he said. "The revolution for freedom and dignity... was in effect led by the young." Several local residents turned out to air their frustration. "He says he will help us, and then he goes back to his palace," said Mouna, a high school student.

Tunisia's 2011 revolt was sparked by the self-immolation of a fruit seller in desperation at police harassment and unemployment. On Jan 14, 2011, Ben Ali fled to Saudi Arabia, inspiring similar revolts across the region in what became known as the Arab Spring. Tunisia has been praised for its steps towards democracy in the years since, compared to countries now wracked by war such as Syria or Yemen. A new constitution was adopted and legislative and presidential polls held in 2014.

But authorities have struggled to redress Tunisia's economy, including after deadly jihadist attacks in 2015 dealt a major blow to the key tourism sector. Seven years on, youth unemployment is more than 35 percent, according to the International Labour Organization, while inflation reached more than six percent at the end of last year.

On Saturday, Essebsi announced an increase in aid to the needy and improved healthcare as part of social reforms. The action plan, costing more than 70 million dinars (\$28.5 million), will benefit more than 120,000 Tunisians, according to the authorities. Tunisia has secured a 2.4-billion-euro (\$2.9-billion) IMF loan in return for a reduction in its budget deficit and financial reforms. — AFP

## No survivors as Iran tanker sinks...

Continued from Page 1

joined the martyrs", according to an official statement carried by state media.

Chinese rescuers had on Saturday recovered the tanker's "black box", the transport ministry said, without specifying exactly what had been retrieved. A reporter with China's state television CCTV aboard a plane from the State Oceanic Administration reported seeing wreckage from the Sanchi, oil on fire, and spilled fuel covering a 10-sq-km area. "The oil spill situation is very serious," CCTV quoted the reporter as saying on social media.

But the television channel earlier also cited Zhang

Yong, a senior engineer with the State Oceanic Administration, as playing down fears of a spill. "Because this is a light crude oil spill, relatively speaking it has a much smaller impact than other oil spills, because this kind of oil is especially volatile - most of it has entered the atmosphere, so it's had less impact on the ocean", Zhang was quoted as saying. "This area should be considered the open sea, very far from places where people live, so the human impact should be minimal."

Rescue efforts had been particularly difficult because at 89 degrees Celsius, the vessel's compartments were too hot for workers to withstand for long, CCTV quoted He Wang, an expert from Chinese oil company Huade Petrochemical, as saying. Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi earlier told his Iranian counterpart Mohammad Javad Zarif by telephone that "as long as there is 1 percent of hope, China will continue to make 100 percent effort" to rescue and recover the crew. — Agencies

## Kuwaitization of public sector jobs...

Continued from Page 1

number of expat employees annually in order to reach the designated percentage by 2022 for each category of jobs as per the Kuwaitization plan that was launched by the government in Sept 2017. The document asks each entity to reduce the number of expats and adhere to the set percentage in the Kuwaitization plan.

The demand by the finance ministry to send the lists urgently is within the framework of preparing an estimated budget of government bodies' expenses, as the finance ministry is trying to put a limit on expenses on them. It said no additional allocations should be sought during the fiscal year, except in highly urgent cases.

The document said government bodies will be committed to coordinate with the Civil Service Commission to send to the finance ministry the final numbers of expats who are to be terminated, so that the finance ministry will freeze the job and remove it.

Sources said that a government body asked for several million dinars to pay expats' end of service indemnities, in addition to the difference between the newly-appointed Kuwaitis and expats' salaries whose services will be terminated. The sources added that this is an example of what will happen with many other government entities that have asked for additional financial allocations.

The plan called for terminating expats in the following job categories based on specialization, so that they will be 100 percent Kuwaitized by 2022:

- Information technology
- Marine
- Arts, information, letters and public relations
- Development, administrative follow-up and statistics
- Administrative support



**TUNIS:** Tunisians carry flares and shout slogans against the government during a demonstration over price hikes and austerity measures yesterday. — AFP

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Sports

# Oman's Essam Albalushi wins gold medal with score of 241.7 points

## Al-Roudhan opens Amir 7th Int'l Shooting Grand Prix



Essam Albalushi



Shooters taking their position for 10m Air Rifle competition.



Special performance during the opening ceremony.

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Commerce and Industry Minister, State Minister for Youth Affairs Khalid Al-Roudhan opened HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Seventh Annual Shooting Grand Prix at Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Olympic Shooting Complex, as 350 shooters are representing 39 Arab and foreign countries.

The opening ceremony was also attended by Minister of Public Works, State Minister for Municipal Affairs Eng Hussam Al-Roumi, Director General of Public Authority for Sports Dr Humoud Falaiten, Director General of Public Authority for Youth Abdelrahman Al-Mutairi, President of Asian Shooting Federation Sheikh Ali Al-Khalifa, Vice President of International Sports Federation Luciano Rossi, heads of delegations and shooting sport fans.

The ceremony included a display of participating countries' flags, and a documentary about Kuwait Shooting Federation's achievements and an operetta titled "Kuwait of Peace and Humanity", by Ministry of Education students.

Meanwhile the results of first day of competition saw Oman's Essam Albalushi win the gold medal with the score of 241.7 points, followed by Saudi Arabia's Misfer Al-Ammari with 240.4 and Bahrain's Mahmoud Ali Haji third with a score of 219.6.

Kuwait returns to hosting important sports events

The finals of Trap for men and women will be played today, as well as the 10m air rifle for women.

Meanwhile, Minister Al-Roudhan told journalists following the opening ceremony that the Grand Prix has a special significance as it comes following the lifting of the suspension on Kuwait shooting. He said it also comes following the hosting of "Khaleeji 23" soccer tournament, and is considered a true return to hosting important sports events here in Kuwait.

Al-Roudhan lauded the efforts of the organizing committee of the Grand Prix, as well as Kuwait Shooting Federation for the outstanding organization of the opening ceremony.

President of Arab and Kuwait Shooting Federations Eng Duaij Al-Otaibi in his opening speech said the contributions of HH the Amir to the sport of shooting are many as he gave all support and care for athletes and the building of the unique Olympic shooting complex.

Al-Otaibi thanked HH the Amir for patronizing the grand prix for the seventh consecutive year, and thanked Minister Khalid Al-Roudhan for attending the opening ceremony as representative of HH the Amir.

Omani Shooter Essam Albalushi said that winning first place was very difficult, as competition was very strong with highly talented shooters. He said the most difficult stage for him was the semi finals against Misfer Al-Ammari and Bahrain's Mahmoud Haji.



KUWAIT: (From left) Sheikh Ali Al-Khalifa, President of ASC, Khalid Nasser Al-Roudhan, Minister of Commerce and Industry and Minister of State for Youth Affairs, Duaij Khalaf Al-Otaibi, President of Arab and Kuwait Shooting Federation and Eng Hussam Al-Roumi, Minister of Public Works and State Minister for Municipal Affairs are seen during the opening ceremony.

## Hirscher wins fifth slalom of the season

WENGEN: The irrepressible Marcel Hirscher stayed on course for his seventh successive overall World Cup title and sounded a warning to his Olympic rivals with another dominant win yesterday, this time in the slalom at Wengen. The Austrian, who will be aiming to add a first Olympic gold in Pyeongchang next month to his glittering array of titles, won by 0.93 seconds from long-suffering Norwegian rival Henrik Kristoffersen.

Hirscher was fastest in both legs as he claimed his fifth successive slalom win and left Kristoffersen to contemplate his seventh second place of the season, five of those behind the Austrian. Andre Myhrer of Sweden was third on a difficult, icy course which saw more than 20 skiers fail to finish the first run.

"At the moment, he's just better, that's the way it is and I don't really have anything more to say," Kristoffersen told reporters. "I'll never give up that's for sure, I'll keep fighting and I'll train as much as I have to so that one day I can be on top of the podium again."

Although Hirscher has won 53 World Cup races, it was his first success at Wengen, considered one of the circuit's classic events, and where Kristoffersen won for the past two seasons. "Everybody is beatable including



WENGER: Winner Austria's Marcel Hirscher (C), second-placed Norway's Henrik Kristoffersen (L) and third-placed Sweden's Andre Myhrer (R) celebrate on the podium after the men's Slalom race at the FIS Alpine Skiing World Cup in Wengen, yesterday. — AFP

myself," said Hirscher. "I've managed to win this race for the first time, it's something special for me."

"This was the only classic race in the slalom calendar that I hadn't won today, and the media were always asking me why, so now that matter is finished," Hirscher

tops the overall standings with 974 points and extended his lead over Kristoffersen, who is second, to 174. Alexis Pinturault of France is third on 579. Hirscher has won eight races altogether this season, with the other three in giant slalom. — Reuters

## Chan, Daleman win at Canadian titles as Olympics loom

VANCOUVER: Patrick Chan won the Canadian figure skating championships men's title for the 10th time on Saturday, while Gabrielle Daleman celebrated her 20th birthday by winning the women's competition.

Tessa Virtue and Scott Moir won the ice dance with a steamy performance to the music of Moulin Rouge in Vancouver, while Meagan Duhamel and Eric Radford won the pairs. Three-times world champion Chan was not at his best, but did enough to prevail with a score of 274.24 points.

"I won my first senior title (here). I've

won my 10th here again and I want to live here," Chan said in a rink-side interview. "What a way to kick it off. "Today was not the dream skate I imagine but when you look at every champion in every sport, it's up and downs that create champions and how you weather the storms, weather the challenges."

Chan won silver in Sochi four years ago and has said he felt overthinking the experience had hampered him. Daleman produced a brilliant free skate to finish with a Canadian record score of 229.78 points and edge Kaetlyn Osmond, who is still expected to start as one of the favourites next month after winning silver at last year's world championships.

"Hopefully the frustration I feel here will motivate me for the next month," said Osmond. Daleman will head to Pyeongchang brimming with confidence. "You're competing against number two in the world. This means the absolute world to me going into an Olympic year," she told reporters. In the ice dance, Virtue and Moir's eighth national title



Gabrielle Daleman

was highlighted by their performance to Moulin Rouge, which they hope will provide a difference in Pyeongchang.

"I think edgy would probably summarize most of the program quite well and that's what we were going for," Virtue said. "We knew that taking the ice at an Olympic Games again meant that we

needed to have a different style.

"If that was bringing an edge or sexuality or darkness, or a contemporary feel to it, then mission accomplished I guess." Virtue and Moir won gold in Vancouver in 2010 before taking silver in Sochi then retired but launched a comeback last year. — Reuters

## Europe fight back to defeat Asia in EurAsia Cup

KUALA LUMPUR: Europe came from behind to defeat Asia 14-10 and retain the EurAsia Cup title yesterday, in a boost for captain Thomas Bjorn as he gears up for the Ryder Cup. Bjorn's side entered the final day of the tournament in Malaysia trailing Asia by one point but put on a masterclass in the singles, winning eight out of 12 matches.

It was a disappointment for Indian captain Arjun Atwal's men, as Team Asia had ended the first two days of the event—which featured foursome and four-ball matches—with a slim lead. Asia has never won the biennial Ryder Cup-style tournament. Europe thrashed them the last time it was held in 2016 while the inaugural 2014 edition ended in a tie.

Europe dominated from the start Sunday and their winning point came when Belgium's Thomas Pieters defeated South Korea's An Byeong-Hun in a hard-fought match. Bjorn hailed his side's victory in the \$4.8 million event: "It was a great performance today from every single one of them. There was a determination and a will of wanting to win this."

The Dane is also Europe's Ryder Cup captain and the Malaysian event was a chance for him to run the rule over a heavyweight European side before the showdown against the USA in France in September. "I learned a lot about myself this week," said Bjorn, whose team included six Ryder Cup veterans. "I learned a lot about these 12 players, and they have all got potential to be in Paris in nine months time."

Despite the loss, Atwal said he was "very proud" of his team. "They are all awesome players, it's just unfortunate that we ran into a buzzsaw today," he said. "It looked like every time I watched my players, they were hitting the edges and it seemed Europe, every time I watched them, were either chipping in or making birdies."

Bjorn's side, all European Tour winners, won seven of the eight first matches Sunday at the Glenmarie Golf and Country Club near Kuala Lumpur. In his showdown, Pieters started strongly by winning four of the first six holes against An to establish a strong lead but the Korean fought back and levelled the match. The Belgian scored a seven-foot putt at the 15th to move back out in front before winning another hole, ensuring Europe would retain the trophy.

"It's always nice to get the winning point," Pieters said. "I got off to a good start, then played pretty poorly during the middle, then made a couple of very good birdies." —AFP



# Halep, Wozniacki eye maiden Slam in Serena's absence

## 36-year-old Williams not ready yet to return

**MELBOURNE:** Simona Halep will sport her "lucky" red dress and Caroline Wozniacki says she is playing better than ever as both aim for a first Grand Slam victory when the Australian Open starts today. The world's two top-ranked players will spearhead the charge to succeed Serena Williams at year's first major left wide open by the withdrawal of the defending champion and new mum.

With the 36-year-old Williams not ready yet to return, the tournament could be there for the taking by a host of players yet to win a Grand Slam led by top seed Halep, Wozniacki and fourth-ranked Elina Svitolina. Last year there were two first-time major-winners while Serena was on maternity leave-Jelena Ostapenko at the French Open and Sloane Stephens at the US Open.

But their chances in Melbourne look slim: Stephens hasn't won a match since her Flushing Meadows triumph, and Ostapenko was far from her attacking best in first-round defeats in Shenzhen and Sydney recently. Wimbledon champion and world number three Garbine Muguruza is battling injury problems which could further aid Halep's hopes. And the 26-year-old Romanian, who currently has no clothing sponsor, confirmed she would wear the same "lucky" red dress in Australia that she used while registering a dominant victory at the Shenzhen Open a fortnight ago. She found the outfit on the internet and hoped it would bring the same results in Australia.

"Was a (web)site, in China actually, and one of my managers helped me, and in 24 hours I had the outfit, and it was perfect. I was lucky," she said. But lucky dress or not, she will need to overcome her poor record at Melbourne

Park where she has lost in the first round in both of the past two years when she opens tomorrow against Australian wildcard Destinee Aiava. Former number one Wozniacki is riding high in the rankings again after reaching eight finals in 2017, with victories in Tokyo in September and at the season-ending Tour Championship.

"I think I've improved everything," said Wozniacki ahead of a first-round clash today with Romania's Mihaela Buzarnescu. She lost in the Auckland Classic final last week to Germany's Julia Goerges, but said the rain-disrupted tournament had been tough, ideal preparation. "It was a good start to the year," said Wozniacki.

In-form Svitolina last week won the Brisbane International after picking up five WTA Tour titles last year, more than any other woman. The Ukrainian believes hard work in the off-season is paying dividends. "I've started to play more consistently," she said. "I'm stronger physically. I have a different look to my game."

World number six Karolina Pliskova lost to Svitolina in the Brisbane semi-final but also will be a contender for a maiden Slam behind one of the biggest serves on tour. Britain's world number nine Johanna Konta could figure despite a stuttering start to the season.

She reached the at least the last eight in both of her Australian Open appearances to date, but slumped out of the Sydney International in the first round and faces a tricky opener against competitive American Madison Brengle. The most dangerous floater is 2008 champion Maria Sharapova, who is back in the world's top 50 for the first time since returning from a 15-month doping ban and



MELBOURNE: Denmark's Caroline Wozniacki hits a return during a practice session ahead of the Australian Open tennis tournament in Melbourne yesterday. — AFP

will open against unseeded German Maria Tatjana. Former champions aiming to go deep into the tournament include evergreen 37-year-old Venus Williams, who last won a

Slam in 2008 but last year reached two finals-in Melbourne and Wimbledon-to get back to world number five, and Angelique Kerber.—AFP

## Fun-loving Federer having a ball at 36

**MELBOURNE:** After two decades of high-intensity tennis, non-stop travel, and the commitments that come with being a sporting superstar, Roger Federer is still loving what he does. The 36-year-old Swiss, who is gunning for a 20th Grand Slam title at the Australian Open, admitted yesterday he was enjoying it as much as ever, if not more.

This is despite saying the lead-up to the opening major of the year had been "intense" with feverish interest from sponsors and media in one of the world's most marketable athletes.

On top of this, he said the off-season for him was now tougher than playing tournaments so he can get his body in good enough shape to stay at the level needed to be one of the top players in the world.

But he wouldn't have it any other way as he enters the final years of a glittering career. "I've always enjoyed it, you know. Do I enjoy it more now? It's unfair if I say yes, because I felt like I loved the time when I was coming up and playing my heroes from TV," he said.

"I mean, that was extremely cool. It was like a little boy in the candy store back in the day. "When I was number one in the world, winning all these tournaments, that was a lot of fun, too. That was OK."

He seems to be getting more out of it now than ever before, travelling with four children—two sets of twins—in tow and conscious perhaps that it will not go on forever. "Now it's different," he admitted on the eve of his 72nd Grand Slam. "Now I have a big family. I have a lot of friends that travel the world with me."



MELBOURNE: Switzerland's Roger Federer gestures during a press conference ahead of the Australian Open tennis tournament in Melbourne yesterday. —AFP

"I get to see familiar faces again at all these events because I've made so many friends over the course of my career. I'm so happy to come back to Melbourne, see all my friends that live here in Melbourne. "It just seems that it's nice that it's never actually gone away, the fun aspect of actually enjoying the travel, coming

back to Australia.

"Yeah, it's great times in my life and in my career that we can make it all work, that I can still play tennis. My wife (Mirka) is incredibly supportive." He added: "It's definitely great times. Is it the best ever? I'm not sure, but it's definitely a lot of fun right now." — AFP

## Joshua, Parker set for world heavyweight title clash

**LONDON:** Heavyweight boxing moved closer to having an undisputed world champion after it was announced yesterday that Britain's Anthony Joshua and New Zealand's Joseph Parker will meet for a multiple title bout in Cardiff on March 31.

Joshua will put his World Boxing Association and International Boxing Federation belts on the line against Parker, the World Boxing Organisation champion. Matchroom Boxing, Joshua's promoters, said the bout would take place at the 74,500 capacity Principality Stadium, best known for staging Wales rugby union internationals.

"I would like to announce the official news that myself and Joseph Parker will be fighting on March 31 at Principality Stadium in Cardiff," said Joshua. "It is a unification heavyweight championship fight. We all know what happened last time I was in a unification heavyweight championship fight—it was gruelling, it was interesting and we both left the ring with masses of respect," the 28-year-old added.

"These fights aren't easy because there is a lot on the line, so respect to team Parker for taking the challenge. I am looking forward to it, training camp is under way and before you know it March 31 will be upon us."

Joshua, the London 2012 Olympic super-heavyweight



CARDIFF: File photo taken on September 11, 2017 shows Britain's Anthony Joshua during a press conference at the Principality Stadium in Cardiff. Joshua and Joseph Parker will meet in a world heavyweight title unification bout in Cardiff on March 31. — AFP

champion, unified the WBA and IBF titles with a dramatic and hard-fought win over Vladimir Klitschko at Wembley in April before retaining both belts against Carlos Takam in a late-stoppage win in Cardiff in October. Parker, 26, became the WBO champion in December 2016. He made his British debut last year with a majority points win over challenger Hughie Fury, a cousin of former world heavyweight champion Tyson Fury. Parker's performance against Fury did not impress some ringside observers. But Parker was adamant his punching power would test Joshua. "Anthony Joshua is in for a huge shock," he said. "A couple

of months ago I heard him say 'why should I be worried about this little kid from New Zealand'?

"Well, now he's about to find out. And the world is about to find out whether AJ can really take a punch. "My entire existence is now devoted to proving what the boxing world already knows." Sunday's announcement concluded weeks of sometimes fraught talks between the two camps. "I'm delighted to get this fight made—it's been a long time coming," said Joshua's promoter Eddie Hearn. "Champions should fight champions and AJ continues to step up to the challenges." — AFP

## Warriors hold off charging Raptors to win on road

**LOS ANGELES:** Klay Thompson delivered 26 points and Kevin Durant tallied 25 as the reigning NBA champion Golden State Warriors held on to defeat the Raptors 127-125 in Toronto on Saturday. The Warriors recorded their league-best 19th road win of the season as they won the battle against a Raptors team lying second in the Eastern Conference.

They didn't make it easy, however, blowing a 27-point halftime lead before hanging on for the victory. DeMar DeRozan helped spark Toronto's rally with a 42-point performance for the Raptors, who lost to Golden State for an eighth straight time.

Two-time league MVP Stephen Curry scored 24 points for the Warriors after missing the last two games with an ankle injury. Durant came up with some clutch baskets down the stretch to secure the win. DeRozan's layup moved Toronto to within 121-119 with just over two minutes left, but Durant countered to give the Warriors a four-point lead. DeRozan responded, cutting the Raptors' deficit to 123-122 with 63 seconds remaining. After Curry surprisingly missed two free throws with 45 seconds left, Durant's basket with 21 seconds remaining made it 125-122. Curry then made amends by making two free throws with two seconds left.

Toronto's Fred VanVleet nailed a three-pointer at the buzzer to round out the scoring. After the game, Curry praised the Raptors for the way they fought back. "They played amazing in the second half. You knew in this building they would make a run. I didn't think it would be that big," said Curry.

All the Raptors coaching staff and players wanted to talk about after the game was perceived poor officiating. A frustrated DeRozan said it seemed like all three officials were against them. "Being out there it felt like we played five on eight," he said. "Some of those calls was terrible, period."

Raptors coach Dwane Casey added: "There were some tough calls in the second half. It is mind boggling when you ask the officials, 'Did you see it?' 'No I didn't see it.' 'Wasn't my call.' I have got to have an explanation."

Elsewhere, Zach LaVine scored 14 points in his first game in 11 months, rookie Lauri Markkanen added 19 points and the host Chicago Bulls edged the Detroit Pistons 107-105. Chicago made 17 three-pointers to win for the 13th time in its last 20 games.—AFP

	<b>Matches on TV</b> (Local Timings)	
<b>ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE</b>		
<b>Manchester United v Stoke City</b>	<b>23:00</b>	
beIN SPORTS HD 2		
<b>SPANISH LEAGUE</b>		
<b>Real Betis v Leganes</b>	<b>23:00</b>	
beIN SPORTS HD 3		

**13** Oman's Essam Albalushi wins gold medal with score of 241.7 points



**14** Roy smashes 180 as England win by five wickets in Melbourne



**15** Halep, Wozniacki eye maiden Slam in Serena's absence



LIVERPOOL: Manchester City's Brazilian goalkeeper Ederson (R) fails to hold the ball as he attempts a catch during the English Premier League football match between Liverpool and Manchester City at Anfield in Liverpool, yesterday. — AFP

## Reds end City's unbeaten record

### Firmino, Mane and Salah destroy City with three goals in 9 minutes

**LIVERPOOL:** Liverpool handed Manchester City their first Premier League defeat this season as the rampant Reds won 4-3 against the shell-shocked leaders to show they can thrive without Philippe Coutinho.

City swaggered into Anfield unbeaten in the top flight in 30 matches and widely heralded as champions-elect amid talk that they could go throughout the entire league campaign without losing.

But 90 minutes later, Pep Guardiola's side were licking their wounds after their first domestic defeat since the FA Cup semi-final against Arsenal last season. They were beaten at their own game as Jurgen Klopp's team delivered a scintillating display that allayed fears they may struggle follow the sale of Brazil forward Coutinho to Barcelona.

In their first match following Coutinho's exit, Liverpool were on fire from the moment Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain gave them an early lead. Leroy Sane equalised before half-time, but Roberto Firmino, Sadio Mane and Mohamed Salah destroyed City after the break with three goals in nine minutes.

Late goals from Bernardo Silva and Ilkay Gundogan made the final score closer than City deserved.

It was a rare chastening experience this season for City,

but shouldn't prove damaging to their title bid as they remain 15 points clear of second-placed Manchester United, who host Stoke today.

Liverpool go above Chelsea into third place after extending their unbeaten run to 18 matches in all competitions. While Coutinho's departure ended the brief reign of Liverpool's 'Fab Four', Klopp could still call on Firmino, Mane and Salah.

And on the evidence of this sublime performance, it won't be long before they are dubbed Liverpool's 'holy trinity'. They quickly combined for a tone-setting break as Firmino's lofted pass to Mane caught the City defence flat-footed, but when the ball ran to Salah, John Stones made a last-ditch block.

Liverpool fans mercilessly jeered Raheem Sterling on his return to the club he left acrimoniously in 2015. And the



### Guardiola's side were licking their wounds after their first defeat

Kop faithful were crowing even louder when Oxlade-Chamberlain put Liverpool ahead in the ninth minute.

When Oxlade-Chamberlain took possession 45 yards from goal, he appeared to pose little threat, but City's defenders fatally backed off. Advancing at pace, Oxlade-Chamberlain set his sights from 25 yards and unloaded a fierce drive that fizzed past City goalkeeper Ederson into the far corner.

It was only the England winger's fourth goal following his August transfer from Arsenal and it couldn't have been more well-timed with Coutinho's exit having opened up a place shot that raced into the top corner.

Losing all composure City capitulated again in the 68th minute when Ederson run out of his area to clear, but only found Salah, who clinically stroked the ball into the empty net from 35 yards.—AFP

## Sanchez missing as Arsenal slip to defeat at Bournemouth

**BOURNEMOUTH:** Arsene Wenger's difficult start to the new year took a turn for the worse as his Arsenal side — missing Alexis Sanchez—lost 2-1 at struggling Bournemouth.

Hector Bellerin put Arsenal ahead shortly after half-time but Eddie Howe's side mounted an impressive comeback, scoring twice in five minutes through Callum Wilson and Jordan Ibe. Defeat leaves Arsenal in sixth place, five points off the top four ahead of Liverpool's clash with Manchester City later, and without a win in five games in all competitions while Bournemouth moved four points clear of the bottom three.

And while Wenger wrestles with problems on the field, the off-the-pitch saga involving Sanchez is adding to his concerns, with the manager admitting that continuing uncertainty

surrounding the striker's future, was the reason he was omitted. "He's being vague at the moment. The situation is not completely decided one way or the other, so I left him at home," the manager said.

Sanchez, who is in the final year of his contract, has been a long-term target for Manchester City and was expected to move to the Etihad Stadium in a £60 million (\$82 million, 67 million euros) transfer on the final day of the last transfer window had Arsenal completed a deal for Monaco's Thomas Lemar.

City remained favourites to sign the Chile international this month until Manchester United expressed their interest last week.

The Old Trafford club's willingness to meet Arsenal's £35 million valuation of Sanchez, who can leave as a free agent at the end of the campaign, together with the possibility of offering one-time Arsenal target Henrikh Mkhitaryan as part of any deal, have increased the chance of the forward joining Jose Mourinho's squad.

But while Wenger confirmed he expected the situation to be resolved soon, he said he did not know what the final outcome would be.

Asked if he expected Sanchez's future to be determined imminently, he said: "Yes. Don't read too much in it because even I don't know which way it will go." Mesut Ozil was also missing for the Gunners after being ruled out

with a swollen knee but Jack Wilshere started despite having limped out of the midweek League Cup draw at Chelsea with an ankle injury. Wilshere was anxious to make a good impression on his return to the club where he spent last season on loan while Arsenal were keen to register their first victory since the turn of the year.

Arsenal came close after eight minutes as wing-back Ainsley Maitland-Niles struck the bar with a curling shot. In the 35th minute, Danny Welbeck's shot was saved by keeper Asmir Begovic but if the Arsenal striker had gone to ground under the challenge of Simon Francis, he may well have won a penalty.

There was a much clearer claim for a spot-kick moments later in the Arsenal area when Alex Iwobi handled Ibe's free-kick but referee Kevin Friend decided the contact was unintentional. Arsenal broke the deadlock seven minutes after the restart, Iwobi slotted an excellent pass inside left-back Charlie Daniels, allowing Bellerin to advance on Begovic before beating the keeper with a powerful angled shot.

Bournemouth forced their way back onto level terms with 20 minutes remaining after Ryan Fraser and whipped a low cross towards the penalty spot where Wilson nipped in ahead of keeper Petr Cech and turned the ball into an empty net with a first-time finish.—AFP



BOURNEMOUTH: Bournemouth's English midfielder Jack Wilshere (C) vies with Bournemouth's English midfielder Dan Gosling (L) and Bournemouth's Scottish midfielder Ryan Fraser during the English Premier League football match between Bournemouth and Arsenal at the Vitality Stadium in Bournemouth. — AFP

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**18** Al-Sayer Bahrah launches the new and advanced Doosan generators**19** Dollar pressured amid a mix of softer data and a stronger euro**21** Obaid Al-Rishidi is Gulf Bank's newest and youngest Al-Danah millionaire

WEST PALM BEACH: Supporters of US President Donald Trump hold signs near his Mar-a-Lago resort in West Palm Beach on Saturday.—AFP

# US migrant workers face uncertain future

## As Trump clamps down, tech firms seek protection for 'Dreamers'

**WASHINGTON:** Two decades ago, Fatima Nolasco walked over the border into the United States in search of a better life, going on to build a successful business, and a new home. Now, after Donald Trump decided to end a program that has allowed her to work legally in the country, along with 200,000 fellow immigrants from El Salvador, she fears she is about to lose it all.

Unless Congress can find a long-term solution to replace the Temporary Protected Status (TPS) program granted to Salvadorans in 2001 after two earthquakes devastated their country, Nolasco will lose her legal immigration rights in September 2019. Under the plan's protections, Nolasco started a small construction and home remodeling business with her husband Walter Dubon, a permanent legal resident. Today, they employ 20 workers and pay up to \$30,000 a year in business taxes, on top of individual taxes. "We've been paying taxes for 16 years," she said. "We never thought this would end like this. We always had hope that they would give us the opportunity." Nolasco notes that her family does not rely on any government aid. In fact, TPS recipients do not qualify for needs-based government programs, but do contribute to them through payroll taxes.

"We have given ourselves a decent life as a result of our work and effort. I hope they realize we are not a burden on

the country," she told AFP in an interview at her home near the capital Washington, which hosts a large population of Salvadorans. While Trump takes credit for solid growth and jobs gains during his first year in office, economists and business leaders warn that expelling immigrant workers wholesale would cause a major hit to the economy.

This would be especially damaging at a time when firms increasingly complain they cannot find workers, especially in fields like construction—a particular concern for rebuilding efforts in hurricane-hit areas of Houston and Florida. One analysis shows that if Salvadoran TPS holders as well as tens of thousands from Honduras and Haiti were removed from the labor force, the United States would lose \$164 billion in GDP over the next decade—without counting \$6.9 billion in lost contributions to Social Security and Medicare.

As much as 88 percent of those immigrants work—much

higher than the rate among US citizens—while about a third own homes. Many, like Nolasco, own businesses. If sent home, they face an uncertain future. While the US government deems that conditions in El Salvador no longer justify protected status for its citizens, it still has a travel warning cautioning Americans that "gang activity, such as extortion, violent street crime and narcotics and arms trafficking, is widespread."

**We consider ourselves American**

### Legal status

Trump has also announced the end of another program providing legal status to immigrants who were brought to the country as young children. If Congress fails find a compromise, 800,000 people covered by the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) will lose their protections March 5. Economists warn the US could lose \$215 billion in GDP if the so-called "Dreamers" leave the labor pool. Amazon, Apple, Facebook and Google were among more than 100 major companies

whose top executives signed a letter calling for protection for the "Dreamers," and warning that failure to act "will lead to businesses losing valuable talent, cause disruptions in the workforce and will result in significant costs." Miguel Aguilera, who was brought to the United States from Mexico when he was 11, has found a route to legal status, but fears for his fellow "Dreamers." "It's pretty ridiculous that the president wants to do away with so many young people who do nothing but contribute to this country," he told AFP.

"We've lived here all our lives, we consider ourselves American, even though we don't have the paper to show it." He is a shining example of the American dream. After passage of DACA, he attended a US college on a soccer scholarship and then was drafted to play in the domestic professional soccer league—the first undocumented immigrant to achieve that goal. He later married a US citizen, his college sweetheart, which allowed him to gain status as a permanent legal resident with a so-called green card. Ali Noorani, executive director of the National Immigration Forum, is optimistic Democrats and Republicans in Congress will find a solution to help "Dreamers." "For better or for worse, the administration has provided a deadline to Congress to figure this out," he said.—AFP

## Bitcoin fever hits US real estate market

**MIAMI:** Bitcoin fever has hit the US real estate market, especially that of Florida, offering foreign investors a way to dodge currency controls at home and US economic sanctions.

As of the end of last year, the digital currency was listed as a way to pay for some 75 properties for sale, especially in south Florida and California, according to the real estate firm Redfin. "Bitcoin accepted" is a message now seen in the description of homes for sale in the Miami area.

One seller is going even farther, saying he will take only bitcoin (33 of them to be exact) for his half-million-dollar downtown condo in the Florida

metropolis. Bitcoin has been on a roller coaster ride of late, shooting up to nearly \$20,000 a piece in mid-December and then dropping sharply around Christmas. It started the year at around \$14,000.

Its use in real estate transactions is novel, and agents are wary because of its high volatility. "I'd be blown away if a year from now we see hundreds of real estate transactions in bitcoins," said Jay Parker, Florida CEO for the Douglas Elliman brokerage agency.

Still, such transactions can be useful for foreigners who want to invest in the United States and cannot otherwise do so, said economist and bitcoin expert Charles Evans of Barry University. "This seems to be driven by international investors who are circumventing inefficient banking and currency controls at home, and by US cryptocurrency enthusiasts," Evans told AFP.

"The governments in those countries restrict the amount of money that their residents are allowed to transfer abroad through the banking system. Bitcoin enables individuals there to bypass such

restrictions," he added. This could be a draw for investors, who even before the bitcoin rage were already hot on the real estate market in south Florida.

Nearly half of all foreign buyers of property in south Florida are from Latin America. According to the National Association of Realtors, over the past five years, investors from Venezuela, Brazil and Argentina—in that order—have led purchases in this part of the state.

### Money laundering?

Bitcoin offers another advantage for some foreign investors: it lets them dodge US economic sanctions. Evans cited the example of Venezuela, which imposes strict currency controls and is enduring runaway inflation that surpassed 2,600 percent in 2017. What is more, many senior officials in the government of Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro have been hit by sanctions imposed by Washington, which considers his administration a dictatorship.—AFP



TOKYO: Members of idol group Kasotsuka Shoujo (Virtual Currency Girls) attend an interview following their live stage performance in Tokyo.—AFP

# Al-Sayer Bahrah launches the new and advanced Doosan generators

Doosan generators are rugged, robust and the easiest



**KUWAIT:** Bahrah Trading Company (BTC), a subsidiary of Al-Sayer Holding has announced the launch of a new range generators from Doosan Portable Power. The new generators extend the Doosan portfolio to a wider audience to cover applications such as home standby, telecommunications and back-up power for small businesses as well as construction and rental.

The launch event was organized by Doosan recently Nassima Royal Hotel in Dubai and was attended by Andrew Bacon General Manager DPP EMEA, Gaby Rhayem Regional Director MENA, Jemylia Raimbault Senior Marketing Director EMEA, Jan Moravec Director Engineering DPP EMEA, Olivier Rasmont Business Director DIPP EMEA. BTC was represented by Bader Musaed Al-Sayer Business Director Al-Sayer Holding and Hamza Melakandy General Manager BTC.

The four new generators – the G20, G30, G45 and G60, available in both 50 Hz and 60 Hz versions provide prime power out-

puts of 20, 30, 45 and 63 kVA respectively. All four units are available as open units (XF) or sound attenuated versions (XW). The equivalent 60 Hz versions are also available in a range of voltages between 220V and 480V (Phase to Phase).

**Peace of mind - Improved warranty terms**

They are powered by well-proven Cummins diesel engines and are covered by the best standard warranty on the market – two years and/or 4000 hours on the complete powertrain.

The new generators are fully supported by BTC, from unit start-up to complete servicing, maintenance and troubleshooting back-up. In addition to parts stock for planned servicing or emergency needs, parts are also available through the Doosan network and from within the Doosan Parts warehouse in Dubai.

**Safe, flexible operation**

Sharing the same design and character-



istics, the new generators offer robustness and reliability, high performance and a wide choice of features to meet the needs of a very wide range of power applications from prime power in remote areas to stationary units in grid back up. The standard frame-fuel tank configuration of the generators ensures autonomy of at least 15 hours at 75 percent of the load, allowing users to work regular shifts without refueling concerns.

Safe and easy access to operation and

maintenance areas has been a priority throughout the design of the new generators. Accessibility to key areas, including the engine radiator compartment and maintenance points, has been enhanced. The air flow has been optimized throughout the generator unit to meet cooling requirements for locations with high ambient temperatures, without deration impact on the electrical output performance.

A user-friendly feature is the electrical

control and power compartment which has been designed to meet the highest safety, reliability and flexibility requirements. All control functions are grouped together on the 6010 Deep Sea Electronics simple-to-use operator control panel, displaying critical operating parameters at a glance

The output performance stability of the generators is ensured by an efficient powertrain featuring a combination of the Cummins engines and Stamford alternators.

## Burgan Bank announces winners of Yawmi account draw

**KUWAIT:** Burgan Bank, the second largest in terms of assets, announced yesterday the names of the daily draw winners of its Yawmi account draw, each taking home a cash-prize of KD 5,000.

**The lucky winners are:**

1. Narjis Abdulretha Karam Marafi
2. Ahmad Saad Mohammad Alsahlawi
3. Abdulqader Mohammad Aldandashi
4. Salma Rashed Moslam Alshhomy
5. Rahaf Yousef Khalil Alawadhi

In addition to the daily draw, Burgan Bank also offers a Quarterly Draw with more chances to win higher rewards, offering the chance to one lucky customer to win KD 125,000 every three months. The Yawmi Account offers daily and quarterly draws, wherein the quarterly draw requires customers to maintain a minimum amount of KD 500 in their account for two months prior to the draw date. Additionally, every KD 10 in the account will entitle customers to one chance of winning. If the account balance is KD 500 and above, the account holder will be qualified for both the quarterly and daily draws.

Burgan Bank encourages everyone to open a Yawmi account and/or increase their deposit to maximize their chances of becoming a winner. The higher the level of the deposit, the higher the likelihood to win.

## EU more dependent on Russian gas despite bid to diversify

**MOSCOW:** Despite repeatedly vowing to reduce its energy dependency on Moscow, Europe is more reliant on Russian gas than ever before-and there are few signs of this trend reversing. Russian gas giant Gazprom said this month it had completed record deliveries towards Europe and Turkey in 2017 at a total of 193.9 billion cubic meters-eight percent higher than its previous record, set in 2016. This result was not only a financial victory for the company, whose exports are its main source of profit, but also a political one at a time when diplomatic relations between Russia and the European Union are at their worst since the Cold War.

The numbers “show the increasing demand from European countries for Russian gas, but also the reliability of these deliveries in the required amount,” Gazprom’s chairman Alexei Miller said.

Deliveries to Germany and Austria reached a historic high and exports to France rose by 6.7 percent compared to 2016, according to Gazprom’s figures. Brussels set goals to diversify its energy sources following a series of gas crises between Moscow and Kiev that affected deliveries to Europe. But the percentage of Russian gas in Europe has only increased in recent years and now represents a third of the total gas consumption in the EU.

That goal was reinforced by tensions between Brussels and Moscow following the start of the Ukrainian crisis in 2014 that led to fears of Moscow using its gas leverage for geopolitical means.

Meanwhile, diversification became easier to achieve with the development of the market for liquefied natural gas (LNG), which is transported by ship rather than pipelines, allowing for the import of supplies from Qatar and even the

United States. However a number of factors have worked to push up consumption of Russian gas. According to Valery Nesterov, an oil and gas analyst at Russian bank Sberbank CIB, EU demand for gas is rising due to “economic recovery” in Europe and thanks to gas prices being “more competitive” than those of coal.

Other reasons pushing up demand include cold winters, the decline of European (mainly Dutch) gas output and the closure of nuclear power plants, such as in Germany. If Nesterov envisages a possible reduction of Russian exports to EU this year after record results in 2017, he nonetheless says the general tendency will not change: “Gazprom will likely keep its market share in the EU.”

**‘Schizophrenia’**

Strong European demand has allowed Gazprom to increase production after weak results in recent years due to a decline of its market share on its home market and the loss of Ukraine, an important client which stopped buying Russian gas in 2015.

Gazprom is also looking to develop new pipelines with the support of major European companies to maintain its part in the market. But the EU is wary. Brussels blocked South Stream, a Russian project to ease exports to southern European nations, and has been resisting other projects such as TurkStream, a pipeline planned via Turkey, and North Stream 2, via the Baltic Sea, which Gazprom justifies as necessary for the increased European demand in the future.

“A sort of schizophrenia exists between Europe’s diplomacy and its market. The market chooses the cheapest gas to produce and use in Europe, which is Russian gas. Europe is said to be too dependent but nothing has been done to change this,” said Thierry Bros, researcher at the Oxford Institute for Energy Studies. “We could say that the speed limit signs are in place but they are ineffective because there is no speed check. There are mechanisms for regulation but there is nothing to verify that they are respected,” he added.—AFP

## CBK announces winners of Al-Najma Account

**KUWAIT:** Commercial Bank of Kuwait held the daily draw on “Al-Najma Account” yesterday at the bank’s head office to select 5 winners to win a cash prize of KD 7,000 for each. The draw was held in the presence of Latifa Al-Jea’an, representative of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. The following names were announced as winners of the prizes:

1. Saad Sheheb Bohaqlah
2. Hawraa Fayeز Abualhasan
3. Mohammad Nawaf Al-Harbi
4. Mohammad Sohail Khokhar Mohammad Aslam
5. Wadhha Mohammad Al-Safrani

Al-Najma Account allows its customers to win a daily prize of KD 7,000 which is the highest daily prize in Kuwait. In addition, the account offers quarterly draws that provide customers with opportunity to get their dreams turned to reality by winning great prizes starting from KD100,000 for the first quarter escalating thereafter by KD 50 thousand for each quarter to reach KD 250,000 in the last quarter. Customers can enjoy additional benefits including obtaining ATM card and a credit card against the customer’s account along with enjoying all other banking services.

The Bank congratulates all the lucky winners and draws their attention that the cash prizes will be credited into their accounts with the Bank. Further, the Bank appreciates the Ministry of Commerce and Industry’s significant role and its continuous cooperation and effective supervision on the draw that was smoothly and transparently organized.

## EXCHANGE RATES

Al-Muzaini Exchange Co.	
ASIAN COUNTRIES	
Japanese Yen	2.683
Indian Rupees	4.772
Pakistani Rupees	2.737
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.968
Nepali Rupees	2.970
Singapore Dollar	227.860
Hongkong Dollar	38.683
Bangladesh Taka	3.638
Philippine Peso	6.056
Thai Baht	9.323
GCC COUNTRIES	
Saudi Riyal	80.654
Qatari Riyal	83.070
Omani Riyal	785.473
Bahraini Dinar	803.110
UAE Dirham	82.366
ARAB COUNTRIES	
Egyptian Pound - Cash	20.000
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	16.992
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.214
Tunisian Dinar	123.700
Jordanian Dinar	426.420
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	2.015
Syrian Lira	0.000
Morocco Dirham	32.500
EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES	
US Dollar Transfer	302.250

Euro	365.120
Sterling Pound	410.610
Canadian dollar	242.280
Turkish lira	80.710
Swiss Franc	312.400
Australian Dollar	238.630
US Dollar Buying	301.500
GOLD	
20 Gram	249.070
10 Gram	127.450
5 Gram	64.570
Dollarco Exchange Co. Ltd	
Rate for Transfer	Selling Rate
US Dollar	302.100
Canadian Dollar	242.530
Sterling Pound	409.633
Euro	362.965
Swiss Franc	297.145
Bahrain Dinar	803.394
UAE Dirhams	82.651
Qatari Riyals	83.886
Saudi Riyals	81.454
Jordanian Dinar	427.373
Egyptian Pound	17.118
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.966
Indian Rupees	4.743
Pakistani Rupees	2.735
Bangladesh Taka	3.664
Philippines Peso	5.998
Cyprus pound	17.976

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL		
CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
Europe		
British Pound	0.408970	0.416470
Czech Korune	0.006381	0.015681
Danish Krone	0.045215	0.050215
Euro	0.362639	0.370139
Georgian Lari	0.001326	0.013408
Hungarian 0.001136	0.001326	0.013408
Norwegian Krone	0.033994	0.039194
Romanian Leu	0.064461	0.081311
Russian ruble	0.005330	0.005330
Slovakia	0.008967	0.018967
Swedish Krona	0.033401	0.038401
Swiss Franc	0.305439	0.316439
Australasia		
Australian Dollar	0.230724	0.242724
New Zealand Dollar	0.213019	0.222519
America		
Canadian Dollar	0.237035	0.245035
US Dollars	0.297450	0.301870
US Dollars Mint	0.297950	0.301870

Asia		
Bangladesh Taka	0.003276	0.003860
Chinese Yuan	0.045071	0.048571
Hong Kong Dollar	0.036670	0.039420
Indian Rupee	0.004187	0.004828
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000018	0.000024
Japanese Yen	0.002633	0.002813
Korean Won	0.000274	0.000289
Malaysian Ringgit	0.072068	0.078068
Nepalese Rupee	0.003009	0.003179
Pakistan Rupee	0.002553	0.002843
Philippine Peso	0.005937	0.006237
Singapore Dollar	0.222108	0.232108
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001729	0.002309
Taiwan	0.010346	0.010526
Thai Baht	0.009084	0.009634
Arab		
Bahraini Dinar	0.793236	0.801736
Egyptian Pound	0.014660	0.020378
Iranian Riyal	0.000083	0.000085
Iraqi Dinar	0.000185	0.000245
Jordanian Dinar	0.420703	0.429703
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000155	0.000256
Moroccan Dirhams	0.021994	0.045994
Omani Riyal	0.776929	0.782609
Qatar Riyal	0.078538	0.083478
Saudi Riyal	0.079327	0.080627
Syrian Pound	0.001278	0.001498
Tunisian Dinar	0.117796	0.125796
Turkish Lira	0.075074	0.085374
UAE Dirhams	0.080675	0.082375
Yemeni Riyal	0.000980	0.001060

## Business

## NBK Money Markets Report

# Dollar pressured amid a mix of softer data and a stronger euro

## US producer prices fall for first time in 18 months

**KUWAIT:** Last week, the greenback was under modest pressure until Thursday evening when softer US data along with hawkish ECB minutes were released sending the dollar to three-year lows. However, positive inflation and retail sales reports supported the currency and sent March interest rate hike probabilities to 82 percent. Furthermore, NY Fed president Bill Dudley delivered his keynote remarks in New York warning bluntly on the prospect of US economic overheating is a real risk over the next few years. He also cautioned about the financial market asset valuations, which he believes to be elevated.

The 10 year Treasury bond rose to a new 10-month high after a report from China recommended the reduction of US purchases. China has the world's biggest currency reserves and is the biggest foreign holder of US government debt. According to the Bloomberg report, the sources said the market for US government bonds is becoming less attractive relative to other assets. They also cited trade tensions with the United States as a reason to slow Treasury purchases.

The surprise of last week was that the European Central Bank could be the next major policymaking body that takes a step away from accommodation. According to the minutes from their December meeting, the central bank saw "some comfort" in wage dynamics but low inflation remains a concern. Most importantly, they would consider a gradual shift in guidance starting in "early 2018" if reflation continues which suggests that they've grown less dovish since their decision to cut bond purchases in October. Further positive news on the eurozone was the reported success of Chancellor Angela Merkel in reaching a preliminary deal with Social Democrats to negotiate a grand coalition government.

On the currency front, the dollar index opened the week at 91.931 and was neutral until the release of the ECB meeting minutes and disappointing PPI figures which sent the dollar to a low of 90.902, a 3-year low. The currency closed the week at 90.974.

The euro started the week with a bullish move to reach the 1.2000 levels. The single currency had a breakthrough the 1.2100 level after the grand coalition

agreement between the German parties. The agreement to form a government was reached after long hours of negotiations and cleared any political uncertainties surrounding Europe's largest economy. The pair closed the week at 1.2194.

The cable traded sensitively to the progress of the divorce settlement negotiations between the UK and EU, better known as Brexit. The pair appreciated to reach a high of 1.3744 on the back of solid manufacturing data and a weaker dollar. The currency closed the week at 1.3728.

The Japanese yen had a week of solid gains on the dollar. The pair opened the week at 113.10 and continued to appreciate to reach 6-week low of 110.97 amid speculation on US inflation figures. The currency closed the week at 111.01.

The labor department said that its producer price index slipped by 0.1 percent last month, marking the first monthly drop since August 2016. Most of the December decline in the final demand index is attributable to a 0.2 percent decrease in prices for final demand services. A major factor in the December decline in prices for final demand services was the index for automotive fuels and lubricants retailing, which fell 10.7 percent. The indexes for loan services (partial): airline passenger services; apparel, footwear, and accessories retailing; legal services; and health, beauty, and optical goods retailing also moved lower. In contrast, prices for inpatient care advanced 0.7 percent. The indexes for truck transportation of freight and apparel wholesaling also increased.

### Consumer prices

Underlying US consumer prices recorded their largest increase in 11 months in December amid strong gains in the cost of rental accommodation and health-care, bolstering expectations that inflation will gain momentum this year. The Labor Department said its Consumer Price Index excluding the volatile food and energy components rose 0.3 percent last month also as prices for new motor vehicles, used cars and trucks and motor vehicle insurance increased.

Retail sales increased in December as households

bought a range of goods and figures for the prior month were revised higher, suggesting the economy exited 2017 with strong momentum. The Commerce Department said on Friday that retail sales rose 0.4 percent last month. Data for November was revised to show sales gaining 0.9 percent instead of the previously reported 0.8 percent increase.

### Job openings fall

Job openings for November fell for the second consecutive month in a row according to data out from the Labor department. The JOLTS report showed 5.88 million job openings and judging from the recent employment data which showed a steady unemployment rate of 4.1 percent. Thus, analysts expect to see a continuous marginal decrease in the job openings.

### ECB hawkish minutes

The central bank's December meeting minutes showcased a hawkish ECB on the back of great growth figures and solid fundamentals and a tighter labor market. As such, the market is expecting the central bank to gradually reduce its bond purchases and start considering their stance on interest rates "As progress was made toward a sustained adjustment in the path of inflation, the relative importance of the forward guidance on policy rates would increase," policymakers said. Sidelining his critics, ECB President Mario Draghi stuck to his pledge last month to keep money pouring into the eurozone economy for as long as needed, despite improved growth and inflation prospects.

### UK manufacturing output

Manufacturing output in the UK is expanding at the fastest rate since 2008 after recording a seventh consecutive months of growth in November. Renewable energy projects, boats, airplanes and cars for export helped make output 3.9 percent higher in the three months to November than in 2016. Official figures also show industrial output rose by 0.4 percent in November. Economic growth had slowed in the first nine months of 2017 with higher inflation caused by



the fall in sterling after the Brexit referendum, although the UK economy did grow by 0.4 percent in the three months to September.

While the manufacturing figures are good, it is important to note that the sector only makes up roughly 10 percent of the economy.

### China's trade balance

China's producer-price index slid to the lowest level since November 2016 last month and consumer price growth remained largely stable, taking pressure off the People's Bank of China to restrain inflation even as it raises market borrowing costs to curb debt growth. While a sustained moderation in factory inflation in China would put a question mark over the strength of global reflation, it also leaves domestic policy makers with a freer hand to conduct ongoing campaigns against industrial over-capacity and pollution.

### Kuwait

Kuwaiti dinar at 0.30070  
The USDKWD opened at 0.30070 yesterday morning.

## Geely Auto Group reports record sales in 2017

**HANGZHOU, China:** Geely Auto Group (Geely Auto) has reported annual sales of 1,247,116 units in 2017, an increase of 63% from the previous year and beating their revised annual sales target of 1.1 million units. December sales reached a new high of 153,625 units, an increase of approximately 42 percent over the same period last year. Geely Auto's strong growth came on the strength of the brand's third generation models, all of which became benchmark products in their respective segments and have subsequently set their own sales records since being introduced in 2015.

Due to strong 2017 sales, Geely Auto Group has subsequently set its 2018 sales volume target to 1.58 million units (including the sales volume target for LYNK & CO-branded vehicles). Geely Auto's ambitious 2018 sales goal is far ahead of expected market growth, showcasing Geely Auto's confidence in its current and future product range. Under its "2020 Strategy," Geely Auto aim to reach 2 million in annual sales by end of 2020.

### Geely Auto is Setting New Industry Standards

Since Geely Auto launched its third generation of vehicles in 2015, Geely Auto has been able to push forward with strong growth thanks to their leading products, high quality, renowned service, and increased brand image.

For the last three consecutive months of 2017, Geely Auto's flagship SUV, Emgrand X7 SPORT, sold more than 30,000 units per month, with December ending with 31,205 units sold and an annual total of 286,900 units. The Emgrand X7 SPORT has become a SUV market leader and has set a new benchmark within the market its leadings levels of intelligence and connectivity. In December, Geely Auto's first crossover SUV, the Emgrand GS, saw record high monthly sales of over 18,850 units and a total of more than 150,000 units in 2017.

Geely Auto's third generation compact sedan, Emgrand GL, which was designed to compete against foreign joint-venture brands in the Chinese A+ market segment (C Segment) sold 14,088 units in December and over 145,000 units over the course of 2017, becoming a best-selling A+ class sedan in the Chinese market. Retaining its title as the best-selling Chinese A class (C Segment) sedan for the seventh consecutive year, the New Emgrand saw sales of 25,074 in December and over 264,400 units in 2017.

### New Era, New Geely

Geely Auto's sales success is due to its repositioning as a technology leader, the brand's balanced development of sedan and SUVs products, and the continuous upgrading of their nationwide sales and service network to meet the needs of a new generation of consumers.

Last year, Geely Auto opened its new state-of-the-art R&D facility in Ningbo as the flagship centre of its global R&D network, which employs more than 10,000 research staff. Geely Auto also introduced its iNTEC brand of vehicle technologies which are a package of five leading technologies in the areas of safety, connectivity, powertrain, interior environment, and assisted driving. The launch of iNTEC brand technologies have allowed Geely Auto to reposition itself as a technology leader.

Geely Auto's strategy of utilizing its strength in the sedan market whilst pivoting to SUVs has created models that are leaders in all segments. The balanced development of sedans and SUVs have led to stable growth across key segments and has enhanced the brand's competitiveness, performance, and image.

The continuous upgrading of Geely Auto's sales and serv-



ice network to meet the needs of a new generation of consumers also played a significant part in the brand's success. According to the 2017 China Customer Service Index (CSI) released by JD Power, Geely Auto ranked first among Chinese brands with a score of 735 points while the market averaged 703 points. By the end of 2017, Geely Auto already had over 850 dealers with plans to add another 150 this year, the majority of which will be opening in major cities such as Beijing, Shanghai, Tianjin, etc.

Lin Jie, Geely Auto's Vice President and General Manager of Geely Auto sales company said "Just as the 3.0 era models have set new benchmarks in the market segment, we are also setting new benchmarks for sales and service in the 3.0 era. Only by upgrading our dealerships and raising our sales and service standards to meet the demands of a new generation of consumers were we able to achieve annual sales of over 1 million units for the first time."

Geely Auto has also seen a changing demographic of consumers demanding higher priced premium models. The success of Geely Auto's 3rd generation models has raised the brand's image and average selling price: In 2017, sales of Geely Auto vehicles priced between 81,000 RMB to 150,000 RMB accounted for over 60 percent of vehicles sold, highlighting the brand's transition from competing on low price to one that's competing on high quality, high tech, and high value.

Geely Auto has seen sales from first and second tier cities account for more than 50 percent of cars sold, showing the brand's increasing influence in major metropolitan areas. Sales data have shown an increasing demand from young urban consumers born in the 80s and 90s, from white-collar workers, and from civil servants.

The past year saw the launch of the 01, the first product from Geely Auto's newest brand Lynk & Co. "Born Global and Connected," Lynk & Co set a new benchmark for premium car brands globally. In November 2017, the first steps in revolutionizing the traditional automotive model was taken with the launch of the intelligently connected Lynk & Co 01 and online sales model.

With annual sales over 1 million as a benchmark, 2018 will become an important year for Geely Auto's development. The brand will delve deeper into its refined cars development strategy and continue raising its sales and service standards. The coming year will see Geely Auto launch more than 10 highly competitive new models including sedans, SUVs, crossover SUVs, and MPVs that will further consolidate the brand's leading position in the Chinese market. Geely Auto's iNTEC brand of technologies will also be integrated more deeply in upcoming products and launch Geely Auto into a new stage of development based on high quality, high tech, and high value.

An Conghui, Geely Auto's President and CEO said "The opportunities and challenges that we will face in 2018 are unprecedented. The new era gives Geely Auto a new mission, new opportunities, and a new future. We will become a brand that truly understands the needs of domestic and international consumers. We must maintain a humble mindset and persevere with this task, we must continuously push the limits and innovate in order to give consumers the best products possible."



7th Edition

**UNDER THE PATRONAGE**

**H.E. Khaled Nasser Abdullah Al-Roudan**

Minister of Commerce and Industry and Minister of State for Youth Affairs

**Leaders Group for Consulting & Development and Hospitality Services S.A.R.L**

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# Obaid Al-Rishidi is Gulf Bank's newest and youngest Al-Danah millionaire

## Shouq Ashour is the lucky red account winner of a Fiat 500c



A group photo of the Gulf Bank staff during the event

**KUWAIT:** Gulf Bank congratulates Obaid Saad Al-Rishidi for winning its annual Al-Danah account prize of KD 1 million. Kuwait's newest Al Danah millionaire was announced live and simultaneously broadcast on 88.8 FM Kuwait Pulse during the exciting draw event at The Avenues Mall. As with all Gulf Bank draws, it was conducted in the presence of a representative from the Ministry of Commerce, Abdulaziz Ashkanani.

The event was hosted by popular media personality and social media celebrity, Omar Al-Othman. Representing Gulf Bank, Mijren Al-Mijren, Assistant Manager for Corporate Communications, energized the crowd, along with Ahmad Al-Matari, Trainer, Human Resources. The three hosts electrified the air and had the crowd at the Avenues cheering for each winner.

### Red account winners

During the event, the Bank also announced the winners of the red account draw. Shouq Hasan Ashour won a new Fiat 500c car; and winning Apple prizes were Khalefa Douaig Jumma - Apple Watch; Ahmed Mohammad Karam - iPad Pro; and Hawraa Abdullah Ateyah - iPhone. Gulf Bank looks forward to receiving the prize winners at the head office.

### Performance by Al-Mass traditional band

The highly-anticipated event kicked off at 5 pm with a range of children's activities. Then, the growing crowd of attendees were treated to a live performance by the Al-Mass Band. With their popular mix of traditional songs and dances, inspired by Kuwait's seafaring traditions, the night got off to a dynamic start.

### 'Catch the Cash' Money Box Game

Hundreds of people also registered for a chance to enter Gulf Bank's exclusive and wildly popular "Catch the Cash" money box game. Once the main event started, participants' names were selected live through a random raffle by the event hosts. Introduced last year, this game has proven to be a crowd favorite. The game is simple, once selected to play, you enter the box and have 10 seconds to catch as many notes of different denominations as you can. These notes are then exchanged for cash on the spot with the total prize amount being KD 3,000.

### Kuwait Newest Al-Danah millionaire announced

Tony Daher, Chief Executive Officer of Gulf Bank, took to the stage along with Meshari Shehab, Assistant General Manager for Priority and Wealth Management, and Tarek Al-Saleh, Assistant General Manager for Investments, to announce the newest winner. This year marks the ten-year anniversary of Gulf Bank making millionaires and the newest winner was randomly selected, Obaid Saad Al-Rishidi won the big prize of KD 1 million. Gulf Bank extends its sincere congratulations to Kuwait's newest and youngest Al-Danah millionaire.

### Guinness World Records

Last year, Gulf Bank was proud to set Guinness World Records achievement live during its event. The Al-Danah account prize of KD 1 million was named the 'largest bank prize linked to a bank account prize in the world'. Gulf Bank solidly beat out the previous record and still holds this title for this year. In honor of this well respected and

esteemed international recognition, the Bank showcased its custom Guinness World Records books. A large replica of the book served as the backdrop of our popular photo booth. Attendees were able to take pictures with and see the book, its cover, and the pages dedicated to Gulf Bank.

### Celebrating ten years of making millionaires

Commenting on this exciting Al-Danah millionaire draw, Laila Al-Qatami, Assistant General Manager for Corporate Communications at Gulf Bank said: "We are proud to have concluded another successful draw event. This year marks Gulf Bank's ten-year anniversary of making millionaires and we are happy to be celebrating this amazing milestone. We are also pleased to continue to hold the title of 'largest prize linked to a bank account payout in the world' from Guinness World Records for our Al-Danah account prize of KD 1 million. We thank Kuwait for joining us as the event and look forward to continuing to make millionaires!"

Al-Danah is Gulf Bank's flagship account and account holders are eligible to win valuable cash prizes through its daily and quarterly draws. To participate in the Al-Danah draws, customers must have an Al-Danah account containing a minimum of KD 200 and the chances of winning increase corresponding to the amount deposited in their Al-Danah account. Stay tuned for more information on the Al-Danah account prizes for 2018.

Gulf Bank's red account does not require a minimum deposit. Eligible customers have chance to enter the draw automatically and on a monthly basis, upon transferring their student allowances, in addition to number of other benefits and advantages.



Ohood Al-Enizi was announced the red car winner



MCs



MC Al-Matar with audience



Money Box



Yaqoub Bushehri joins Gulf Bank Team to announce the new millionaire



Gulf Bank staff at photo booth



Kids



Money Box registration



Al- Mass Band

## Technology

# Beyond the car: How tech firms are exploring the future of transport

## Industry worried that car ownership is going away

**LAS VEGAS:** Carless commuting is cruising in the fast lane at the Consumer Electronics Show, with companies showing off electric bicycles, scooters, skateboards and more aimed at making the internal combustion engine a thing of the past. As the ranks of people around the world living in cities has grown, so too has the cost of car ownership as well as traffic congestion. Nowhere was this more apparent than at the annual tech gathering in Las Vegas where some 170,000 conference goers jammed the streets.

“In a lot of big cities, cars aren’t tenable anymore,” said tech analyst Jack Gold of J. Gold Associates. An AFP reporter testing the car-free concept through the week at CES by relying on a freshly released GenZe electric bicycle consistently sailed past clogged traffic near the convention center and on the famed Las Vegas Strip. Riders too tired or lazy to pedal meanwhile can twist a throttle to glide along at close to local street speed limits.

GenZe spokesman Tom Valasek, a former auto industry marketing executive, said that several car makers had come to check out the company’s CES exhibit. “There is a lot of curiosity right now about where things are heading,” Valasek told AFP. “I know a lot of people in the auto industry who are quite worried that car ownership is going away.”

### Driverless cars

The popularity of smartphone-summoned rides from services such as Uber and Lyft are playing into the trend, with technology giants investing heavily in self-driving capabilities that could soon see automated vehicles available on-demand. “We believe car ownership makes no sense in the future,” Lyft chief

executive John Zimmer said at a CES dinner event. Zimmer doubted that his daughter, now a young child, will want to own a car when she is of age. Instead, he said: “She’ll want access to transportation.”

A boom of autonomous cars would likely prompt vehicles to evolve to be more akin to rooms on wheels: sleeper cabins in trains, or private offices, Zimmer added. A shift away from owning and relying on cars was also expected to result in traffic and parking becoming less of a priority in urban design. GenZe, a US-based division of the Mahindra Group in India, this week announced its e-bikes will be added in April to a Ford GoBike ride-share program in San Francisco.

The e-bikes should “help to make San Francisco more livable and reduce congestion,” Metropolitan Transportation Commission deputy executive Alix Bockelman said in a release. Leading online social network Facebook has a fleet of 100 GenZe bikes for employees to get around its Silicon Valley campus, and they are also used by delivery services DoorDash and Postmates, according to Valasek.

### Scoot, Skate, Ride

Despite negative publicity about hoverboards a few years ago-centered on their tendency to explode-the manufacturer Swagtron was at CES with some of those devices along with skateboards and bicycles boosted with electric motors. “We are seeing with personal mobility that some people like to skate; some people like to scoot, and some people like to ride,” Swagtron chief operating officer Andrew Koven told AFP.

Koven saw alternatives to cars as an “absolute necessity” that was part of a “systemic shift” toward getting around in ways that are economical as well as

**You have to fundamentally rethink the car**



**LAS VEGAS:** DJ & HBFIT Founder Hannah Bronfman attends the Lyft and Aptiv self-driving car experience during CES 2018 at the Las Vegas Convention Center. —AFP

socially and environmentally responsible. “If I am commuting a short distance to work, do I really need a car?” analyst Gold asked rhetorically. Cities are already eyeing autonomous shuttle services. A self-driving electric shuttle built by Navya was introduced here last year in a test that segued into a program providing rides on a route in downtown Las Vegas.

Swiss-based Rinspeed also showed its autonomous shuttle, and Toyota introduced a boxy concept vehicle which could be used for ridesharing, deliveries, med-

ical services or as an extension of retail stores. Plenty of new cars were shown at CES including a number of self-driving models. But some attendees said that the vehicle of the future may be something different. Automakers “have been building cars from the driver’s perspective,” said Ankit Jain, head of the Ola Play software platform for the India-based rideshare group. In future vehicles which may be autonomous, “the passenger is the one paying,” Jain said. “You have to fundamentally rethink the car.” —AFP

## Which voice in your fridge? Makers pick virtual assistants

**LAS VEGAS:** Who would you rather have in your fridge? Alexa, Cortana, or some as-yet unknown virtual assistant? Manufacturers of appliances and other products are considering factors such as ease of use and language support as they pick voice technology from what they view as a wide open battle between Alphabet Inc’s Google, Amazon.com Inc and others. Consumer demand is surging for the ability to summon music, order food and control lights by voice commands. Amazon.com’s Alexa voice assistant is the early leader and could spur up to \$12 billion in Amazon sales in 2020, Stifel, Nicolaus & Co analysts projected this week.

Amazon and Google combined have sold more than 30 million home speakers with virtual assistants, according to analyst estimates, and the firms are working with hardware partners to get the same software into more devices. Hardware makers’ varying strategies and decisions, described in interviews with Reuters at this week’s consumer electronics industry’s CES conference in Las Vegas, reflect differing strengths of Google, Amazon and peers.

Google Assistant attracts them with its expertise in answering complex questions, its ability to adapt to different settings and broader language support. Alexa can be used to command more devices, is associated with making purchases, and has become a household name. Microsoft Corp’s Cortana is optimized to work with its services, including Skype. Apple Inc, whose Siri assistant features on millions of iPhones, has yet to weigh in on the market.

Assistant makers are scouting for partners and offering technology for free, expecting to capitalize on their brand’s deeper integration into customers’ lives. An advanced microphone can add as little as \$8 to the cost of a product, according to chipset maker MediaTek Inc. Neither Amazon nor Google is forcing exclusive deals, hardware executives say, with the understanding that consumers may prefer a different assistant in different settings. LG Electronics Inc chose Google for televisions it unveiled this week, but opted for Alexa in refrigerators because of its online shopping functionality.

### Big brands not only players

When Lenovo Group Ltd decided to create an assistant-enabled screen last summer that would sit on a kitchen counter like a mini-TV, it turned to Google. That was due to a many-year relationship that would help the PC maker get the product in stores fast, said Jeff Meredith, vice president for consumer computers and smart devices at Lenovo. The biggest brands are not the only players in voice assistants.

Television maker TCL Corp is turning to video set top box manufacturer Roku Inc, which makes TCL’s TV operating system and has data on TCL customers that could improve personalization, said Chris Larson, senior vice president for North America at TCL. Roku’s assistant will be less complicated than Google or Alexa, and TCL had to stick to one assistant because it would too expensive to support multiple models, Larson added. JBL, by comparison, offers several speaker models, each with a different assistant.

People can use a speaker with Cortana for Skype calls and access to their Outlook work calendar, said Michael Mauser, president of lifestyle audio at JBL parent Harman Kardon, a Samsung Electronics Co subsidiary. Users who want multiple speakers find Google’s linking functionality more appealing, he said. Ford Motor Co’s announced a year ago that Alexa would come to cars. That followed outreach by Amazon, which had seen social media posts about people using the portable Echo Dot smart speaker in their vehicles, said David Limp, Amazon’s senior vice president for devices and services. —Reuters

## Facebook move will play out in long-term

**NEW YORK:** Facebook’s move to highlight posts from friends and family over those from brands and publications follows months of turmoil for the social network and will result in lower advertising revenue-at least in the short-term, analysts said. Facebook founder and CEO Mark Zuckerberg announced the shift in the configuration of the News Feed on Thursday, saying it would reduce engagement by users at first but would lead to their improved “well-being.”

While Zuckerberg described the move as being designed to bring people closer together and foster more “meaningful social interactions,” analysts noted that it comes amid criticism of the world’s leading social network on various fronts. Facebook has been under fire for months for the proliferation of Russian-created “fake news” on the platform that may have impacted the 2016 presidential election.

Zuckerberg initially scoffed at the suggestion Facebook had been used as a Russian propaganda tool, before acknowledging that mistakes had been made and promising to do better in 2018. Facebook revealed in September that “inauthentic” accounts created in Russia had purchased advertising on the site designed to increase tensions during the election campaign. A USA Today/Suffolk University poll published in October found that Americans believed by a two-to-one margin that Facebook should have done more to identify and reveal the Russian ads.

### ‘More social and less media’

In September, in another blow for the social network, ProPublica reported that Facebook’s ad-buying platform could be used to deliver ads to users who identify as anti-Semites. Facebook said it quickly shut that capability down. The company also took a number of steps to eliminate graphic or violent content on the site following several incidents, including the live-streamed murder of a young girl in Thailand. A USA Today/Suffolk University poll published in October found that Americans believed by a two-to-one margin that Facebook should have done more to identify and reveal the Russian ads.

Despite some turbulence, Facebook appears to have



**LONDON:** This file photo taken on December 4, 2017 shows a mousepad with the Facebook logo at Facebook’s headquarters. —AFP

weathered the storms so far. A study published in August by NetBase found that Facebook is still the preferred brand of Internet users. In September, the latest month for which figures are available, Facebook’s total number of users was up 16 percent over a year earlier to 2.07 billion. And while Facebook suffered on the stock market on Friday-its shares lost 4.47 percent-analysts said they did not expect it to last.

“We believe these changes will be beneficial to Facebook in the medium and long term,” said Brian Weiser of the Pivotal Research Group. “In our view, making the feed more relevant should boost user and engagement growth over time. “Facebook is making the service more social and less media, and that’s likely a

positive for the vast majority of users,” Weiser said.

RBC Capital Markets said lower user engagement with the site may provide a “headwind to growth in the near-term,” but the changes will be “helpful for the long-term health of the business.” While analysts were sanguine, some users, particularly publishers, were worried. Susann Hoffman, co-founder of the German website Edition F, said she was upset that the move had been done without any consultation. “I am personally quite unhappy with the fact that Facebook decides for its users what is relevant to them and what not,” Hoffman said. She argued for more personalization-giving users a greater ability to decide for themselves which content they would like to see. —AFP

## Canon placed top five in US patent rankings

**KUWAIT:** Canon Inc ranked third for the number of US patents awarded in 2017, becoming the only company in the world to have ranked in the top five for 32 years running, according to the latest ranking of preliminary patent results issued by IFI CLAIMS Patent Services. What’s more, Canon once again ranked first among Japanese companies.

Canon actively promotes the globalization of its business and places great value on obtaining patents overseas, carefully adhering to a patent-filing strategy that pursues patents in essential countries and regions while taking into consideration the business strategies and technology and product trends unique to each location. Among these, the United States, with its many high-tech companies and large market scale, represents a particularly important region in terms of business expansion and technology alliances.

Canon prizes its corporate DNA of placing a high priority on technology. And with regard to research and development results, the Company actively promotes the acquisition of patent rights in accordance with the management direction of the Canon Group and technology trends while conducting thorough pre-application searches to raise the quality of applications. Through close cooperation between Canon’s technology and intellectual property divisions, the Company aims to improve its technological capabilities while further enhancing its intellectual property rights.



Anurag Agrawal, Managing Director of Canon Middle East, commented: “Canon has accomplished another significant milestone as Innovation remains the heart of our business and we continue to build solutions for the industry and

our customers. We are committed in exploring the changing world of business and helping customers address their challenges and improve their operations - especially as they operate in a more digitally-connected, seamless world.”

# Clear blue skies in China’s capital sparks both joy and skepticism

Are these new government’s measures sustainable?

**BEIJING:** Every day for the last five years, Zou Yi has photographed Beijing’s smog-cloaked skyline from his 13th-floor apartment, but there is something different in the air this year. This winter, save a few grey days, the sky has been a brilliant blue, suggesting the city may finally be making progress against air pollution—an issue so dire in previous years that some periods were dubbed an “airpocalypse”. “It feels like life has returned to the city,” Zou, a former property investor, told AFP.

Last year Beijing enjoyed the best air quality on recent record, with a steady increase in “good air” days since pollution control measures were implemented in 2013, according to the capital’s environmental protection bureau. In the last quarter of 2017 alone, the density of dangerous particulate PM2.5 dropped by 53.8 percent year-on-year. The average level of PM2.5 particles—which penetrate deep into the lungs in the city last year was 58 micrograms per cubic metre. The World Health Organization recommends a maximum average exposure of 25 micrograms per cubic metre in a 24-hour period.

Analysts said this improvement was sparked by favorable weather conditions and more aggressive enforcement of environmental rules. Questions remain, however, on whether the government’s measures are sustainable. Authorities warned that heavy smog would slam the city and surrounding areas this weekend. From his home, Zou has an almost 360-degree view of the Central Business District—an urban landscape that he used to regard as “murky, static even”. He has created a massive composite of nearly 2,000 photographs showing the Beijing Television tower enveloped in differing shades of grey and blue. “Now that the air is good, I’m discovering that ours is a city of colour, full of emotion and rhythm,” the 50-year-old said.

**‘I was a polluter’**

On a recent clear, below-zero day, 65-year-old Tian Yuan and five other retirees were immersed in a lively card game at a Beijing public park. “Give us more clean air! This is just the beginning,” Tian, who used to sell coal for a living, said between rounds. “I was a polluter before I retired,” he said. “Now that whole company is gone.” Even French President Emmanuel Macron marvelled at the sky during his state visit this week, saying: “I have never seen Beijing like this.”

In recent years, authorities have ordered polluting factories to leave Beijing and its surroundings, and designated “no-coal zones” where more than three million homes have abruptly switched to gas or electric heating. Smaller businesses in the wider region are also being investigated for illegal smog-worsening practices. Enforcement of environmental regulations was previously applied primarily to larger, state-owned enterprises, said Greenpeace East Asia climate and energy campaigner Huang Wei. “Now the focus is on these local—and often more difficult to manage—corporations as well,” she said.

Prominent environmentalist Ma Jun said growing public awareness and pressure has played a key role in improving air quality. Ma, who penned a major book on China’s pollution crisis, developed an online platform displaying official data on companies’ environmental violations, which people increasingly use to call out irresponsible corporations.

**Long road ahead**

As China nears the end of its five-year plan for combatting smog, experts and activists called for a new strategy for long-term success. A Greenpeace analysis released Thursday found that while PM2.5 levels in Beijing, Tianjin and 26 surrounding cities declined 33.1 percent year-on-year in the last three months of 2017, for the full year it fell just 4.5 percent around the country—the lowest rate of decline since 2013.

Strong northerly winds this winter would have improved the air quality regardless of human intervention, Huang said, though government measures have no doubt bolstered blue skies. Xu Yuan, an air pollution policy expert at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, said the recent air quality marks a “turning point”. “We hope that people won’t be satisfied yet,” Xu said, adding that he believes pollution will “rebound”, although the long-term outlook is positive.

As for Zou, the photographer hopes to soon pass on his daily duties to other observers who will upload sky photos onto an app he is developing. He began his project in 2013, tired of the choking smog that prevented him from leaving the house and sent his child to hospital several times, and has left his job to work on environmental issues full-time. “I just have one dream,” he said, “that our country’s skies can always look like this.” —AFP



BEIJING: This picture taken on January 6, 2018 shows the Beijing Central Business District on a clear day. —AFP

## Zambia fighting back on cholera

**LUSAKA:** Zambia said Saturday it would open its international school and some retail centers in the capital after making sufficient progress in its fight to stem a cholera outbreak. Lusaka has borne the brunt of an epidemic which began last September with data released on Saturday showing 3,148 cases nationwide, 72 of them fatal. The government has sought to stem the spread with a

package of sometimes draconian measures including a ban on large public gatherings and the nationwide postponing of the start of the school year, as well as the introduction of a curfew in the slum district of Kanyama, seen as the focal point of the outbreak. “Lusaka’s international school will reopen on January 16. They have been inspected and meet sanitary conditions,” said Health Minister Chitalu Chifuy, adding the situation regarding government-run schools would be revisited on January 23, rather than a week later as initially announced, before setting a date on their reopening. Minister Vincent Mwale said retail stores in some commercial districts in the capital would reopen today – although not in Kanyama. —AFP

CLINIC PAGE

Kuwait Times

248 33 199

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What's On

# IWG organizes Kazakhstani event



— Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

By Faten Omar

**I**nternational Women's Group (IWG) organized a Kazakhstani traditional and entertaining event yesterday at Crowne Plaza Hotel in Farwaniya and was attended by IWG members. The event was a part of the regular events and activities held by IWG members. At the event, spouse of the Kazakhstani Ambassador to Kuwait, Markizetta Abdramanova praised the members of IWG for organizing such events and the relations linking the two countries which will broaden the scope of Kuwaiti-Kazakhstani ties. She also highlighted Kazakhstan's culture and the tourist attractions.

IWG's media advisor Narjis Al-Shatti stressed that IWG celebrates all occasions due to the fact that the group includes spouses of international ambassadors designated in Kuwait regardless of race or religion. She added that the event had a Kazakhstani musical show which included opera. The event also had well-known traditional Kazakhstani bread "Boursak" and sweets.

Shatti pointed out that the IWG will organize cultural events for each country starting from this year 2018, which will allow every country to show its traditions and culture "The members of the organization are entertained by various cultural activities and cultural programs that aim to introduce the different cultures of the organization's members." She noted that IWG's members will visit Oman soon.

The event concluded with a performance by a band that presented a traditional Kazakhstani musical show. These events aim to strengthen the relations with other members, where the wives of new ambassadors meet with other members to exchange information about their countries, tradition, food and culture.



## Soak up the winter sun with a Staycation at Hilton resort

**M**ake the most of the fabulous winter sunshine with a dream staycation at Hilton Kuwait Resort. Conveniently located in the south of the city, Hilton Kuwait Resort's stylishly decorated premier rooms offer magnificent views over the Arabian Gulf, making Hilton Kuwait Resort the perfect spot for a family staycation. Guests can make their stay the ultimate in luxury by upgrading to a plush villa or chalet. The two-bedroom chalets feature a fully fitted kitchen, spacious living room and an outdoor terrace, in addition to a separate dining area, providing a deluxe living area in which to relax and enjoy the 5-star service.

Set over two storeys, Hilton Kuwait Resort's magnificent Presidential Villas feature all the comforts of home including four bedrooms and bathrooms, a fully equipped modern kitchen and dining room for preparing meals. Two bedrooms feature one king bed and the other two rooms offer two twin beds. Unwind in the living room or kick back on your private terrace with its calming sea view. Downstairs each villa also features a private maid's room and bathroom.

For the ultimate indulgence, families can choose the Royal Villa, which comes complete with an exclusive plunge pool for guests to relax in with total privacy whilst enjoying spectacular seafront views over the Arabian Gulf. A perfect staycation goes with a sumptuous dining experience. From Arabic to international cuisines, Hilton Kuwait Resort boasts innovative menus lavishly prepared by the finest chefs in the region.

Guests enjoy the daily meals at the hotel's main restaurant, Teatro, with an open buffet and live cooking stations for grilled meat, seafood and pasta. Music performances entertain the visitors from Wednesday to



Friday starting at 7pm until midnight. The Palm Court Terrace and the private tents located by the beach offer a one-of-a-kind dining for the outdoor lovers. The serene atmosphere of Hilton Kuwait Resort's quaint Song Bird Cafe set the atrium bright and airy, with French pastries and freshly brewed coffee to delight guests all throughout the day.

For fitness enthusiasts, The Health Club offers a wide range of wellness classes, as well as a free weights area and an aerobics studio. For those looking to wind down, guests can pamper themselves at The Spa, which provides the perfect balance of fun and serenity, completing the ultimate experience of hospitality and relaxation in the heart of Kuwait.

## TIES announcement

**Y**ou are cordially invited to our Tafseer class (Divine Wisdom from the Last Testament) today, January 15th at 7:00 pm. In this class, we will focus on Surat Al-Mulk (The Dominion) from verse 24 till 27. We will bring light to the treasures of the unseen that only Allah

(SWT) knows, understand why Allah gives respite to the unjust wrongdoers, and why it is prohibited to invoke Allah's curse on ourselves, children and property. We will also discuss why the polytheists of Makkah discredited Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) yet would resort to him for help during adversity. Finally, we will examine some shocking events that will unfold on the Day of Judgment, and some simple yet meritorious acts of worship that will save us from the distress of that Day.

## Nespresso's new professional barista machine: The Aguila 220

**T**o satisfy evolving demands in the out of home market, the Aguila 220 is designed to meet the needs of all premium large HORECA establishments, such as hotels, restaurants, cafes and bakeries, and proposes an unmatched choice of one-touch gourmet recipes for extraordinary coffee quality and exceptional coffee moments.

As consumers become ever more knowledgeable and discerning about coffee, as well as keen to enjoy new beverage experiences, hotels and restaurants see a premium coffee offering as a means of differentiation. In true Nespresso fashion, the high-performance Aguila 220 helps professionals achieve this goal whilst at the same time ensuring convenient operation and simple maintenance. The Aguila 220 further strengthens Nespresso's professional proposal which includes a complete machine portfolio, 13 coffees for every taste and occasion and exceptional customer service.

### Feature-rich for exceptional service and customer care

The Aguila 220 combines exceptional functionality with sleek and durable design and ease of use together with a wide variety of coffee recipes. Its robust brewing unit makes it possible for an average of 2,000 cups of coffee to be served a month thus satisfying the market need for different serving capacities and efficient use of space.

Two extraction heads allow simultaneous and fast beverage preparation during peak hours. Unparalleled milk foam, milk temperature regulation,

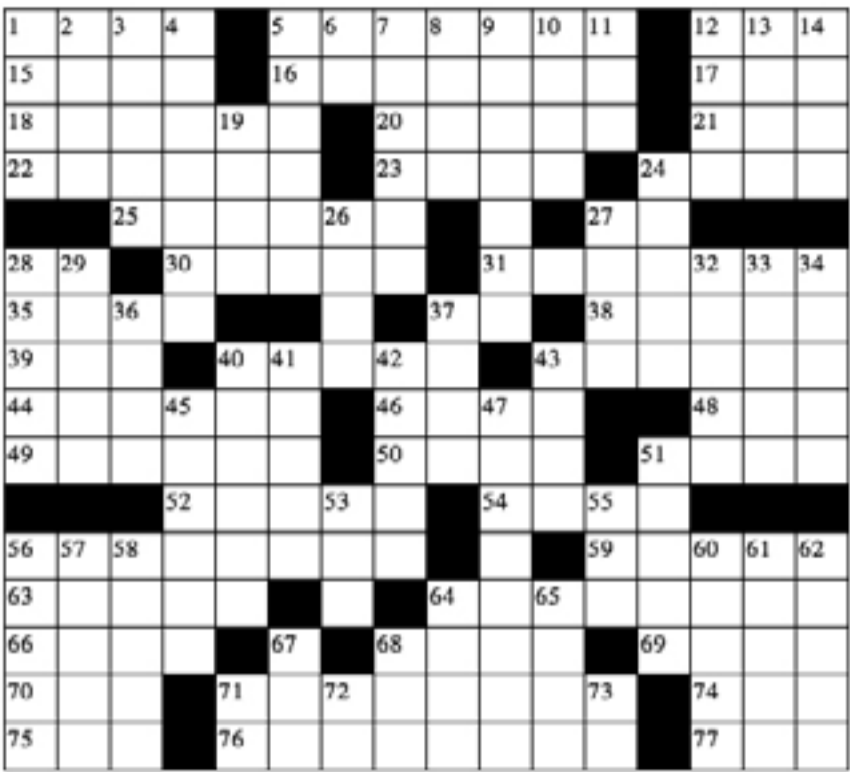


three programmable cup sizes (Ristretto, Espresso and Lungo), 4 one-touch recipes and 12 pre-programmed hot milk-based coffee recipes, all prepared at the touch of a button, ensure that the Aguila 220 delivers added value from both a service and operational perspective. Further convenience is ensured through a link to the cash register which helps cater to even the most high-pressure service and operational requirements.

"Our professional customers are very important to us and we are thrilled to extend the Aguila range to include the innovative and compact Barista machine, Aguila 220," said Reto Bruegger, Head of Out of Home channel, Nestlé Nespresso SA. "The Aguila range reflects Nespresso's desire to provide our professional partners with the highest quality coffee, choice, convenience and service that consumers have come to expect of their coffee experiences."



CROSSWORD 1809



ACROSS

1. The small projection of a mammary gland.  
5. Fatty red flesh of salmon of Pacific coast and rivers.  
12. Inquire about.  
15. (Norse mythology) One of the Aesir known for his beauty and skill with bow and skis.  
16. A path over which electrical signals can pass.  
17. Aircraft landing in bad weather in which the pilot is talked down by ground control using precision approach radar.  
18. When dried yields a hard substance used e.g. in golf balls.  
20. Relating to or designed for or using the singing voice.  
21. Thigh of a hog (usually smoked).  
22. Of or at or relating to an anode.  
23. An open vessel with a handle and a spout for pouring.  
25. Japanese mathematical physicist who proposed that nuclear forces are mediated by massive particles called mesons which are analogous to the photon in mediating electromagnetic forces (1907-1981).  
28. An ancient city of Sumer located on a former channel of the Euphrates River.  
30. A mark used by an author or editor to indicate where something is to be inserted into a text.  
31. A ship with a reinforced bow to break up ice and keep channels open for navigation.  
35. A network of intersecting blood vessels or intersecting nerves or intersecting lymph vessels.  
38. (Norse mythology) God of light and peace and noted for his beauty and sweet nature.  
39. A flat wing-shaped process or wing-like part of an organism.  
44. Of or relating to Libya or its people.  
46. (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.  
48. British informal term.  
49. Minute blackish gregarious flies destructive to mushrooms and seedlings.  
50. (Irish) Mother of the Tuatha De Danann.  
52. Boiled or baked buckwheat.  
54. A republic in the Middle East in western Asia.  
56. (Japan) Ritual suicide by self-disembowelment on a sword.  
59. Robust east Asian clump-forming perennial herbs having racemose flowers.  
63. Small terrestrial lizard of warm regions of the Old World.  
66. A collection of facts from which conclusions may be drawn.  
69. A small cake leavened with yeast.  
70. A federal agency established to coordinate programs aimed at reducing pollution and protecting the environment.  
74. A room equipped with toilet facilities.  
75. A fractional monetary unit of Japan and Indonesia and Cambodia.  
76. Any plant of the genus Caragana having even-pinnate leaves and mostly yellow flowers followed by seeds in a linear pod.  
77. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.

DOWN

1. The lowest brass wind instrument.  
2. A feeling of strong eagerness (usually in favor of a person or cause).  
3. A mixture containing two or more metallic elements or metallic and non-metallic elements usually fused together or dissolving into each other when molten.  
4. Speak unfavorably about.  
5. Of or relating to a directionless magnitude.  
6. A midwestern state in north central United States in the Great Lakes region.  
7. A warning against certain acts.  
8. Be cognizant or aware of a fact or a specific piece of information.  
9. Genus of shrubs of southwestern United States and Mexico.  
10. A period of time containing 365 (or 366) days.  
11. An extension at the end and at right angles to the main building.  
12. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).  
13. Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.  
14. God of love and erotic desire.  
19. The basic unit of money in Bangladesh.  
24. A region of Malaysia in northeastern Borneo.  
26. English writer and a central member of the Fabian Society (1858-1943).  
27. The compass point that is one point north of northeast.  
29. Antiquity that as survived from the distant past.  
32. Of a yellow-green color similar to that of an unripe olive n l.  
33. Someone whose business is advertising.  
34. A just detectable amount.  
36. A sock with a separation for the big toe.  
37. An informal term for a father.  
40. United States writer of poems and plays about racial conflict (born in 1934).  
41. Squash bugs.  
42. A family of Sino-Tibetan languages spoken in southeastern Asia.  
43. The sixth month of the civil year.  
45. A town in south central Washington.  
47. Taxonomic kingdom comprising all living or extinct animals.  
51. Short and fat.  
53. Hormones (estrogen and progesterin) are given to postmenopausal women.  
55. An abnormally large amount of this fetoprotein in the fetus can signal an abnormality of the neural tube (as spina bifida or anencephaly).  
57. With the mouth wide open as in wonder or awe.  
58. A switch made from the stems of the rattan palms.  
60. City in Sudan.  
61. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.  
62. An anti-TNF compound (trade name Arava) that is given orally.  
64. The taste experience when a savoury condiment is taken into the mouth.  
65. A city of central China.  
67. Large brownish-green New Zealand parrot.  
68. A long thin fluffy scarf of feathers or fur.  
71. The district occupied entirely by the city of Washington.  
72. A form of address for a man.  
73. A white metallic element that burns with a brilliant light.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Aries, you will wake up dreamy and letting your ideas flow; relax and let this happen. Your sensual side demands attention now; this will become a priority. Some events may halt your progress causing difficulty and frustration. By nature you desire to call the shots and you wonder about the unknown aspects of life. This is a good period to contemplate important situations regarding health and finances. You could find yourself stressed by an unpleasant situation with an elderly person or a superior. You could likely find you can't even agree with yourself! If you feel that you have been omitted from certain activities, look to yourself as your standards may be perceived as too high. Rethink, re-evaluate, and try to relax, aries.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Taurus, now is not the time to make important decisions; the stars are not aligned for this now. You may seem to crave things that would be harmful and would create lasting negative situations. You will continue to look deeply inside yourself for ways to improve, often the little things could make an enormous difference. If you have wandered off your path now is a perfect time to regroup and regain positive momentum. This will unfold without any problems if you allow it. You could overshoot and reign yourself in too harshly and to an unhealthy extent. Things that may seem unimportant to your happiness or well-being could be tossed aside; think carefully before you eliminate these things. You may set new goals this evening, taurus.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Gemini, you will be called on to take the lead in a certain project or matter. Normally very conservative thinkers will welcome your cutting-edge brainstorm. You could become sharply aware of how time flies and feel pressure regarding a new project. Give yourself a break; you cannot starve yourself enough to feed anyone. There may be conflict with someone who secretly feels threatened by you and your talent for working with others toward solutions. You may seek perfection in yourself and others, this could slow progress to a debilitating level; one step at a time will get you where you need to be. This evening is the perfect time to refresh an existing relationship. You enjoy the warmth and safety of home, gemini.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Cancer, you may find yourself disillusioned and wanting to focus on things that truly don't matter; this may create an impractical energy that will cause more harm than good. A new experience will alert you to something you would rather not know about. You will realize that time is slipping away too quickly where a project or person is concerned. You could revisit the past with some melancholy and regret but also with joy and smiles. Someone who is your junior will gain valuable knowledge from you today that they will never forget. You tend to be far too severe in judging your thoughts and actions; make an effort to change this. Accept one of the invitations to dinner or a movie this evening and have a great time, cancer.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Leo, you have entered a cycle that creates an energy of thinking about where you've been and where you're going. Home and hearth are where your focus and your heart are. You could feel a need to strengthen your personal bonds and commitments. Don't beat yourself up because you may need to reach out for help; when a vehicle you run out of gas energy it can't take anyone anywhere! You could become acutely aware of how quickly time moves. Let yourself have a break with a massage or a soothing session in a hot tub. You will share a great time with a like-minded person who gets your quirks and silly jokes. This afternoon will flow into this evening as you enjoy a home-cooked meal and special dessert before you go off to a peaceful sleep, leo.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Virgo, this is a good day to turn away from the superficial and pay close attention to spiritual and mental matters. Consider the new theories and factual information regarding controversial topics such as hauntings or alien life; perhaps new spiritual opinions are forming in your mind. Someone will rudely jump into your conversation with another person. Don't back down from your work goals; continue to steadily climb up the ladder. You will be able to use your ideas and energies to complete a project with an approaching deadline. You could get irritated when interacting with someone you feel is too far out there. Remember that what may seem odd to you doesn't seem odd to others; take a look in the mirror before you judge, virgo.

Wordsearch Puzzle

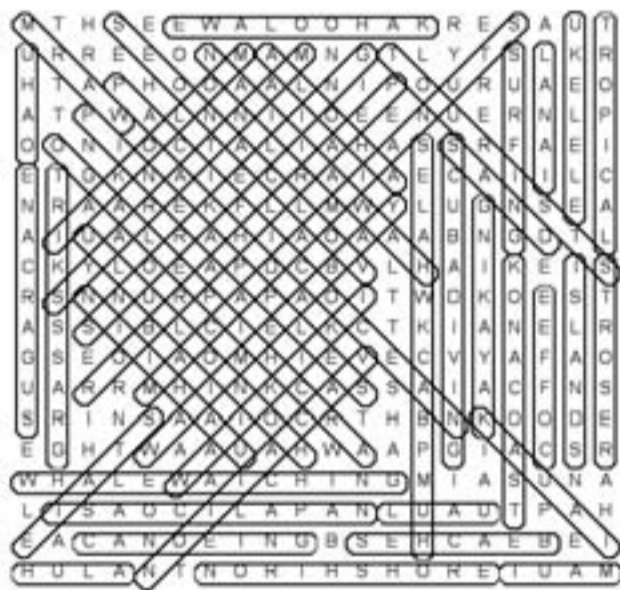
Head & Neck

Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell an additional word.



- BRAIN  
CHEEKS  
CHIN  
EAR LOBES  
EARDRUM  
EARS  
EYEBROWS  
EYELIDS  
EYES  
FOREHEAD  
GUMS  
HAIR  
JAW  
LARYNX  
LIPS  
MOUTH  
NAPE  
NECK  
NOSE  
NOSTRILS  
OESOPHAGUS  
PHARYNX  
SCALP  
SKULL  
TASTE BUDS  
TEETH  
TEMPLES  
THROAT  
TONGUE  
TONSILS  
TRACHEA  
UVULA

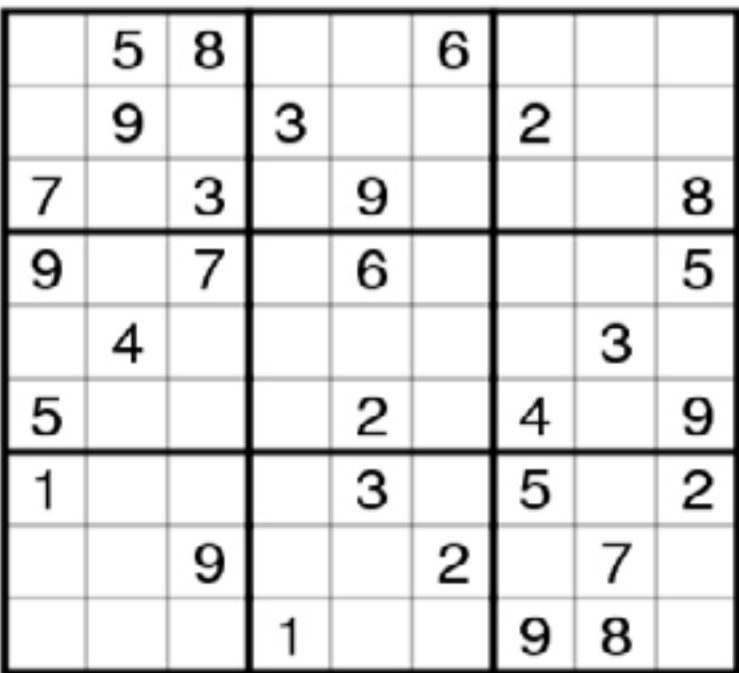
Hawaii



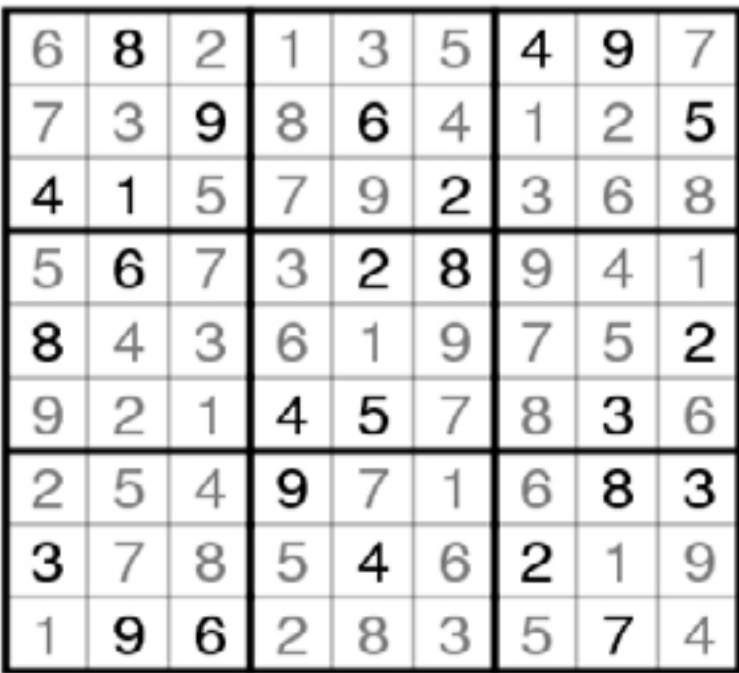
- ALOHA  
ARCHIPELAGO  
BEACHES  
CANDLING  
COFFEE  
GRASS SKIRT  
HAWAIIAN  
HONOLULU  
HULA  
HUMPBACK WHALES  
ISLANDS  
KAHOOLAWE  
KAUAI  
KAYAKING  
KONA COAST  
LANAI  
LIUAI  
MACADAMIA NUTS  
MANTA RAYS  
MAUI  
MOLOKAI  
NAPALI COAST  
NIIHAU  
NORTH SHORE  
OAHU  
PACIFIC OCEAN  
PEARL HARBOR  
PINEAPPLES  
RESORTS  
SAND  
SCUBA DIVING  
SHORKELING  
STATE  
SUGARCANE  
SURFING  
TOURISTS  
TROPICAL  
UKULELE  
VACATION  
VOLCANOES  
WAIKIKI  
WAIKOA BAY  
WAIKOA  
WHALE WATCHING

The hidden message is:  
THERE ARE ONLY THIRTEEN LETTERS IN THE HAWAIIAN ALPHABET

Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution







## Sheeran and Lipa dominate Brit Award nominations

Ed Sheeran, Dua Lipa, Liam Payne and Stormzy are among the nominees for this year's Brit Awards, Britain's most prestigious pop music prizes. Sheeran is in the running in four categories - British malesolo artist, best video and single for "Shape of You", and best album. Singer Dua Lipa received the most nominations. Her single "New Rules" was a break out hit last year and she is nominated in five categories including best album, best female artist and best single. And former One Direction star Payne was nominated for best single and video for "Strip That Down", which has now been a hit in Britain, Australia and United States. "The song's done extremely well, I am extremely happy with the success so far... We just reached a billion streams. I have never written down that number, I have never had the need," Payne said backstage at an event to announce the nominees in London. "It's amazing. You look at it and you're like, wow, it's one-sixth of the world's population, incredible." Dua Lipa will compete for best female artist against the likes of Jessie Ware and 2015 winner Paloma Faith. East London rapper J Hus and platinum-selling songwriter Rag'n'Bone Man have three nominations apiece, including for best album, while Stormzy's "Gang Signs and Prayer" is also nominated.



## Clapton's alternate career aspiration

Eric Clapton would have been a bricklayer if he didn't become a rock legend. The 'Tears in Heaven' hitmaker got the chance to try his hand at the laboring job when he worked briefly with his grandfather as a youngster, and says his work ethic and "master" craftsmanship rubbed off on him. Asked by Jools Holland at the UK premiere of his new movie 'Eric Clapton: Life in 12 Bar Blues' what he'd have done instead of music - he said: "Bricklayer or plasterer. For a little while I worked for my grandfather. And he was very strict and very noble. "He never took a raise. He worked for the same amount of money all his life. "And he was a master craftsman. And that was very important for me to observe. "That I could take that ethic anywhere. "He worked me very hard. So, I always thought, Well, if music doesn't work ... 'Cause I had the time of my life on that building site." The 72-year-old music legend teamed up with filmmaker and long-time friend Lili Fini Zanuck for new movie 'Eric Clapton: Life In 12 Bar Blues', which documents the rocker's spiraling addiction to drugs and alcohol, finding out the woman he believed was his mother was actually his sister, being rejected by his real parent, and the tragic loss of his four-year-old son Connor, who fell to his death after falling out of a window in a New York City apartment. A continuous theme to the 'Layla' hitmaker's personality, which director Zanuck chose to pinpoint, was how Clapton would just start getting onto a good thing with each of his groups, including The Yardbirds, Cream and Derek And The Dominos, and then he'd move on to the next thing. The 'Layla' songwriter - who has a net worth of around \$250 million - also admitted to never being concerned with how much he'd earned or spent over the years, despite the movie showing a young Clapton making his first ever purchase, his impressive Hurtwood Edge mansion in Surrey, England. He explained: "About the time [Derek And] The Dominos broke up [1971]. That thing of calling my band The Dominos was me trying to back out of everything. I still don't know how much money I've got or how much I've spent. I deliberately avoid knowing, because I'm a working class boy.

## Dion axes another Las Vegas show

Celine Dion is "truly sorry" for cancelling three Las Vegas shows this week. The 'Think Twice' hitmaker was upset at the thought of disappointing her fans when she had to axe her residency gig on Saturday on medical advice, following previous cancellations on January 6 and 9. The 49-year-old singer has been suffering from "throat irritation" due to a cold and though she had thought she was well enough to return to the stage on Friday she found the performance a struggle. She shared on social media: "I don't know what to say, other than I'm truly sorry for having to cancel tonight's show and the two shows from last week. "Cancelling a show is the hardest thing I have to do, especially when I know that so many people have travelled far to see me in Las Vegas. This decision is not made lightly. "When I'm not well, I always try to push through and I do everything I can to do my show. I really struggled to finish last night's show and it took everything out of me." "I know that I'm disappointing you, the people who support me the most and it hurts me beyond words. I hope that you can forgive me." Celine's cancellations came following a bizarre incident at one of her Caesars Palace shows earlier this month when she invited a female fan on stage during her performance, only for the supporter to wrap her leg around the star and start humping her. Celine said afterwards: "Let me tell you something, I'm glad you came up onstage tonight. "I'm glad that ... I thought you just wanted to come closer to me. But you know what, I'm glad you came closer to me." She then started singing: "I love you, you love me." Security rushed to Celine's aid but she asked them to stop and told the woman it was "OK" and that the guards were her "friends".



## Jessica Chastain will direct

Jessica Chastain is planning to quit acting. The 'Molly's Game' actress will "step back" and move behind the camera some day because she's keen to bring other people into the spotlight to enjoy the success she's had in her career. She told Grazia magazine: "Every day I feel like there is something new I never imagined I'd be doing. "If anything, I think in the future I'm going to step back and I'm probably going to produce more. I may even direct. "I'm interested in taking the light that has been shined on me and maybe shining it on some other people. I don't feel like I'm having to sacrifice anything because in reality this world is bigger than what my dream was." During last year's Cannes Film Festival, Jessica - who was a member of the jury - blasted the "disturbing" representation of women in film. In an emotional speech, she said: "I do believe that if you have female storytelling you also have more authentic female characters. This is the first time I watched 20 films in 10 days, and I love movies. The one thing I really took away from this experience is how the world views women, from the female characters that were represented. It was quite disturbing to me, to be honest. There were some exceptions. I will say, [but] for the most part, I was surprised by the representation of female characters on screen in these films." But the 'Zero Dark Thirty' star recently admitted she didn't go to Cannes with the intention to make such a powerful statement but nervously took the opportunity once she was on the jury. She said: "I did not expect to say it. I was very nervous as I was talking, because I was formulating my words, and it was actually coming from a very true place. And then after I spoke, every other woman on the jury spoke to the same thing. The one big regret, from whatever came out of Cannes, was that their statements did not also go around. But yes, I was not alone in what I felt being on that jury."



## Hammer wants Man From U.N.C.L.E. sequel

Armie Hammer wants to make another 'Man From U.N.C.L.E.' movie. The 31-year-old actor had a great time working on the 1960s spy tale with Henry Cavill, Alicia Vikander and director Guy Ritchie and revealed he's had conversations with the filmmaker about making another film in the series. Told by Collider they were keen on another 'Man From U.N.C.L.E.' movie, he said: "Yeah. Me too, man. I'd love to. "[Guy and I] had some chats about it and we talked about potential script ideas and stuff like that. I've been talking to Lionel [Wigram], who produced and co-wrote and wrote the first one. Yeah, we'll see. You never know what's going to happen." But fans shouldn't be expecting to see a sequel in the near future because the director is tied up with other commitments. Armie added: "It all depends. Guy's really busy right now doing 'Aladdin', so we'll see. You never know." In 2013, Armie worked with Johnny Depp and director Gore Verbinski on 'The Lone Ranger' but admitted he never knew what was planned for mooted sequels because the scope of the film was such a "monumental undertaking" that there was no time for conversation, and once it was released to scathing reviews and poor box office figures, any suggestions of a follow-up were immediately "squashed". He said: "We never made it that far. That was such a monumental undertaking. It was just a massive budget and a huge physical production. "We built close to 20 miles of our own personal railway. We built multiple towns. At one point, we had like a 500-person crew on that movie, I think. "It was really just focusing on handling everything we had to then, so we never really got a chance to talk about where it would go in the future. And then it opened to the reception it did, so any talk of sequels was sort of squashed."

## Hudson's home keeps her grounded



Jennifer Hudson thinks living in Chicago keeps her grounded. The 'Voice' coach - who has son David Jr., seven, with former fiancé David Otunga - believes it is important to keep her personal and professional lives separate but doesn't think living in Los Angeles would allow her the "breathing room" to do that. She told Britain's Cosmopolitan magazine: "I can go incognito [in Chicago]. "I'm a thinker and sometimes in this business celebrities tend to lose it. A lot of that is down to putting all your eggs in one basket. "So, if you live in L.A. your whole life is there - your personal life and your work. Where is your breathing room? I like to separate the two. "Going home to Chicago keeps me grounded, sane and balanced. L.A is a bubble. There is another world outside that, so it's intentional." The 36-year-old singer has a strong work ethic and thinks it's just as important to understand the business side of her profession as it is to perform. She said: "All I do is my job. I am a businesswoman. "In this industry you need to have just as much business sense as talent to be able to exist. Not everyone gets that. "Fortunately I do. I'm so grateful for that, along with having the talent to be able to do it..." "I don't care if I sing for the pope or the local church, everything is just as precious. "When I'm having my hair and make-up done for a job, people joke, 'She's really studying her stuff - who does that?' "But it's the nature of this business. Your work speaks for you and your next thing comes from your last thing."

## Kendall Jenner wants solo clothing range

Kendall Jenner wants a standalone fashion line of her own. The 22-year-old model has partnered with her younger sister Kendall + Kylie in a collaborative range since 2016, and though she has "fun" working with her sister, the brunette beauty would also like to create a serious collection herself. She said: "Kylie and I have our little brand that we do together, and actually have a fun time doing it, but I would love to branch off and do something a little more serious and really sit down and test my brain and play with it a little bit." The 'Keeping Up With the Kardashians' star also confessed to a passion for interior design and revealed she has learned a lot from Kanye West, who is married to her half-sister Kim Kardashian West. She said: "Most people don't know this about me, but I have a real love for interior design. I've been working with a designer named Martyn Bullard who's really awesome and who kind of made me fall in love with art. "Kanye has also been a huge influence. He's really, really into art and has the sickest pieces in his house." Despite being a huge sensation on social media, Kendall insists sites such as Instagram haven't made her career any easier and she has to work just as hard as anyone else. Speaking to her friend Cara Delevingne in an interview for the new issue of Harper's Bazaar magazine, she said: "I've actually talked about it with a couple of women, like Cindy Crawford, who have been doing this for a long time. I feel like social media obviously has a lot to do with how it's different. "A lot of people are like, 'Oh, it's so much easier now because you have Instagram. You don't even need an agency anymore.' " But that's just not true. I still had to go to all the castings, I still had to go meet all the photographers, I still had to do all of that to get to where I am now. "There wasn't a step taken out just because I had social media. I still have 12-hour days, I still have even 24-hour days sometimes; I still have to do all those things. "We don't work any less hard than the '90s models did when they were young." — Bang Showbiz



Lifestyle | Features

# Women of Colombia's emerald mines shine after smashing taboo

‘Anyone with the ability to use the tools can do this job’

For decades, women like Rosalba Canon were banned from Colombia's emerald mines: men said they brought bad luck. Canon and others like her have spent their lives as "guaqueras," or fortune hunters, sifting stray gems from the shale gouged from rock and spewed out as waste from the mines in the lush mountains of northern Colombia. "The idea of getting an emerald brought me here and I've stayed in the hope that the Baby Jesus will put one on my shovel," said the 63-year-old Canon, her face chiseled by the sun. Canon arrived at the end of the 1970s in the Andean town of Muzo, known as the emerald capital of the world. The women who came here, some running from violent relationships, could not work in the tunnels alongside the men because of the macho prejudice that they brought bad luck.



An emerald seeker rests in the Las Animas river close to an emerald mine in the municipality of Muzo - known as the "emerald capital of the world" - in the Colombian department of Boyaca.

The country's laws additionally prevented women from going down the mines.

"It has always been said in this region that the emeralds hid when they would enter," says Maria Luisa Durance, a 39-year-old social worker at Mining Texas Colombia (MTC), a leading company in the sector with 800 employees. Every day for more than three decades, Canon has put on her rubber boots and joined dozens of other fortune hunters sifting through the mine waste in the fast-flowing Las Animas river. Global fascination for emeralds dates back to pre-Columbian civilizations. Ships from the Spanish conquest exported the precious stones as far away as Persia, and in the 20th century the mountain was practically disfigured by explosives used to shift walls of rock.

Colombia now produces around two thirds of the world's emeralds, most of them from the Muzo area, around 150 kilometers (100 miles) north of the capital Bogota.

## Green fever

The modernized mines now produce less waste shale. But even so, men and women of all ages still cling to their shovels and sieves, seeking their fortune in the tons of mine tailings



An emerald seeker looks at a green gem found in the Las Animas river close to an emerald mine.



An emerald seeker looks at a green gem found in the Las Animas river close to an emerald mine.

thrown into the river. "This is a fever," admits Canon, who has raised her three children with the proceeds from the job. From time to time, someone will strike it lucky, finding sparkling green stones in a wash of shale, but for the most part, the guaqueros-men and women alike-live in debt to local merchants.

"They lend us money and when we find a stone, they take it," said Blanca Buitrago. "For a



General view of the village of Muzo, in the municipality of the same name and known as the "emerald capital of the world".

long time now, I haven't found anything." But sometimes, Buitrago says, she can find gems that will bring in between 65 and 165 dollars, "no more," Buitrago, a 52-year-old mother of five, arrived in Muzo to seek her fortune after being forced out of her home by one of Colombia's dozens of armed groups in 2006. In 2015, women were finally allowed to enter the mines when the sexist law that prevented them was annulled.

But like Canon and many other guaqueras, Buitrago is now too old to benefit from the law and get a formal job at the mines. However, Saida Canizales, 40, was able to take advantage of the change and she is currently the only woman among 18 MTC security supervisors. "Obviously women joining the mines has been a challenge... but I think I've already taken it forward," says Canizales, an expert in electronic surveillance, who tripled the 600-dollar salary she was getting in Bogota. Wearing a black helmet that barely covered her blonde braids,

Canizales headed deep into the mine to monitor gems being extracted from the rock.

Later-and 140 meters (460 feet) deeper-a miner using a jackhammer broke through the rock face as Canizales watched. A powdery white vein of calcite appeared, and a smudge of green dust-a tell-tale sign of a gem. In the shifting beams of head torches, a geologist delicately chipped at the rock with his pick until a few emerald stones tumbled into his palm. He slipped the stones into a bag that Canizales sealed, before making her way back up to the surface.

## 'Hardworking, honest, proud'

Luis Miguel Ayala said he is unfazed by having a woman supervisor in what until recently has exclusively been a man's world. "Anyone with the ability to use the tools can do this job," said the 23-year-old, wiping the sweat from his eyes as temperatures in the shaft reached 35 degrees Celsius (95 degrees Fahrenheit) with 90 percent humidity. Hiring women has been "a

very successful policy," MTC chairman Charles Burgess told AFP. The women "are very hard-working, honest and proud of their work."

"Although obviously there are jobs that are not suitable for them because the work is sometimes very hard physically," said the 62-year old former US diplomat, who is married to a Colombian. But introducing women in the shafts was not easy. When the huge elevator that takes them down from the surface was operated for the first time by a woman, no miner would take the risk of going with her. An engineer finally stepped forward to set an example. Two years later, some 15 women known as "malacateras" handle these machines, most of them single mothers or widows who left violent homes.

Adriana Perez escaped a poverty ridden childhood to get here. The day she could go down the mine, she said "my life changed." Her \$600 salary is more than twice the minimum wage. For her, the mine allows her to dream of a better future for her two children. — AFP

# ‘Coco’ guitars all the rage in Mexico



Mexican luthier Salvador Meza, makes a replica guitar from "Coco" the movie.

Salvador Meza has been making guitars since he was a boy, but his leathery hands have never had to churn them out as fast as now-thanks to the hit movie "Coco." Meza, 41, is one of many renowned guitar-makers in the Mexican town of Paracho, which has been producing artfully crafted guitars since the 18th century. But the sleepy colonial town has never seen a boom like this-all because of "Coco," this year's Golden Globe winner for best animated film and a box office smash that has



Mexican luthier Salvador Meza, makes a replica guitar from "Coco" the movie.

grossed more than \$500 million so far. Set in Mexico, the movie tells the story of Miguel, a young boy who secretly longs to be a musician but is growing up in a family where music is forbidden.

Fate thrusts into his hands a white guitar incrustated with mother-of-pearl, topped with gold tuning pegs and a stylized black skull. The skull, like the film itself, is a playful tribute to



Replica guitars from "Coco" the movie are pictured at a store.

from 50 guitars a week to 100. Paracho, the "guitar capital of Mexico," makes nearly one million classical guitars a year, many exported to the United States. Typically, they are elegant and understated masterpieces of burnished brown wood. At least, that was the case until the town caught what guitar shop owner Maria Eugenia Gomez calls "Coco fever." Now, she says, she can't keep up with demand for the flashy white guitars. "If I had 1,000 of them, I'd sell them all," said Gomez, 76.

## 'Straight out of a movie'

The man behind the original "Coco" guitar is German Vazquez, a Paracho native who emigrated to the United States 25 years ago, slipping over the border to chase the American dream. The state where Paracho is located, Michoacan, was until recent years swept by



Guitar parts are pictured during the drying process at the workshop of Salvador Meza, a Mexican luthier who makes replica guitars from "Coco" the movie.



Mexican luthier Salvador Meza, makes a replica guitar from "Coco" the movie.

grisly violence unleashed by the Knights Templar drug cartel. It is among the states with the highest rates of emigration to the US. After Vazquez crossed the border, he found work, eventually became a US citizen and finally managed to open his own guitar workshop in Los Angeles-which is where Pixar found him. Now 64, he reminisces with a hint of nostalgia about his trek across the desert a quarter-century ago. "It was hard. You arrive with nothing but

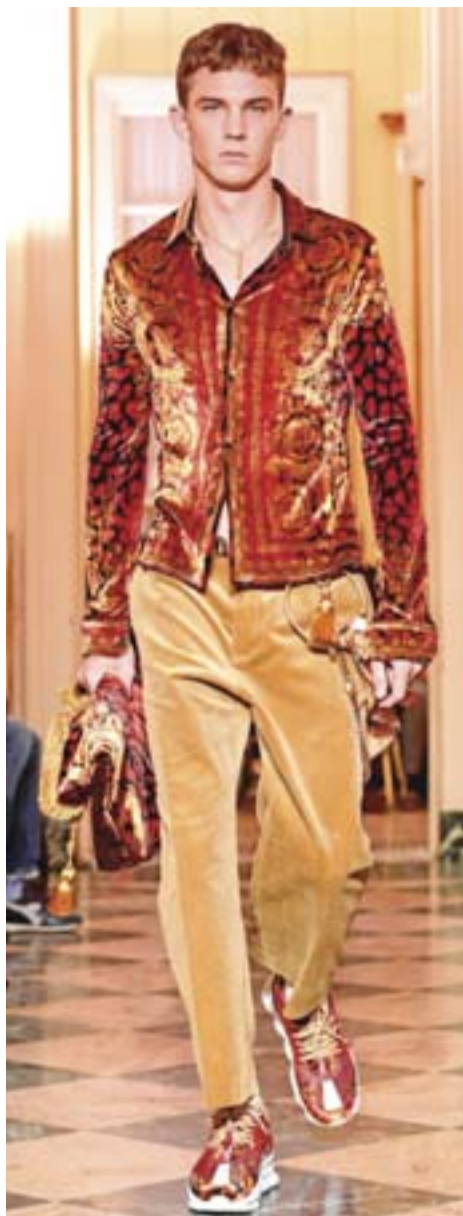


A woman sells replica guitars from "Coco" the movie at her stall in Paracho.



Guitar parts are pictured during the drying process at the workshop of Salvador Meza, a Mexican luthier who makes replica guitars from "Coco" the movie.

the clothes on your back, with no money, nothing but your desire to work," said Vazquez, a critic of US President Donald Trump's planned border wall. He said he sees a little bit of young Miguel in his own life's story. "He wants to be a musician, and he searches for a way to make it happen. He fights and fights until he achieves it. I think in that way I'm also like little Miguel... in love with guitars," he told AFP. "My life is straight out of a movie." — AFP



# DOLCE & GABBANA'S ROYAL FLUSH WOWS MILAN FASHION WEEK



Italian fashion house Dolce & Gabbana put on a show fit for a king Saturday with its regal-inspired men's range modeled by some of the scions of the social media age in Milan. The show, "King's Angels", featuring sharp tailored suits embellished with patterned lapels and gold embroidery, took place under an enormous crown with regular appearances of the celestial beings on sleeves, sweatsuits and suede moccasin slippers. The Italian label has made millennials (those born between 1980 and 2000) its target market and used several of the generation's more prominent members to show off its latest creations at Milan Men's Fashion Week.

Internet celebrities such as Kevin Chaplin, grandson of Charlie, Dylan Jagger Lee, son of actress Pamela Anderson and drummer Tommy Lee, Paris Brosnan, son of actor Pierce, and Christian Combs, son of rapper Puff Daddy all took to the catwalk. They were joined by the likes of Neels Visser-he of 2.7 million Instagram followers-video microblogging app Vine star Cameron Dallas, and musician and actor Austin Mahone. Earlier Saturday, the doyen of Italian fashion Giorgio Armani, 83, showed off new creations for his Emporio Armani streetwear brand with a unisex show full of dark block colors and sharp tailoring. Donatella Versace introduced riffs on Scottish tartan, also displaying women's outfits at Men's Fashion Week. — AFP



Models present creations for fashion house Versace during the Men's Fall/Winter 2019 fashion shows in Milan. — AFP photos



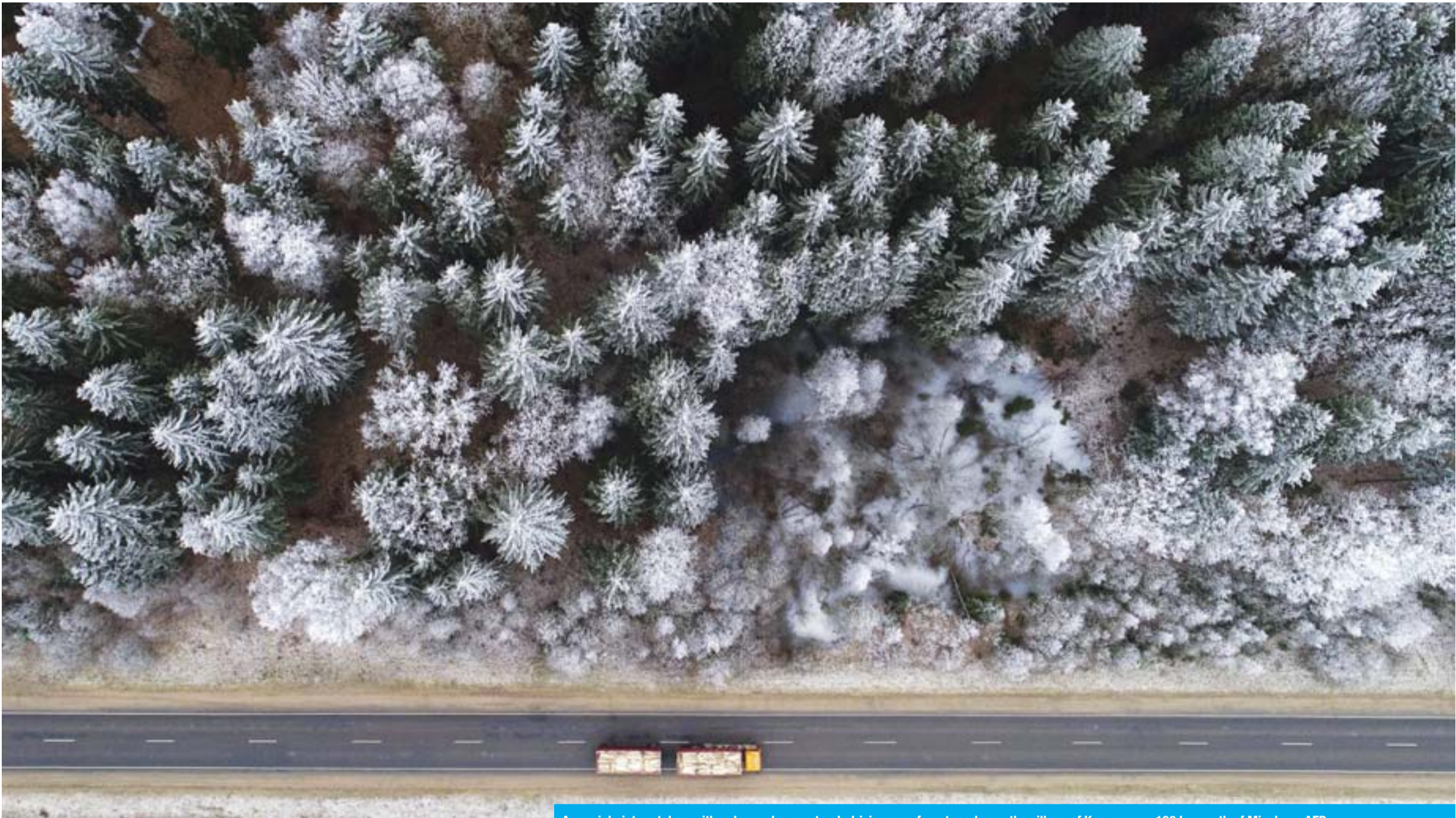
Models present creations for fashion house Versace during the Men's Fall/Winter 2019 fashion shows in Milan.



Models present a creation for fashion house Moschino during the Men's Fall/Winter 2019 fashion shows in Milan.

# Lifestyle

MONDAY, JANUARY 15, 2018



An aerial picture taken with a drone shows a truck driving on a forest road near the village of Krevo, some 100 km north of Minsk. — AFP

## JAPAN SEWERS CLEAN UP THEIR ACT WITH MANHOLE ART

Japan's sewerage industry has found a way to clean up its dirty and smelly image: elaborately designed and colorful manhole covers with 12,000 local varieties nationwide—including, of course, a Hello Kitty design. Appealing to a Japanese love of detail and “kawaii” (“cute”), bespoke manhole covers adorn the streets of 1,700 towns, cities and villages across Japan and have spawned a collection craze among so-called “manholers.” The designs represent an instant guide to a place as they feature its history, folklore, or specialty goods: a castle design for an ancient town, a bay bridge for a port and Mt Fuji for a city at the foot of Japan's iconic mountain.

As for Tama City, located in the western sprawl of greater Tokyo, locals are pinning their hopes on a more modern Japanese icon—Hello Kitty—to attract tourists, alongside the town's theme park showcasing much-loved children's character from the Sanrio company. “We'd be happy if people come and take some time for a stroll in our town while looking for the Hello Kitty manholes,” said Mikio Narashima, who heads the city's sewage system division, after the city installed the first of the 10 designed covers.

### 'Treasure hunting for adults'

Veteran spotter Shoji Morimoto said his passion for covers was fuelled after noticing that the central city of Fukui sported two phoenixes on its manholes.

He later learned the imaginary birds were a symbol of the town's rise from a 1945 devastating US air raid and a deadly earthquake three years later. “I sometimes do research on why the town has that particular design. I'm impressed whenever I find out it represents the town's history and culture,” said Morimoto, who coined the word “manholer” for like-minded people. Designed manholes cost more but appeal to a Japanese sense of detail, the 48-year-old Morimoto told AFP.

He has already visited all the designed manholes in his local area. “Now I have to travel far,” he admits. “It's treasure hunting for adults.” “Manholers” take pictures of the covers they visit, with the more obsessive taking rubbings.



A worker installs a new manhole, with a design bearing Japanese character “Hello Kitty” at Tama Chuo park in Tama city, Tokyo prefecture.

For others, the interest lies more in “cover bonsai”, plants growing on soil accumulated on and around covers. More than 3,000 people attended a “manhole summit” in western Japan in November.

### 'Under the cover'

And manhole covers are not simply there to hide away dirty sewers, enthuses Tetsuro Sasabe, who is interested in covers for telecoms infrastructure. “I'm interested in why the manhole is there, where it leads to—I'd say I'm interested in what's under the manhole covers,” he said. He noted that there is a story even to plain covers—such as finding the logos of now-defunct companies. Given their size, the covers cannot easily be collected in the same way people hoard stamps and coins. But to satisfy collectors' desire, the private-public GKP network designed to promote awareness

on the importance of sewerage in society, has released 1.4 million cards of 293 different covers.

The cards are free but they can only be obtained through local offices, thus working as a tourist magnet. They are numbered in chronological order and come with the manhole's exact GPS information for the convenience of manholers. “We believe Japanese manholes are cultural products we can boast to the world,” said Hideto Yamada, a GKP planning official. And when a real cover does become available, demand is brisk. The eastern city of Maebashi held a highly competitive lottery in October as its offer to sell 10 used manhole covers — 40 kilograms of iron-at 3,000 yen (\$28) each was swamped with more than 190 bids.

### Non-slip

The history of decorating manhole covers in Japan dates



A collection of designed manhole cover cards in Tokyo.

back 40 years to a bid to improve the image of the sewerage system, according to GKP's Yamada. Cover designs must have the same friction level no matter which direction humans or cars come from so that people do not slip over them. This need for friction resulted in placing extra streaks of clouds, sea waves or tiny stars in the background, giving birth to “condensed designs,” Yamada said.

Overall, there are some 15 million manholes in Japan, of which only a fraction have colorful designed covers, carefully hand-painted. A plain cover costs some \$600 but a colorful, designed one can be double that depending on the number of colors used and the level of detail used. The craze has since spread online with abundant information on where to find the best manholes via the hashtag #manhotalk. An extensive collection can be seen at Japan Society of Manhole Covers. — AFP



Japanese employee Isamu Kamiya paints a manhole cover at a factory in Otawara, Tochigi prefecture. — AFP photos



People walk past designed manhole covers in Kawaguchi, Saitama prefecture.



People walk past a designed manhole cover in Kawaguchi, Saitama prefecture.