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# Iraq favors deferred-payment initiatives as sustainable help

## Maliki: Executing projects better than financial grants to Iraq

conspiracy theories

### Amnesty...is it enough?



By Badrya Darwish  
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It was a great decision by Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah to grant an amnesty to all illegal residents in Kuwait. The best part in his decision is that they can leave immediately, without any penalties or fees, through any border (airport or land borders) without referring to any authority like the police station, immigration offices, etc. Also, the second decision by the minister was great. He made it possible for those who want to stay to legalize their status, pay the fines and obtain a valid visa.

This serves both Kuwait and the illegals. Firstly, because many of them are living in dire frustration - they cannot go left or right or center. They cannot go anywhere without being scared of being caught by the police. They cannot work legally. They cannot go to hospitals or clinics if they are sick. They cannot live decently. This also benefits Kuwait, because it reduces the number of illegal residents in the country and also helps reduce the burden on government services - be it social or security wise.

But this is not the end of a beautiful story in Kuwait - illegals are out, etc. I think the minister should consider how these illegals became illegals. What were the reasons? Let's hit and find the source. Not all of them are runaway maids. Tens of thousands of them are ordinary employees or laborers who were brought here legally but without a job when they arrived. They paid recruiters to come here - both in their home country and in Kuwait, but found nothing when they arrived.

And I'm sure the minister is sophisticated enough to know how they came and who brought them. So the question is how to stop this from repeating itself? Because it can be repeated now, tomorrow and after tomorrow and on and on and we will be back to square one. This is human trafficking. People are filling their pockets from these poor souls and then dumping them on Kuwait's streets. And this makes them a burden for Kuwait and its system and infrastructure.

I am sure Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah has enough power and determination to close this chapter once and for all. He can scrutinize the companies that are bringing in these large numbers of workers and benefiting from them, and throwing the responsibility at the end of the day on Kuwait and the Kuwaiti government. Now is the chance for the interior ministry to put in place a new system that is fair to both the worker and the company hiring him without wasta and without connections. No more human traffickers please.

BAGHDAD: Iraqi Vice President Nouri Al-Maliki has expressed hope that the planned Iraqi reconstruction conference in Kuwait will yield tangible outcomes, namely accords on enterprises of delayed payment. The vice president, during a meeting with a Kuwaiti media delegation on Tuesday, hoped that action during the conference would not be restricted to raising donations for Iraq.

Instead, Maliki wished it will witness accords on rebuilding bridges, hospitals, factories and other sectors with delayed payment or cash according to specific timetable. Executing projects in Iraq and making deals with government guarantees is better than giving financial grants to the nation, he said, also pointing out that his proposed mechanism would be useful for investors and helpful for speeding up Iraq's reconstruction.

Iraq is a wealthy country and oil prices have been improving gradually, so it will be able to pay debts to the creditors, he added. Maliki indicated that he had previously proposed this mechanism for reconstruction and that the value of late-payment enterprises has been estimated at \$77 billion, to be paid in installments over 10 years.

Citing a concrete successful example, he says that Japan has offered \$780 million to Iraq through ventures, which it has been executing, with pledges Baghdad pays the costs later. He praised HH the Amir



BAGHDAD: Members of a Kuwaiti media delegation meet Iraqi Vice President Nouri Al-Maliki on Tuesday. Editor-in-Chief of Kuwait Times Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan is fourth from left. — Photo by Mustafa Al-Bader (See Page 2)

Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for hosting the international convention for rebuilding Iraq, hoping that this effort will contribute to cementing the ties between the two brotherly peoples at various levels. The conference's success is necessary because this means undermining plots by the so-called Islamic State,

Al-Qaeda and sectarianism advocates. Vice President Maliki lauded His Highness the Amir for his efforts to resolve crises and problems between the two countries. "We are seeking to close all doors leading to discord and elevating bilateral relations through mutual visits," he said. — KUNA

## Nuqat opens 'human capital' conference

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: Local nonprofit Nuqat kicked off a two-day "The Human Capital" forum yesterday at Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Center, comprising of talks and panel discussions by speakers from different fields with a common vision to highlight the importance of investing in creativity to make a social impact.

In his opening speech, Minister of Commerce and Industry and Acting Minister of State for Youth Affairs Khaled Al-Roudhan said moral values and ethics are more important than education. "Success or your level of education can never be thought of as more important than moral values. The journey is actually more important than the destination, and if no ethics are involved in the journey, then the destination has no value at all. A person has to feel good about how they achieved their success in order to feel good about it," he said.

Roudhan praised Nuqat's effort in creating a new world of creativity in Kuwait, adding that it is time for the government to notice the amount of effort that Nuqat is spending and provide a good environment for creative Kuwaitis and develop and invest in human assets.



Bader Al-Kharafi, Vice Chairman and Group CEO of Zain

Hussa Al-Humaidhi, Co-founder of Nuqat, explained that creative economy is about doing what a person loves to do in order to create jobs as a social impact. "Kuwait is not only going to be an economic center, but also a center of culture and creativity," she vowed. She added that most jobs will disappear after 10 years and replaced by technology, but the creativity of humans is the only thing that will not be replaceable. "To do what you're creative in makes a person do their jobs with passion and love," she said.

Among her suggested solutions,

Humaidhi said that the current education has to be replaced with a creative one. "Values of flexibility shall not only be taught at school and university, but also at work. Everyone has the responsibility to develop themselves. We can anchor and build a solid future for Kuwaitis," she added.

Bader Al-Kharafi, Vice Chairman and Group CEO of Zain, spoke about "enabling a creative culture". "I believe that a successful business is all about creative teamwork. At Zain, we believe that the employees are the ones who make the



Hussa Al-Humaidhi, Co-founder of Nuqat

company succeed or fail," he said. Kharafi said Zain started the Zainiac program where it invited all employees of Zain from all countries to offer their ideas. "We were shocked by how much creative ideas they had," he said.

"Education in Kuwait kills creativity. Kuwait spends \$14,300 per student annually - so we do not have money issues, but we're spending all the money in the wrong path. We need new fields to study such as data science, coding and complex problem solving.

Continued on Page 11

## Duterte threatens Mideast work ban, demands dignity

MANILA: Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte yesterday threatened to ban hundreds of thousands of Filipinas from working as maids in the Middle East as he said domestic workers were being abused in Kuwait. Over two million Filipinos, many of them maids, are employed in the region, helping to prop up the Philippine economy with billions of dollars in salary remittances to their families each year. Duterte said Kuwait was an ally, but abuse should not be tolerated. "I hope that you'd listen to me," he said. "We may need your help, but we will not do it at the expense of the dignity of the Filipino."

Last week, Duterte barred Filipinos from seeking work in Kuwait over reports of widespread abuse, exploitation and deaths, although the ban did not affect workers already in the state. "I hope I am not committing a diplomatic faux pas. But one more incident about a woman, a Filipina worker being raped there, committing suicide, I'm going to stop - I'm going to ban" Filipinos

working, he said.

"And I'm sorry to all the Filipinos there, they can all go home. If you leave, they will also be having a hell of a time adjusting to that. Let me be blunt about this because Kuwait has always been an ally. But please do something about it and for the other countries of the Middle East." A visibly angry Duterte was speaking shortly before boarding a flight for India to attend a regional summit. "Can I ask you now to treat my countrymen as human beings with dignity?" he added.

Duterte said last week that four Filipinas had died in Kuwait over the past few months in apparent suicides. Kuwaiti Embassy officials in Manila could not be contacted for comment. Philippine Foreign Secretary Alan Peter Cayetano said separately that Duterte had reacted to a recent report on abuses in Kuwait. "Statistics don't lie and there is grave concern about the abuses in Kuwait," he said. There are more than 200,000 Filipinos in Kuwait and a "large" number are stranded in the country, are paid less than they were promised or are abused, Cayetano said.

Cayetano said Kuwaiti and Philippine diplomats had met in both countries to discuss the issue after Duterte imposed the ban. "We expressed the same concerns and they expressed surprise or shock that we used a ban immediately," Cayetano said. "So the point is we are sending a message around the world." — Agencies

## Ryan holds talks with Saudi king

RIYADH: The speaker of the US House of Representatives Paul Ryan held talks with Saudi King Salman in Riyadh yesterday on the first leg of a Gulf tour. They discussed "bilateral cooperation" between the longtime allies, the official Saudi Press Agency reported without elaborating. Relations between Riyadh and Washington frayed under the administration of Barack Obama after the US joined other major powers in agree-

ing a landmark nuclear deal with the kingdom's arch foe Iran in 2015.

But they have improved markedly since President Donald Trump took office last year with a much tougher policy towards Iran that has seen his administration demand revisions that the other parties to the deal warn will torpedo it. Today, Ryan is due to travel on to Abu Dhabi for talks with leaders of close Saudi ally the United Arab Emirates. — AFP



RIYADH: Saudi King Salman welcomes US House Speaker Paul Ryan yesterday. — AFP



## Local

# Allawi commends political leadership of Kuwait, ability

## Iraqi VP says battle is still going on against terrorism



Kuwait Times Editor-in-Chief Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan meets with Iraqi Vice President Dr Iyad Allawi.



Members of the Kuwaiti media delegation pose for a group photo with Iraqi Vice President Dr Iyad Allawi. — Photos by Mustafa Al-Bader



Kuwait Times Editor-in-Chief Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan meets with Iraqi Vice President Nouri Al-Maliki.

BAGHDAD: Iraqi Vice President Dr Iyad Allawi hailed Kuwait's ability and wisdom to deal with "great political dilemmas," adding, "despite its geographical size, it has a moral standing in the region and the world". The remarks were made during a meeting with a Kuwaiti media delegation which is currently visiting Baghdad.

Allawi expressed his appreciation and thanks to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, for his constant support to Iraq and for his wisdom in dealing with Arab issues. The Iraqi leader also praised the wisdom of Kuwait's political leadership and its constant quest to resolve disputes in the Arab world.

On the issue of terrorism, Allawi said that "the battle is still going on but the ways of confrontation will change through intelligence confrontation and the specific operations to eliminate terrorism and protect the unity of society from extremist ideas." He explained that these ideas came because of sectarian quotas and abuses on some segments of society and policies built on reactions, which were unacceptable.

Allawi expressed his regret that the political, social and economic situation in Iraq is not on the right track, adding that Iraq is rich in men and wealth, but money is wasted due to lack of awareness of proper plans and work and the absence of adequate management, and also due to the spread of corruption and lack of accountability and deterrent legislation.

The Kuwaiti delegation includes Kuwait Times Editor-in-Chief Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan, Secretary of the Kuwaiti Journalists Association Adnan Al-Rashed, KUNA Deputy General Director for the Editorial Department and Chief Editor Saad Al-Ali, Undersecretary of the External Media at the Ministry of Information Faisal Al-Mutallqem and Editor-in-Chief of the daily newspaper, Al-Anbaa. It also includes Hassan Al-Sayegh from the Premier Diwan and other renowned journalists and media figures. The conference for rebuilding Iraq is due on February 12-14. It will group a number of donors, regional and international organizations namely the United Nations, the European Union and the World Bank. — KUNA



Members of the Kuwaiti media delegation meet with Iraqi Vice President Nouri Al-Maliki.

## FM administers oath of office to 28 envoys

KUWAIT: Some 28 Kuwaiti diplomats were sworn in yesterday in a ceremony presided over by Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. The Kuwaiti foreign minister congratulated the new diplomatic staff on successfully completing a Sheikh Saud Al-Nasser Al-Sabah Diplomatic Institute-organized training program, saying he was confident that they would live up to their responsibilities. Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled advised the diplomats, both men and women, to keep their

country's best interests at heart and remain highly vigilant at a time where the international political scene is mired in instability.

Meanwhile, Kuwaiti Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah conveyed his "heartiest congratulations" to the new diplomats, urging them to remain committed and diligent as they settle into their new positions. Abdulaziz Al-Sharekh, the Director General of the Sheikh Saud Al-Nasser Diplomatic Institute, commended the diplomatic contingent on their outstanding efforts during the program. He also thanked the Kuwaiti foreign minister for his profound contributions to the success of the diplomatic institute. The swearing-in ceremony brought together a number of senior Kuwaiti foreign ministry officials. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah with the new diplomatic staff. — KUNA

## Kuwait condemns use of chemical weapons: Ambassador

NEW YORK/PARIS: The State of Kuwait firmly affirmed its strong condemnation of any use of chemical weapons at any time and place and due to being a gross violation of international law. Kuwait stresses those responsible for such uses should be subjected to trial, whether they were persons, entities or groups other than States or Governments.

This came in a speech delivered by the Permanent Representative of the State of Kuwait to the United Nations, Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi before the UN Security Council session discussing the situation in the Middle East (the Chemical file of Syria). "The continued use of chemical weapons in Syria is one of the negative images of this crisis which started seven years ago and is still growing more and more with the absence of justice, accountability and impunity," Ambassador Otaibi said.

Otaibi pointed out that since the chemical weapons attack on areas in the eastern Ghouta in 2013 in which most casualties were civilians, the UNSC has shown unity, determination to ensure such crime is not repeated, and that the perpetrators are held accountable by issuing resolution 2118.

"Unfortunately, we are still witnessing reports of attacks with the use of chemicals in Syria, the latest on the eastern Ghouta on January 13," he added. "We express our disappointment that the Security Council has not been able to reach a unified position regarding the renewal of the mandate of the joint investigation mechanism in Syria, which has done its work professionally,

impartially and independently," he noted.

In this regard, Otaibi expressed Kuwait's welcoming of the French initiative to hold the Paris meeting of the International Partnership to combat the impunity of chemical weapons users. The State of Kuwait participated in this event alongside a group of countries in order to emphasize the importance of establishing the values of justice and accountability.

Otaibi referred to Kuwait's support for the international mechanisms established by the UN General Assembly and the Human Rights Council to investigate, collect and preserve evidence of humanitarian crimes and human rights violations committed in Syria.

He stressed the great importance of the unity of the Security Council in dealing with everything that harms international peace and security. UNSC issued many resolutions related to the Syrian crisis such as resolution 2118 in the chemical file, resolution 2165 in the humanitarian file, and resolution 2254 in the political track of the Syrian crisis.

### France meeting

Separately, Kuwait took part Tuesday in a ministerial conference on the International Partnership against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons. Kuwait's Ambassador in Paris Sami Al-Sulaiman headed the Kuwaiti delegation, on behalf of Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, at the event.

Kuwait supports such an initiative, and is willing to back all efforts contributing to form an international partnership against impunity for the use of chemical weapons, Sulaiman affirmed in his speech at the conference. Currently, Kuwait is a UNSC member, and also part of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction since 1997, he said. Sulaiman also mentioned his country's launch of the national committee for the prohibition of chemical weapons, which supervises the efforts exerted by the Kuwaiti government, national, and public institutions to secure the implementa-



Permanent Representative of the State of Kuwait to the United Nations Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi



Kuwait's Ambassador in Paris Sami Al-Sulaiman

tion of international agreements and treaties on issues regarding weapons of mass-destruction. Kuwait is also an active member in the organization that supervises the implementation of the 1997 Convention, in addition to its participation in all international efforts aimed at boosting international peace and security, added the Kuwaiti diplomat. Meanwhile, Sulaiman urged the international community to search for independent and professional alternatives and measures, with UNSC's approval, to secure the non-impunity of officials from crimes they committed.

He also reiterated his country's supportive stand to the efforts exerted by the UN and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, through their fact-finding missions, in investigating claims of chemical weapons use in Syria. The Kuwaiti diplomat also stressed the conference's importance in highlighting the dangers surrounding the region, in addition to the consequent international developments and clash of interests that produced wrong concepts to some organizations and people about justifying impunity from punish-

ment due to the ongoing threat targeting humanity, peace, and security.

The use of chemical weapons in conflicts is the most dangerous threat the world is currently facing, Sulaiman said, adding that the conference would emphasize that such a crime against humanity would not be immune from punishment. "At this conference, we can crystallize an international stand to go after chemical weapon users as part of supporting the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons, and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)," he noted.

The Kuwaiti diplomat expressed hope the initiative attracts an international interest and attain the desired goal of forming a solid international partnership that secures the arrest of chemical weapon users. Some 30 countries took part in the ministerial conference to endorse the establishment of an International Partnership against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons. — KUNA



Local

# Lebanese President Aoun concludes visit to Kuwait

## Positive visit an achievement in itself: Lebanese Minister



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sees off Lebanese President Michel Aoun upon his departure from Kuwait yesterday.— KUNA photos



Lebanese President Michel Aoun meets with General Director of Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) Abdulwahab Al-Bader prior to his departure from Kuwait yesterday.

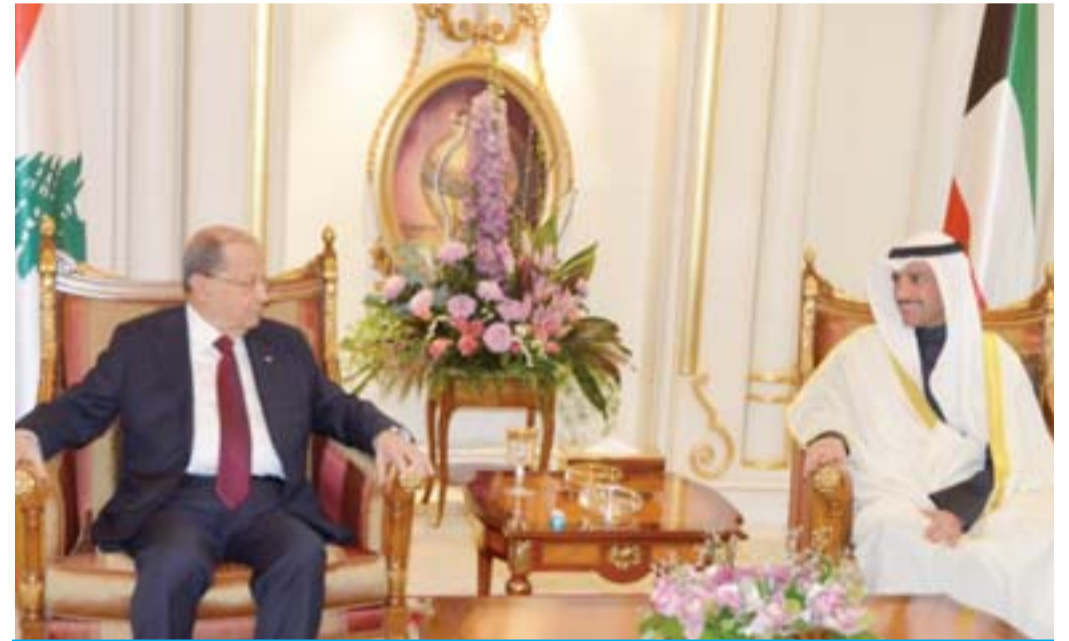
KUWAIT: Lebanese President Michel Aoun and his accompanying delegation departed Kuwait yesterday an official visit and official talks with His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. Upon departure, the Lebanese leader was seen off by His Highness the Amir, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah and several other senior state officials.

Aoun led a delegation to Kuwait Tuesday, his government's first visit to the Gulf since the shock resignation and return of the prime minister late last year. The "positive" visit, with talks on bilateral issues, was "an achievement in itself," said Lebanon's Minister of State for Administrative Reform Inaya Ezzeddine, speaking at a reception for the Lebanese community in Kuwait City. "The Amir of Kuwait expressed his readiness during the bilateral talks to support Lebanon in all files, and for Kuwait to back Lebanon in the region," she said.

The delegation met with the Kuwaiti Fund for Arab Economic Development, which Ezzeddine said she hoped would bear fruit for Lebanon's revitalization plans. "This government is in the process of developing new economic and development visions and God willing we will secure ways to finance them," she said, adding that Lebanon was working to finalize financial studies ahead of a planned support conference in Paris. Kuwait, meanwhile, has increasingly emerged as a regional force of moderation, taking on mediation of the Gulf political crisis. — Agencies



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah bids farewell to Lebanese President Michel Aoun.



Lebanese President Michel Aoun meets with National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem before the conclusion of his visit to Kuwait yesterday.

## Kuwaiti pledges for Syrian refugees worth \$1.6 billion

ZAHLE, Lebanon: The Kuwaiti leadership remains committed to efforts aimed at addressing the Syrian people's urgent humanitarian needs, an official said on Tuesday, adding these include \$1.6 billion in pledges made over several global donors' conferences.

Speaking as he visited refugee camps in Lebanon alongside other major donor country representatives, Assistant Foreign Minister for International Organizations Nasser Al-Hayyen said Kuwait appreciates UN efforts on the matter. "Kuwait has had a pioneering role in hosting three successive pledging conferences upon the generous initiative of His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, who is relentless in his support of the humanitarian needs of our Syrian brothers," he said.

The visit, including officials from Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, the United Kingdom, Germany, Japan, Canada, Denmark, the Netherlands, Sweden, Norway and the European Union, is important to witness the labor refugee host nations have to bear. It comes in response to an invitation from United Nations special humanitarian envoy Ahmad Al-Meraikhi made at the donor nations' most recent talks, said the Kuwaiti official. Hayyen reiterated Kuwait's commitment to the refugees and thanked Lebanon for its efforts on hosting and assisting the vast number of refugees.

Meanwhile, United Nations High Commissioner (UNHCR) representative in Lebanon Mireille Girard highlighted Kuwait's huge role in supporting the Syrian refugees, and providing financial support to a number of UN agencies, including the UNHCR. In spite of this, funding resources are inadequate, she said, expressing hope Kuwait would maintain its support of the UNHCR, in order for the agency to continue its role in improving the living conditions of the refugees until their return home. The number of Syrian refugees registered at the agency has dropped to just under one million as many have moved on to Europe, Australia and other countries.

At the UNHCR office, the delegation's members were briefed on the assistance being provided to Syrian refugees and their impending needs and requirements. Assistance the UNHCR has received up to the end of 2017 is \$1.17 billion, while their needs amount to \$2.75 billion.

Most of the spending of donations is focused on requirements such as food, education and other basic needs, a UNHCR official told the visitors, while other matters include security, healthcare, water, shelter and energy. The delegation had a first-hand account of the conditions at a refugee camp close to the village of Taanayel, which houses 55 families. They also met with municipal heads in the governorate's towns, who briefed them on the burdens of hosting the refugees on the economy, environment and social welfare of the host towns.

### Honoring pledges

Separately, Hayyen announced that his country honoring its pledge to earmark \$100 million for relieving the Syrian people in 2018. Kuwait is adhering to commitments to allocate aid for the Syrian people, namely the pledge made during the donors' conference in Brussels and London, said Hayyen while speaking during the 12th meeting of the Group of Senior Donors to Syria that kicked off in the Lebanese capital yesterday. Kuwait, being a member of the United Nations Security Council and designated as the Humanitarian Center, ensures that voice of the stricken be heard across the world, the Kuwaiti diplomat said.

Moreover, the State of Kuwait coordinates with the Syrian question stakeholders to ensure legitimacy for delivering assistance to the war victims in Syria. During the Brussels conference, held in April, Kuwait vowed to specialize \$300 million for the Syrian people, at a rate of \$100 million each year between 2016 and 2018.

The pledges for 2016 and 2017 have been honored, with Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development and Kuwait Foundation for Advancement of Sciences signing memos with the refugees' hosting countries for contributions in the medical, educational and service sectors, in addition to offering \$29 million to international agencies that help refugees in Syria and the neighboring countries. Moreover, Kuwaiti charities pledged \$46 million during the Qatar conference on Syria, held in April 2017. — KUNA



BEIRUT: Officials attend a session during the 12th meeting of the Group of Senior Donors to Syria, held in Beirut, Lebanon yesterday. — KUNA

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## Local

## Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: A view of the Sharq district of Kuwait City taken during a cloudy day. — KUNA photo

# KFH: Leader in rolling out innovative investment plans

## Special Healthcare investment plan Shifaa with numerous characteristics



Nehal Almosalem

**KUWAIT:** Executive Manager Liabilities and Investments Products at Kuwait Finance House (KFH), Nehal Almosalem said that the bank's initiative in rolling out the long-term investment plan 'Shifaa' for healthcare comes as part of KFH strategy to improve its products and services, while offering an array of innovative investment plans that reinforce the culture of planning for the future and reiterate the bank's pioneering position in the sharia-Compliant financial services.

She added, in a press release, that 'Shifaa' offers customers a plan based on monthly saving, while earning higher investment returns on their savings along with 'Takaful' cover. If and when facing critical health circumstances, savings and

'Takaful' cover will assist to meet the required medical expenses. Customers should be between 21 to 60 years, and the saving period ranges between 5 years to 15 years.

Almosalem indicated the plan, when opened, will be automatically covered by 'Takaful' insurance policy. The policy will cover the unpaid savings due to death, total disability including sickness or accident and critical illness. Critical illness can have a massive impact on a person's health and at the same time effect the person's finance situation. The significant benefit of the Shifaa investment plan is the availability of saved funds for emergency. If the person has been diagnosed with one of 11 major and critical ill-

nesses as per the policy conditions, the plan target amount will be paid to the person.

She said that customers can deposit any amounts in addition to the withheld monthly saving amounts without affecting the schedule of the plan. 'Shifaa' investment plan can be closed at any time. All saving and declared profits in 'Shifaa' account will be refunded.

KFH offers a wide range of investment plans to fulfill all customers' requirements. The investment plans are flexible, long-term and yield high investment rates. They are 'Jameati' for education, 'Rafaa' for marriage, 'Enjaz' for youths' projects, and 'Thimar' for retirement.

'Jameati' investment plan is tailored to meet

parents' aspiration in paying their children's university education fees when they are 18 years old, while 'Rafaa' is designed to cover marriage expenses and it assists in the early family planning and parents' planning for their children. Moreover, 'Enjaz' is a multipurpose investment plan that caters for the youth's aspirations and ambitions by allowing them to plan for their future and achieve their goals by running their own businesses and projects or purchasing a house etc. Furthermore, 'Thimar' contributes in offering restful and comfortable retirement life for clients, who can receive the targeted amount with all investment profits accrued by the end of the investment plan period identified by them.

## KIB strategic partner of Safira CSR Company

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait International Bank (KIB) signed an agreement for a strategic partnership with Safira CSR Company; the first organization in Kuwait to specialize in the area of social responsibility. The partnership paves the way for implementing a series of local social responsibility projects in 2018 targeting women and youth, which will focus on enhancing their health and cultural awareness, as well as their general knowledge.

During the signing, KIB was recognized for its efforts and contribution with a certificate from the Bahrain Society for Social Responsibility. This recognition was a result of being nominated by Safira, the entity responsible for overseeing all social responsibility programs and initiatives taking place locally. KIB was honored for the active role it played in driving positive change by supporting sustainable development programs and social responsibility projects in 2017.

On this occasion, Manager of the Corporate Communications Unit at KIB, Nawaf Najia expressed his delight on behalf of KIB for receiving this prestigious recognition. He also added that KIB continues to be dedicated to supporting organizations that aim at serving all segments across the local community. For that reason, the Bank has decided to renew its strategic partnership with Safira. As part of this partnership, KIB continues to engage directly with the community and support various important social issues through a number of initiatives and projects organized locally by Safira.

Additionally, Najia noted that these partnerships are a true reflection of KIB's strategy, which seeks to further strengthen community-based initiatives to serve all segments of the community, evidenced by the past success of numerous campaigns and events.



Chairman of the Bahrain Society for Social Responsibility, Khalid Al-Qa'ud, lauded reports presented by Safira detailing the community development projects and programs it had organized over the year. Safira's social responsibility efforts were supported by various institutions, including public and private entities, as well as civil society organizations, such as the Business and Professional Women Network (BPWN). Al-Qa'ud noted that these partnerships are an extremely important factor for the success of sustainable development programs anywhere. He also commended local institutions for their efforts in increasing awareness of the important role different sectors play in solving social issues, raising awareness levels, and boosting national development.

Editor in Chief at Annahar, Hussain Al-Fadhli, added that the newspaper is a proud supporter of community-based projects and programs that contribute to the

development of the community and its people, particularly women and youth. He also pointed out the important role the media plays in shedding light on positive examples that support community development.

On her part, Founder and Managing Director of Safira CSR Company, Maha Al-Baghli said: "The success of our projects and programs are attributable to the belief of our partners in the importance of our mission. We remain committed to developing the local community and achieving our goals by cooperating with various institutions as part of high-impact initiatives and non-profit programs that aim at focusing on pressing community issues."

Al-Baghli also lauded Safira's highly-valued partnership with KIB during the past year. She added that Safira is looking forward to once again implement past successful programs and is planning to carry out new initiatives and projects during the year.

## SMEs fund, General Electric sign digital apps memorandum

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's National Fund for Small and Medium Enterprise Development (SMEs) signed a memorandum of understanding with General Electric company to develop industrial digital applications for SMEs.

The signing was made by the fund's chairman Abdullah Al-Joan and Electric General's digital manager for the Middle East and Africa, with the presence of Minister of Commerce and Industry and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Khaled Al-Roudhan and the US Ambassador to Kuwait Lawrence Silverman.

In a statement to reporters Roudhan said the memorandum is part of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry's strategy to support and develop projects of youth. Joann said meanwhile that digital applications help develop projects by boosting production and improve performance. He added that General Electric is a pioneer in using digital applications to develop industry.

Meanwhile, Chief Executive Officer and President of Power Services Business for the Middle East and Africa at General Electric Company Joseph Anis noted that the memorandum supports the fund's strategic plan to provide Kuwaitis with bigger job opportunities and create a variety of income sources.

According to the memorandum, the company will train Kuwaiti business owners on developing their projects through the use of "Predix" edge-to-cloud app platform. Predix allows users to deploy processing and analytics power to control assets at the edge or analyze machine data in the cloud securely. —KUNA



Local

# Absence of MPs, ministers cancels Assembly session

## Lawmakers oppose report on government debt

By B Izzak

**KUWAIT:** The National Assembly session failed to convene yesterday due to a lack of quorum as only one minister and just 19 lawmakers showed up for the meeting although they required just a few more to fulfill the needed number. MP Hamdan Al-Azemi said the absence was deliberate to prevent the session from starting as 25 MPs and five ministers had registered their names but only 19 MPs and one minister came to the chamber.

The session was supposed to discuss a number of important issues including a report on domestic helpers and why a government company has failed to reduce the recruitment costs. The session came a day after a marathon grilling of the Minister of Social Affairs and Labor Hind Al-Sabeeh over a string of alleged financial and administrative violations and her failure to check the imbalance in the demographic structure which remains in the favor of expatriates.

The grilling ended with 10 MPs filing a no-confidence motion. The voting on the motion will take place on January 31 but the minister appears in a strong position to survive the vote. Three of the 10 lawmakers who filed the motion are the grillers themselves which shows that the support to the motion is not too strong. To pass, the motion requires 25 votes of the elected MPs and not the ministers.

Yesterday, MPs Abdullah Al-Roumi and Safa Al-Hashem said they will not support the no-confidence motion. But as the assembly has just finished this grilling,

opposition lawmakers started talking about another quiz to the Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs Adel Al-Kharafi.

MP Riyadh Al-Adasani has threatened to grill Kharafi if he does not quit or if the prime minister does not dismiss him for allegedly not carrying out his duties in the proper way. Opposition MP Abdulkarim Al-Kandari yesterday called on Kharafi to step down in a bid to protect himself from the grilling, while Hashem said she is likely to join Adasani in grilling the minister.

In the meantime, 19 MPs filed a request calling to pull out a report by the assembly financial and economic affairs committee on allowing the government to borrow up to KD 25 billion. The MPs are calling to send the report to the assembly budgets committee to review the report and rectify mistakes in the original report.

Sabeeh meanwhile assured National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem and MPs, namely the legislators who interpolated her, that she would seriously look into the issues they raised. All the views and ideas expressed during the grilling session would be under examination for tackling any shortcomings or irregularities in the department, the minister said in a statement to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA). "Everybody knows that whenever there is work and bids errors will possibly take place," said the minister. "There will be lots of responsibilities and objectives that we seek to attain with the MPs' participation and support for sake of a dignified livelihood for the citizens as well as for safeguarding public funds."



**KUWAIT:** Lawmakers leave the Abdullah Al-Salem Hall in the National Assembly yesterday after Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem called off the session due to lack of quorum. — KUNA

News in brief

**Kuwait denies summoning Ambassador**

**KUWAIT:** A source at the Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs yesterday dismissed reports that it summoned the Saudi Ambassador to Kuwait for a meeting with Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah. The source said the ministry did not summon the Saudi diplomat and it was just an ordinary meeting between Jarallah and accredited ambassadors in Kuwait for talks on bilateral relations and the latest regional developments. The ministry's source urged everybody to seek news credibility. — KUNA

**Defense Minister heads to Qatar**

**KUWAIT:** Kuwaiti First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah yesterday left for Qatar on an official visit. The visit comes at the invitation of Qatari Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani for attending a military college graduation ceremony. Sheikh Nasser Sabah is accompanied by a delegation of high-ranking army officers. — KUNA

**Kuwait, France seek closer cooperation**

**KUWAIT:** Chief of the General Staff of the Kuwaiti Army Mohammad Al-Khuder and visiting Joint Commander of the French Forces in the Indian Ocean and UAE Rear Admiral Didier Piaton yesterday discussed bilateral military cooperation. They also considered a number of major issues and subjects of mutual interest, and ways of promoting and bolstering Kuwaiti-French military relations, the Defense Ministry said in a press release. Chief of the Defense Ministry's Training Department Brigadier Khaled Al-Jeteli and the French military attache in Kuwait were present at the meeting. — KUNA

## Man stabbed to death at concrete factory in Kabd

By Hanan Al-Saadoun and Agencies

**KUWAIT:** An Egyptian killed his compatriot at a ready-mix concrete factory in Kabd yesterday morning. The suspect, 54, was arrested, a security source confirmed. The coroner's preliminary report indicated that the victim, 48, died as a result of multiple stab wounds in the chest area. A case was filed for investigations.

**97 residency violators arrested**

Residency affairs detectives busted 23 closed companies which has a total of 97 people registered as employees. Those workers face charges for violation of the residency law because the companies employing them are inactive. Detectives also discovered 12 work visas issued by the companies. The discoveries came during an inspection tour of Farwaniya companies, the relations and security information department at the interior ministry announced.

**Swindler questioned**

A Gulf national was questioned by criminal detectives due to his involvement in swindling people, Al-Rai reported yesterday. The suspect worked for the interior ministry and retired recently

because of criminal acts. He tricked a number of expatriates into believing he can bring them to work in Kuwait and charged them money. It was found out most of those tricked are Syrians and Iraqis, as he contacted their relatives in Kuwait. The suspect was sent to criminal detectives by state security after determining that the crimes were felonies. His house was raided where seals indicated that he posed as an employee at an important facility, including one for a VIP, besides other transactions he was about to submit to the immigration department to get visas. Police also found a pistol and six rounds.

**Ferdous fire**

Firemen put out a fire reported in a Ferdous house yesterday. The fire started on the third floor of the building, and a citizen who suffered from burns was taken to hospital. A case was filed to investigate the cause of the fire.

**Vehicles' auction**

The traffic department will put impounded vehicles and motorcycles at the Ahmadi governorate impounding department on sale through an auction. The names of owners and license plates numbers were published in newspapers and they were asked to go to the vehicle sales committee. The auction will be on Wednesday, Feb 7, 2018. Those interested should go to the impoundment garage to inspect the vehicles.

**Jahra campaign**

Kuwait Municipality's public relations department said the public cleanliness and road occupancy and violations removal department in Jahra carried out



**KUWAIT:** Heavy damage caused by flames inside a Ferdous house where a fire was reported yesterday.

a campaign at Jahra Equestrian Club, resulting in the removal of eight abandoned cars, two commercial vehicles, 40 bags of coal and 30 bags of wood. Meanwhile, a restaurant was administratively closed.

**Search for thieves**

Forensics officers went to a Mangaf electric station to gather evidence that may help in the arrest of thieves who stole several copper cables. The theft was discovered when a defect took place in power supply in the area.

**Drug possession**

Two citizens were arrested in Rehaya with drugs, red tube lights, light bulbs, and drug paraphernalia. The two persons were in an abnormal condition

**Reckless driving**

Two campaigns in Wafra and Fahd Al-Ahmad resulted in impounding 10 cars for reckless driving, while wasta attempts to release the violators were ignored.

## KD 150.5 million youth projects ready in 2018

By A Saleh

**KUWAIT:** Four youth projects worth a total of KD 150.5 million are expected to be completed during this year. The projects include areas and kiosks designated for youth projects in vital plans to be executed before the end of 2018. The projects include the Barayeh Salem project for the development of Salem Al-Mubarak Street in Salmiya's old market, which is an integrated project with all services within 500 meters. It will include 14 kiosks in addition to gardens and fountains and covered areas, besides multi-storey parking areas built at a cost of KD 2 million. The project is expected to open in February. Another project is an entertainment center in Egaila at a cost of KD 3.63 million. Meanwhile, an Injaz project in Rai cost KD 800,000 and will be handed over in April. It will have 114 kiosks for youth projects and children games, cafes and restaurants. Also, there are cultural and entertainment projects planned on Abdullah Al-Ahmad Street at a cost of KD 85 million in three stages.

**Co-op employees' move**

The board of directors of Kuwait Union of Consumer Co-operative Societies (KUCCS) approved a proposal that allows Kuwait co-op employees to work for other co-ops without having to resign and be reappointed. Treasurer Ahmad Al-Mutairi, who submitted the proposal to the board, explained that it includes seven conditions for approving the employee's move, including receiving an approval by the co-op he will go to before moving, that the rank or salary should not be lesser, and the move should not cause any disruption to the co-op he wants to move from. He said conditions also include that the employee not be in debt to his current co-op and that the co-op where he works should send his file to the new co-op. He said the proposal mentions that the Public Institution For Social Security and the Public Manpower Authority should be informed about the move.

## New modern ambulances to go on duty in Feb

**KUWAIT:** The Ministry of Health received 79 new ambulance vehicles that will go on duty in February, Acting Undersecretary Majda Al-Qattan announced. The vehicles are currently going under full inspections to make sure they fit international standards, Qattan said in a statement yesterday.

Meanwhile, Qattan said the ministry has set a plan with different companies to develop its emergency services. This includes providing new communications networks and cameras for video calls to connect ambulances with emergency rooms, so that doctors may follow up on the patient's case before he/she arrives at the nearest hospital. The vehicles are made in Europe, as European standards have the best modern technology in emergency medical services, as well as being spacious to allow freedom of movement for the medical staff inside the vehicle, she noted. These ambulance cars are also certified in most countries, she added.

In the meantime, head of medical emergency department Munther Al-Jalahma said that the ministry's strategic plan of 2015 had currently achieved about 65 percent of its targets. As part of the plan, the ministry has currently opened 71 ambulance centers out of 100, spread across all areas and islands. It also appointed 250 paramedics out of 500, a number the ministry aims to achieve within two years. Moreover, with the newly received ambulance cars, the number is 249 out of 270 vehicles, he said. Another target is responding to emergency calls in no more than eight minutes by 2020, which is the international standard, Jalahma said.

"Currently, we are responding within 11 minutes, however, the record used to be ten minutes in 2015 and 2016 but the recent construction works across the country are delaying services," he added. In order to reach eight minutes, paramedics must go under annual training courses and have trainings on major medical emergencies at every hospital, the official explained. He also said that the ministry's plan involves training about ten percent of the Kuwaiti society on performing first aid. — KUNA

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Turkey kills 260 Syrian Kurdish and IS fighters

## Kentucky school shooting leaves two students dead

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BENGHAZI: Libyans check the aftermath of an explosion in the eastern city of Benghazi yesterday. —AFP

# 35 die in bombings at Benghazi mosque

## Bombers blow up two cars 30 minutes apart

**BENGHAZI:** More than 35 people were dead and dozens wounded after two car bombings outside a mosque frequented by jihadist opponents in Libya's second city Benghazi, medical officials said yesterday. The attack after evening prayers on Tuesday underlined the continued chaos in Libya, which has been wracked by violence and divisions since dictator Muammar Gaddafi was toppled and killed in a 2011 NATO-backed uprising. Benghazi has been relatively calm since military strongman Khalifa Haftar announced the eastern city's "liberation" from jihadists in July last year after a three-year campaign, but sporadic violence has continued.

The bombers blew up two cars 30 minutes apart outside the mosque in the central neighborhood of Al-Sleimani, according to security officials. Emergency and security workers who had rushed to the scene were among those killed in the second blast. There was no immediate claim of responsibility but the mosque is known to be a base for Salafist groups which fought the jihadists alongside Haftar's forces.

Mourners gathered outside the mosque yesterday,

walking through puddles of water stained red with blood. Vehicles in a parking lot outside the mosque were burnt-out and mangled, their windows shattered. The city's Al-Jala hospital received 25 dead and 51 wounded, its spokeswoman Fadia al-Barghathi said. The Benghazi Medical Centre received nine dead and 36 wounded, spokesman Khalil Gider said. Ahmad al-Fituri, a security official for Haftar's forces, was among those killed, military spokesman Milud al-Zwei said. Medical officials said many of the wounded were in critical condition and the death toll was likely to rise.

Haftar supports an administration based in the east of

the country. It declared three days of mourning following the attack. A UN-backed unity government based in the capital Tripoli, the Government of National Accord

(GNA), has struggled to assert its authority outside the west. The GNA condemned the attack as a "terrorist and cowardly act".

The UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) denounced the bombings as "horrific" and warned that "direct or indiscriminate attacks against civilians... constitute war crimes". UN efforts to reconcile

the rival administrations have produced no concrete result. Haftar said in late December he would support elections in 2018 to bring the country out of chaos, but

suggested he could take measures if efforts for "a peaceful power transition via free and democratic elections were exhausted". Haftar's opponents accuse him of wanting to seize power and establish a military dictatorship, while his supporters have called for him to take control by "popular mandate".

UN envoy Ghassan Salame presented a plan to the Security Council in September to hold parliamentary and presidential elections this year, but analysts are skeptical they will take place. Clashes between rival militias are common, with fighting at Tripoli's airport last week leaving 20 dead and forcing the cancellation of all flights for five days. The turmoil has stifled efforts to restore oil-rich Libya's economy and made the country fertile ground for extremists. The Islamic State group has a significant presence and was in control of coastal city Sirte from late 2014 to late 2016, when the jihadists were pushed out by pro-GNA forces. People-smugglers have also taken advantage of the chaos to turn the country into a major gateway for migrants heading to Europe. —Agencies



**GNA**  
struggling to  
assert authority  
outside the west

## 'Daesh landlord' in the dock in first Paris attacks trial

**PARIS:** The first trial stemming from the November 2015 Paris terror attacks opened yesterday when Jawad Bendaoud appeared in court, charged with harboring two of the jihadists in the aftermath of the carnage. Bendaoud, 31, became a national laughing stock after a television interview in which he came across as clueless, insisting "I didn't know they were terrorists". It provided a rare reason to laugh after the deadliest attacks in France since World War II, spawning endless parodies on the internet mocking his apparent naivety.

Bendaoud stands accused of lending his apartment to Abdelhamid Abaaoud—a senior Islamic State jihadist suspected of coordinating the attacks that killed 130 people—and his accomplice Chakib Akrouh. The court will seek to determine whether Bendaoud actively conspired in helping the pair to hide out or whether he got caught up in events unknowingly. Anti-terror police killed Abaaoud, Akrouh, and Abaaoud's cousin Hasna Aitboulahcen in a ferocious assault on the apartment on November 18, five days after the attacks.

Bendaoud gave his now infamous interview to BFM television just as armed officers were surrounding the apartment in the gritty Saint-Denis suburb north of Paris. "Someone asked me for a favor, I helped them out," he said, adding that all he knew was that they were from Belgium and wanted access to water and a place to pray. "I was asked to give accommodation to two people for three days and I did the favour," said the bespectacled Bendaoud, wearing a leather jacket with his hair gelled back.

"If I'd known, do you really think I would have hosted them?" The clip became a viral sensation, with internet users mocking his apparent lack of curiosity about his guests, at a time when a huge manhunt had been launched for jihadists. The press nicknamed Bendaoud the "Daesh landlord" after another name for IS, and his own lawyer Xavier Noguera described him as "the one we laughed about, having cried so much". —AFP

## Thousands flee erupting volcano in the Philippines

**LEGAZPI:** Tens of thousands more people have fled an erupting volcano in the Philippines, relief workers said yesterday, as foreign tourists arrived to watch the flaming lava and giant clouds spurring from its crater. More than 70,000 residents are now crammed in schools and other buildings, a figure that has nearly doubled over the past three days, officials said, two weeks after Mayon volcano began showing signs of activity.

Volcanologists on Monday warned of a hazardous eruption within days and a no-go zone was extended from six kilometers (3.7 miles) of the crater to nine kilometers, forcing even those beyond it to flee homes being pounded by a rain of ash. "They were not in the danger zone but they are scared," Cedric Daep, the head of the civil defence office of Albay province told AFP, adding about 360,000 people, or a third of the province's one million residents have been breathing in volcanic ash.

At some shelters, evacuees are sleeping on the floor, with as many as 50 people sharing a toilet. Other shelters have no toilets at all, relief officials said. "They are saying that the local government will provide (portable toilets) but until now, there are still" none, said Maria Evelyn Grollo, who runs a school-turned-shelter for more than 4,000 people on Legazpi city's outskirts. Rose Rivero, the local Red Cross administrator, said the evacuees, mostly farmers and their families, are surviving on food handouts from the government and charities, with her aid group pitching in with drinking water, counselling, and hygiene items.

"We did not want to leave because we knew life is hard at the evacuation centers. But the ashfall yesterday was just too much," Susan Nolaso, one of the new arrivals, told GMA television. Drone footage aired by the network showed Guinobatan, a farming town of 65,000 people below Mayon's western slope carpeted in ash that from the air resembled dirty snow with



DARAGA: The Mayon volcano spews lava as it continues to erupt, as seen from Legazpi City in Albay province yesterday. —AFP

just the green of rice paddies breaking the pattern. "If we go back to its (Mayon's) history of eruption, it would take three to four months before we could send them back to their homes," Rivero said. The state volcanology office said there was little chance of that happening soon.

It reported five episodes of "intense but sporadic lava fountaining from the summit crater" overnight Tuesday, along with ash plumes five kilometers high. Lava and incandescent rocks also rolled down the volcano's flanks, it said in a Wednesday bulletin. The eruption is drawing curious American, European and South Korean tourists, local hoteliers said. "They are attracted by Mayon's activity. They want to have a closer look," Nics Ortonio, a receptionist at the packed four-star Oriental Hotel in Legazpi told AFP. Guests rush out

of their 5,600-peso (\$110) per day rooms to watch Mayon's periodic outbursts in safety from the hotel's terrace restaurant along with local diners, she added.

"This is good for business, but as a resident I am also affected," said Ortonio, 22, who said she and her parents were staying put for now at their home. The Philippines is part of the Pacific "Ring of Fire" of islands that were formed by volcanic activity. With 51 eruptions in the past four centuries, Mayon, a near-perfect cone located about 330 kilometers southeast of Manila, is considered the most volatile of the Philippines' 22 active volcanoes. Authorities have closed airports in the region, while periodic ash showers have made driving on some roads nearly impossible. Local governments have advised residents to wear facial masks and goggles. —AFP



## International

# Turkey kills 260 Kurdish, IS fighters in Syria offensive

## Turkey says seeks no clash with US, Russia

**ANKARA:** Turkey has killed at least 260 Syrian Kurdish fighters and Islamic State militants in its four-day-old offensive into the Kurdish-dominated Afrin region of northwest Syria, the Turkish military said yesterday. US President Donald Trump plans to raise concerns with Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan in a phone call about Ankara's offensive against US-backed Kurdish YPG forces in Afrin, a senior US official said. French President Emmanuel Macron also voiced disquiet, a few hours after Turkey's foreign minister said it wanted to avoid any clash with US, Russian or Syrian government forces during its offensive but would do whatever necessary for its security.

The air and ground operation has opened a new front in Syria's multi-sided civil war and could threaten US plans to stabilize and rebuild a large area of north-east Syria - beyond President Bashar Al-Assad's control - where Washington helped a force dominated by the YPG to drive out Islamic State militants. The United States and Russia both have military forces in Syria backing opposing sides and have called for restraint on the part of Ankara's "Operation Olive Branch" to crush the YPG in the Afrin region near Turkey's southern border.

A senior Trump administration official, who briefed reporters on condition of anonymity, said Ankara had sent "conflicting signals" about the scope of the offensive. "We would urge them to limit the incursion as much as possible," the official said, who said the phone call would happen soon. Another official - as well as Turkey's foreign minister - said Erdogan and Trump planned to speak yesterday. A statement by Macron's office said: "Taking into account Turkey's security imperatives, the president expressed to his Turkish counterpart his concerns following the military intervention launched on Saturday in Afrin."

Erdogan told Macron on Tuesday Turkey was taking all measures to prevent civilian casualties in the Afrin operation, sources at the presidential palace said. The two leaders agreed to stay in close contact on the issue. The Kremlin said President Vladimir Putin had also discussed Turkey's military operation Erdogan by

phone and that Syria's territorial integrity and sovereignty had to be respected. A Kremlin statement said both men stressed the importance of continuing their two countries' joint work to try to find a peaceful resolution to Syria's crisis. Russia has been Assad's most powerful ally against rebels and militants in Syria.

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu reiterated Ankara's demand that Washington stop supporting the YPG. Ankara has said the operation will be swift, but Erdogan's spokesman signaled an open-ended cross-border campaign, saying it would end only when some 3.5 million Syrian refugees now living in Turkey could safely return home. The United States hopes to use the YPG's control in northern Syria to give it the diplomatic muscle it needs to revive UN-led talks in Geneva on a deal that would end Syria's civil war.

### Near breaking point

Ankara has been infuriated by the US support for the YPG, which is one of several issues that have brought ties between Washington and its Muslim NATO ally close to breaking point. "The future of our relations depends on the step the United States

## Thousands flee, Turkey urged to show restraint

will take next," Cavusoglu said. Turkey's military, the second largest in NATO, has conducted air strikes and artillery barrages against targets in Afrin, and its soldiers and allied Syrian rebels tried to thrust into the Kurdish-held district from west, north and east-ern flanks.

With heavy cloud cover hindering air support in the last 24 hours, advances have been limited and Kurdish militia have retaken some territory. Turkish troops and the Syrian fighters have been trying to take the summit of Bursaya Hill, overlooking the eastern approach to Afrin town. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a Britain-based war monitor, said 23 civilians had been killed in Turkish shelling and air strikes, and thousands were fleeing the fighting. However, Syrian government forces were preventing people from crossing government-held checkpoints to reach the Kurdish-held districts of nearby Aleppo city, it said.



**HATAY, Turkey:** Turkish tanks are parked near the Syrian border at Hassa, in Hatay province yesterday as part of the operation 'Olive Branch', launched a few days ago. The operation aims to oust the People's Protection Units (YPG) militia, which Turkey considers to be a terror group, from its enclave of Afrin. —AFP

### YPG threat

US Defense Secretary Jim Mattis said Turkey's offensive distracted from efforts to defeat Islamic State. White House spokeswoman Sarah Sanders said the United States wanted to see Turkey "de-escalate," which Trump would raise in the call with Erdogan. Ankara says the jihadist group is largely finished in Syria and that the greater threat comes from the YPG, which it sees as an extension of a Kurdish group that has waged a decades-long separatist insurgency inside Turkey. Erdogan has said Turkey aims to destroy YPG control not just in the Afrin enclave but also in the mainly Arab town of Manbij to the east. "Terrorists in Manbij are constantly firing provocation shots. If the United States doesn't stop this, we will stop it," Cavusoglu was reported as saying on Tuesday.

"Our goal is not to clash with Russians, the Syrian regime or the United States, it is to battle the terrorist organization," broadcaster Haberturk quoted him as saying. "We will not live with fear and threats,"

Cavusoglu said. He tweeted that a lieutenant had become the second Turkish soldier to be killed in the operation. The Observatory said 43 rebels fighting alongside the Turks had also been killed, as well as 38 on the Kurdish side. Later on Tuesday Cavusoglu discussed the crisis with US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson during a conference in Paris.

Erdogan's spokesman, Ibrahim Kalin, said the military operations would continue until Syrian refugees in Turkey "return home safely and the separatist terror organization has been cleansed from the region". The Kurdish-led administration of northeastern Syria appealed for a mass mobilization in defense of Afrin. "We call on all our people to defend Afrin and its pride, and contribute in all the related activities," it said, without elaborating. A UN report, citing local sources, said about 5,000 people in the Afrin district had been displaced as of Monday but that some of the most vulnerable had been unable to flee. It said the United Nations was ready to provide aid to 50,000 in Afrin. —Reuters

## Congo turning into a 'prison' under Kabila

**KINSHASA:** The head of Congo's Catholic church condemned President Joseph Kabila's government yesterday for a deadly crackdown on pro-democracy demonstrators, suggesting his country was turning into a prison. Tensions between the government and one of the Democratic Republic of the Congo's most powerful institutions has risen as the church has increasingly become a focal point for opposition to Kabila's efforts to stay in power without a mandate. Security forces shot dead at least six people and wounded dozens more as they fired tear gas to disperse a protest on Sunday that the Catholic church had organized, drawing widespread international condemnation.

"We were dispersed by tear gas, stun grenades and live bullets. We have again seen deaths, injuries, priests being arrested, and the theft of citizens' property," Cardinal Laurent Monsengwo said at the church in the capital Kinshasa. "Christians were prevented from praying. Others were prevented from leaving by...police and military who were armed as if they had been on a battlefield," he said. "How can you kill men, women, children, youths and old people all chanting religious songs, carrying bibles, rosaries and crucifixes? Are we now living in an open prison?"

A military spokesman did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Kabila's refusal to step down at the end of his mandate in December 2016 has triggered a series of street protests in which scores have been killed in Kinshasa. It has also emboldened armed rebel groups in different parts of Congo. Congo's influential Roman Catholic Church has emerged as a flashpoint for opposition to Kabila, while his political opposition remains flimsy and divided. The tussle is increasingly a concern for Pope Francis.

"Unfortunately, worrying news continues to arrive from the Democratic Republic of Congo," Francis told a crowd in St Peter's Square on Wednesday. "I therefore renew my appeal that everyone make all efforts to avoid any form of violence." Kabila blames delays in an election meant to



**KINSHASA:** Congolese police fire tear gas and warning shots during a demonstration calling for the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) to step down in Kinshasa. —AFP

replace him - it will not happen until the end of this year at the earliest - on logistical problems registering voters. But the resulting instability has stoked fears that the vast, mineral-rich country could slide back into the wars that killed millions in the 1990s, mostly from hunger and disease.

Sunday's violence - an echo of bloodshed on New Year's Eve when Congolese forces killed at least seven people at a Catholic activists' protest in the capital - prompted condemnation from Western powers. France "strongly condemns the violence perpetrated by the security forces", the French Foreign Ministry said on Monday. In a joint statement late on Tuesday, the embassies of the United States and Britain berated the authorities for "using disproportionate and lethal force against Congolese civilians", and cutting the internet for three days. "These government actions hinder the democratic process and ... breach international norms on human rights," it added. —Reuters

full, transparent probe into the bling. Prawit, an architect of Thailand's 2014 coup who is also defense minister, says the watches were borrowed from friends and later returned. Thailand's National Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC) is yet to open an official graft probe, but is questioning the people Prawit has listed as the watch owners.

"If the watches belong to others and not him, he doesn't have to declare them under the law," NACC deputy secretary-general Worawit Sukboon told reporters. "If the watches are his, we have to find out when he got them, is it before he took up his post (as deputy prime minister) or after?" The affair of the general and his watches, has stirred an unusual level of public outcry in a country where criticism of the junta has been muted and the rich and powerful are rarely held to account. Junta leader Prayut Chan-O-Cha, a longtime army ally of Prawit, on Tuesday denied his deputy could be prodded into resigning.

In 2014 Prayut declared his assets to the NACC at around \$4 million in savings, investments and property. Analysts say the slew of bad headlines is corrosive on Prayut's government which seized power wielding its anti-corruption credentials and own political ambitions as the country looks towards the return of elections. The Thai-born US-based data analyst, whose crowd-sourced sleuthing as "CSI LA" unearthed the watches from official photos and news reports, vowed to redouble his campaign. —AFP

## On borrowed time? Thai 'Rolex General' luxury watch claims

**BANGKOK:** The Thai junta's number two, who is mired in a graft scandal over his dazzling collection of luxury watches, could be cleared of wrongdoing if he proves the timepieces were borrowed from friends, an anti-graft agency said yesterday. Prawit Wongsuwan's penchant for pricey watches has captivated Thailand's public since Facebook users began counting the expensive accessories worn by the deputy prime minister, even prompting calls for him to resign in a country where such open criticism is unusual. Since December the "CSI LA" Facebook page has counted 25 watches collectively worth \$1.2 million, including 11 Rolexes, eight Patek Philipps and three Richard Milles.

The affair has stirred questions over how an ex-general on a relatively humble public servant's salary could afford items undecared on his \$2.7 million list of assets on taking office. The unrelenting social media campaign has heaped pressure on Prawit to resign as well as on the kingdom's anti-graft agency to open a

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## International

# Snake blood, flaming bricks: Mattis gets bizarre send off

## Video of dogs butchered at Indonesian market sparks outrage

**JAKARTA:** US Defense Secretary Jim Mattis saw Indonesian troops drink snake blood, roll in glass, break bricks with their heads, walk on fire, and more, in a rare military demonstration yesterday meant to show the unique skills of Indonesia's military. Pentagon chiefs are accustomed to seeing foreign forces carry out more routine military demonstrations during foreign travel and, ahead of the event, the press traveling with Mattis was expecting a hostage rescue drill.

The ceremony at Indonesia's armed forces headquarters was far more theatrical, however, even featuring a blindfolded soldier shoot out a balloon held between the legs of one of his colleagues. At least one shot missed, although no one appeared injured. To the sounds of beating drums, the Indonesian soldiers performed a series of gripping martial arts techniques, breaking what appeared to be concrete bricks with their heads. They also smashed stacks of burning blocks with their hands. Wearing a hood to blind him, one knife-wielding Indonesian soldier slashed away at a cucumber sticking out of his colleague's mouth, coming just inches from striking his nose with the long blade.

Perhaps the highlight was a demonstration involving live snakes, which Indonesian forces brought out in bags and scattered on the ground, just feet from where Mattis was standing. That included a King Cobra, which widened its neck as if it were going to attack. The soldiers then cut off the snake heads and fed the snake blood to each other, as the crowd looked on. At least one Indonesian soldier bit a snake in half. At the end of the demonstration, to the tune of the movie "Mission Impossible," the Indonesian forces carried out a hostage rescue operation, deploying stealthily

from helicopters - with police dogs. The dogs intercepted the gunman.

"As you can see, the dogs bit the terrorist," the narrator concluded. Mattis appeared to enjoy the demonstration, which came at the end of a three-day visit to Indonesia, and spoke about how the Indonesian forces were smart to wear the snakes down before trying to handle them. "The snakes! Did you see them tire them out and then grab them? The way they were whipping them around - a snake gets tired very quickly," he told reporters as he flew to Vietnam.

Indonesian forces are active in jungle conditions and do have to deal with snakes at times.

The demonstration also showed the intensity of the training of Indonesian forces, Mattis said. "You could imagine how much training went into each individual there, that they were able to do that," he said. "When you watch a force do that, many small things, perfectly, you can imagine that they can also put the bigger things together."

Some of the troops came from Kopassus, Indonesia's elite special forces, a Pentagon spokesman said. Indonesia hopes Mattis can restore closer US military ties with Kopassus, which have faced restrictions under US law over human rights abuses in the 1990s.

### Dogs butchered

In another development, disturbing video footage of dogs being butchered and their hair burnt off with blowtorches at markets in Indonesia has prompted howls of protest from animal rights activists. Campaigners from the Dog Meat-Free Indonesia group are urging authorities to shut down the country's live animal markets, where they say thousands of dogs and cats are bludgeoned to death each



**JAKARTA:** Members of the Indonesian Special Forces display their military skills as US Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis (not pictured) visits the military headquarters in Jakarta. — AFP

week. Video filmed by the activists at markets in Tomohon and Langowan cities on Sulawesi island shows a stomach-churning array of burnt, mutilated animals—including monkeys, cats and bats—being sold openly. Among the most disturbing images is footage of dogs being clobbered to death and

blow-torched in the street amid the rows of grubby stalls. Dogs packed cheek by jowl inside tiny cages appear to tremble and whimper as they watch what is going on around them. Lola Webber, from the Dog Meat-Free coalition, described the market as "like walking through hell".—Agencies



## Mattis sees Indonesian forces drink snake blood

### News in brief

#### Graves of 'stolen babies'

**JERUSALEM:** Israel will allow the opening of graves believed to hold remains of children who died in the 1950s, for DNA tests to help determine whether they were stolen from their parents, officials said yesterday. Activists and family members believe up to several thousand babies were taken in the years after Israel gained statehood in 1948, mainly from Jewish Yemenite families, but also from immigrants of other Arab and Balkan nations. They allege the babies were stolen and given to Jewish families of Western origin in Israel and even abroad, mainly those who could not have children themselves. Official investigations have found that most of the missing babies had died, pointing out the poor conditions in reception camps for immigrants. Many families have not been convinced and have pushed for the graves supposedly holding the remains to be opened.

#### US senator pregnant

**WASHINGTON:** Good news from Washington. US Senator Tammy Duckworth, a decorated Asian American army veteran and double amputee, announced Tuesday she was pregnant with her second child. The 49-year-old Democrat from Illinois stands to be the first senator to give birth during her term. "Wanted to share some exciting personal news..." she tweeted, alongside a picture of two grownup ducks and a young duck joined by a plus sign to a baby duck, and a caption that read: "Duck, duck, duck...duckling!" Duckworth told the Chicago Sun-Times she was expecting her second child, another girl, in April a few weeks after she turns 50. "Bryan and I are thrilled that our family is getting a little bit bigger, and Abigail is ecstatic to welcome her baby sister home this spring," she added in a statement, referring to her husband and three-year-old daughter.

#### Mexico organized crime

**MEXICO CITY:** Organized crime accounted for nearly three-quarters of all murders in Mexico in 2017, the country's deadliest year since record-keeping began, according to non-profit Semaforo Delictivo. The group said that 18,989 of the year's officially recorded 25,339 murders were carried out by criminal gangs. The figure represented a 55 percent increase on the year before. "The sort of numbers we used to see in a year, we now see in a month," said Santiago Roel, the group's head, adding that the total number of murders in 2006 was fewer than 2,100. Twenty-six of the country's 32 states saw an increase in their murder rate in 2017. Nayarit, in the country's west, recorded an eye-watering 554 percent increase in homicides compared to the year before. The states of Baja California Sur and Quintana Roo, home to foreign tourist hotspots of Los Cabos and Cancun, respectively, saw spikes of 192 percent and 118 percent.

#### Haqqani militant killed

**PESHAWAR:** A mid-level Afghan commander of the Taliban-affiliated Haqqani Network was killed yesterday in a drone strike in Pakistan's tribal region, officials said, days after Afghan authorities blamed the group for attacking a luxury Kabul hotel. The pre-dawn strike took place well inside Pakistan territory, more than 50 kilometers from the Afghan border in Mamuzai village of Kurram tribal district. Pakistani government officials said it was carried out by a US drone. The US embassy in Islamabad declined to comment. A senior government official in Kurram said that the drone fired one missile at a two-room compound, killing the commander and destroying the building. "Resultantly one individual, namely Nasir Mehmood alias Ihsanullah Khurya, s/o (son of) Aqeel Muhammad, was killed," the official said, describing him as an Afghan national and a "mid-level commander of the Haqqani Network". "The US drone remained in the air even after the strike and was flying there for almost 15 minutes," the official said.

## Alienation drive young Palestinians beyond politics

**GAZA:** Confrontations between young Palestinians and Israeli soldiers have taken on a life of their own since Palestinian leaders called for protests against Donald Trump's decision to treat Jerusalem as Israel's capital. While Hamas, Fatah and other groups call for a weekly show of strength on Fridays, dozens of stone-throwers turn out along the border between Gaza and Israel every day, even when, as last Friday, a protest is called off due to bad weather.

Some wear the colors of the various factions vying to lead the drive for a Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital, but others have no affiliation, a sign of alienation that makes the political situation more volatile. "I am not against any of the factions, but we are grown-ups and are intelligent and we see that the ongoing division is weakening us all," said a 28-year-old protester, referring to a renewed standoff between the Islamist Hamas and secular Fatah. The two groups have long been rivals and have failed to achieve any lasting unity agreement in years of off-and-on negotiations. Hamas seized control of the Gaza Strip from Fatah forces in 2007.

Conscious of the growing influence of the youth due to their ballooning numbers, both Hamas and Fatah have recently tried to court them, holding large, separate meetings in Gaza to convince them to back reconciliation. But, as the daily scene on the border shows, young Palestinians are increasingly beyond reach, put off by a four-year stalemate in peace talks with Israel and little progress towards healing internal rifts. Their growing frustration surfaces in social media criticism of their leaders that is met by with an increasingly authoritarian response.

The stone-throwers say the more alienated they feel, the greater the likelihood they will take to the streets to protest. "We are hungry and at home we have no electricity and our fathers have no jobs. This can't bring about anything except an explosion," said a 23-year-old unemployed history graduate who gave his name as Ahmed. Asked about the target of such an explosion, he said: "Against the Israeli occupation, because it bears prime responsibility for everything, even for the division between Hamas and Fatah."

### Elections?

Palestinian politicians have agreed to hold long-delayed elections in both territories this year as part of moves to end the schism that led to Hamas seizing control of Gaza in 2007 from the Fatah-led Palestinian Authority based in the larger West Bank. Whether they will materialize is unclear.

## Kentucky school shooting leaves 2 students dead

**WASHINGTON:** A teenage boy opened fire with a handgun at a Kentucky high school early Tuesday, killing two fellow students and wounding more than a dozen people in the latest mass shooting to hit the United States. The unnamed 15-year-old student, now in custody, is alleged to have carried out the attack at Marshall County High School in Benton, a small town in western Kentucky. Two students of the same age died of gunshot wounds, while 13 other people were shot and five suffered other injuries during the shooting, Kentucky State Police said, adding that those hurt ranged in age from 14 to 18 years old. Students ran from the scene

after hearing shots, local media reported, and the school was placed on lockdown as the incident unfolded.

They were later bused to a neighboring school where parents could retrieve them, the Marshall County Tribune-Courier newspaper said. Fourteen of those hurt were male and six were female. Four of them are still in hospital—three in "critical but stable" condition and one in "stable" condition, according to police. The suspected shooter was apprehended in a "non-violent" manner, and will be charged with both two counts of murder and multiple counts of attempted murder, Kentucky Governor Matt Bevin said. One of the students died at the scene and the other after being taken to a hospital.

The shooter struck just as the school day was starting. "The incident began at 7:57 am (1357 GMT) when a 15-year-old student armed with a handgun entered the high school and started shooting," Kentucky State Police Commissioner Rick Sanders said. A 911 emergency call was

placed soon after, and first responders were at the scene by 8:06 am, he said. The suspect "was apprehended by the sheriff's office officer that was the first to arrive," Sanders said. State police had recently been in the area "teaching students and faculty how to respond to an active shooter situation, and everybody in that high school reacted appropriately," he said.

### US plagued by shootings

An "SRO," or "School Resource Officer"—a law enforcement officer responsible for safety at the school—was present. "The SRO that was assigned to the school went through a tough time this morning," Sanders said, but did not provide further information on the officer's actions during the shooting. "This is a tremendous tragedy and speaks to the heartbreak present in our communities," Bevin said a statement. "It is unbelievable that this would happen in a small, close-knit community like Marshall County." According to Everytown for

Gun Safety, a group that works to reduce gun violence, the most recent school shooting in Kentucky occurred in September 2014, when one student shot and wounded another in the hallway of Fern Creek High School in Louisville. The US as a whole is plagued by mass shootings, including two in recent months that left dozens of people dead.

In October, a shooter opened fire on a country music concert from a Las Vegas hotel, killing 58 people, while another attacked a Texas church the following month, leaving 26 people dead, including an unborn child. Guns are the source of one of the most bitter and enduring divides in American politics. Most Democrats advocate gun control as a means of reducing deadly shootings, while many Republicans—backed by the powerful National Rifle Association gun lobby—oppose restrictions on firearms ownership, arguing that armed citizens are better able to protect themselves from gun violence.—AFP



**RAMALLAH:** A Palestinian protester holds a slingshot during clashes with Israeli forces on the outskirts of the West Bank city of Ramallah, near the Jewish settlement of Belt El. —AFP

Palestinian security officials have over the past few years questioned many people, sometimes for weeks, about social media posts criticizing Fatah and Hamas, according to Palestinian human rights groups and New York-based Human Rights Watch.

In Gaza, most complaints centre on electricity shortages that date back 11 years, with both groups seen at fault. Slow unity efforts are another hot-button issue: some blame Hamas for balking at handing full control of Gaza to the Palestinian Authority while others criticize Fatah for retaining salary cuts in Gaza.

Fatah is also faulted for the fact that its engagement in peace talks with Israel has brought little progress towards a Palestinian state and for keeping ageing leaders in place. People aged 15 to 29 make up a third of the population of the Israeli-occupied West Bank and partially blockaded Gaza strip and a disproportionate number of the many unemployed. "There is no party that represents me or that I can say 'this party speaks for me,'" said Oula Jabara, a university student in the occupied West Bank aged 20, who was a child when Mahmoud Abbas was elected president in 2005. Almost three quarters of university students and 69 percent of all 18 to 22-year-olds want Abbas to resign, compared with 59 percent of Palestinians aged 50 and above, a December poll by the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research showed. Hasan Faraj, the Secretary General



International

# Gunmen storm Save the Children office in Afghanistan; three dead

## Islamic State claims responsibility

**JALALABAD:** Gunmen stormed an office of the Save the Children aid agency in Afghanistan's eastern city of Jalalabad yesterday and battled security forces surrounding the building, with at least three people killed and 20 wounded, officials said. Islamic State claimed responsibility for the attack, which began with a suicide car bomb outside the office at about 9 am, followed by gunmen entering the compound. "There was a blast and the target was Save the Children," said Attaullah Khogyani, a provincial government spokesman. "Attackers entered the compound and the fight is going on." Some witnesses said there appeared to have been at least four attackers in police uniform, a commonly used tactic, but there was no immediate official confirmation.

It was not clear if two of the dead were attackers or civilians, the spokesman said. A member of the security forces was also killed. "An explosion rocked the area and right after that children and people started running away," said Ghulam Nabi, who was nearby when the bomb exploded. "I saw a vehicle catch fire and then a gunfight started." Islamic State said the attack targeted British, Swedish and Afghan government institutions in a statement on its Amaq news agency. Save the Children was founded in Britain and a Swedish aid group office and a building of the Afghan Department of Women's Affairs are near the compound.

The attack underlines how difficult operating in Afghanistan has become for humanitarian aid bodies, which have faced heavy pressure from armed groups and kidnappers. Save the Children, which says it reaches

almost 1.4 million children in Afghanistan, said it had suspended its operations temporarily and closed its offices in Afghanistan. "Our primary concern remains to secure the safety of all of our staff," a group representative said in an emailed statement. "We remain committed to resuming our operations and lifesaving work as quickly as possible, as soon as we can be assured that it is safe to do so."

### 'Outrageous'

In October, the Red Cross said it was drastically reducing operations in Afghanistan following attacks that killed seven of its staff. "An attack against an organization that helps children is outrageous. Civilians and aid workers must not be targeted," said Monica Zanarelli, head of the Red Cross delegation in Afghanistan, in response to yesterday's attack.

## Car bomb explodes near aid agency in Afghanistan's east

"Increased violence has made operating in Afghanistan increasingly difficult for many organizations." Plumes of black smoke rose from the area as the surviving gunmen

battled special forces. A police officer said at least one attacker had blown himself up in the initial suicide assault and another had been killed. Schoolchildren and residents fled as Afghan special forces arrived to engage the militants. By late afternoon, Khogyani said one attacker was still holding out, battling the security forces, and 45 people had taken refuge in a fortified "safe room" in the compound.

Jalalabad is the capital of Nangarhar province on the porous border with Pakistan. The province has become a stronghold of Islamic State, which has grown into one of



**JALALABAD:** Afghan security personnel gather near an office of the British charity Save the Children after an attack in Jalalabad yesterday. — AFP

Afghanistan's most dangerous militant groups since it emerged around the beginning of 2015. Backed by intensive US air strikes, Afghan forces have claimed growing success against the Taliban and other militant groups, including Islamic State, but militant attacks on civilian tar-

gets have continued, causing heavy casualties. The attack in Jalalabad came just days after Taliban militants attacked the Hotel Intercontinental in the capital, Kabul, killing at least 20 people, including 13 foreigners.—Reuters



## US warns Hong Kong on 'illicit' N Korea trade

**HONG KONG:** A senior United States official warned Hong Kong authorities yesterday they must stop the city being used as a "safe harbor" for illicit trade with North Korea, in violation of United Nations sanctions. The warning came weeks after a Hong Kong-flagged ship was seized in South Korea for transferring oil products to another vessel.

The UN-at the urging of the US-has imposed a series of sanctions against North Korea aimed at tightening the economic screws on Pyongyang over its missile and nuclear program. At a briefing in Hong Kong yesterday, Sigal P Mandelker, under secretary for terrorism and financial intelligence at the US treasury, said it was "extremely easy" for companies to register in Hong Kong, and authorities needed to tighten up. Hong Kong prides itself on making it easy to do business in the city, with light-touch regulation, discretion and non-cooperation with foreign tax authorities.

But it has also earned a reputation for murky dealings—the 2016 Panama Papers leak exposed the city as playing a key role in channeling money to tax havens via thousands of shell companies, including some linked to China's top political brass. Mandelker said that city authorities must "send a strong message that Hong Kong is not going to be a place where companies can find any kind of safe harbor" for front companies or shell companies. "This shouldn't be a place where companies can establish themselves to help in the smuggling, ship-to-ship transfers, et cetera," she told reporters.

City authorities had no immediate response yesterday. Mandelker also said her team had pressed Beijing to expel North Korean financial facilitators or bank representatives



**HONG KONG:** Photo shows a general view of the skylines of the Kowloon district (back) and Hong Kong island (foreground) from Victoria Peak. A senior US official warned Hong Kong authorities they must stop the city being used as a 'safe harbor' for illicit trade with North Korea. — AFP

who "illicitly access the international financial system". China is the North's biggest trading partner and has been accused by US President Donald Trump of helping Pyongyang skirt sanctions. Last month it emerged that South Korea had briefly seized and inspected a Hong Kong-registered ship in November for transferring oil products to a North Korean vessel and breaching UN sanctions.

The Lighthouse Winmore, which was chartered by a Taiwanese company and carrying around 600 tons of oil products from South Korea's Yeosu port, transferred part of its cargo to a North Korean vessel on October 19, a foreign ministry official said. The firm that owned the ship had a registered office in Hong Kong and a director with an address in the southern mainland city of Guangzhou,

according to Hong Kong's companies registry. Hong Kong is part of China but is semi-autonomous with its own British-style independent legal system. Rule of law has been a major factor in wooing global business.

In another development, Japan has reported a suspected sanctions breach to the UN Security Council after observing an apparent cargo transfer between a Dominica-registered oil tanker and a North Korean ship, the foreign ministry said yesterday. A Japanese patrol spotted the tankers alongside each other in the East China Sea on Saturday night, the ministry said in a statement. "Following a comprehensive analysis, the government strongly suspects they were transferring goods, which is banned by UN sanctions," it said, releasing a photo of the ships. —Agencies

### News in brief

#### Maoists kill 4 policemen

**NEW DELHI:** Maoist rebels killed four policemen yesterday in central India where the guerrillas have been waging a jungle battle for decades, an officer said. Seven other police officers were injured in an ambush in the Narayanpur district of Chhattisgarh state, a densely forested region where security forces have been hunting the rebels known as Naxals. District police chief Jitendra Shukla said an unknown number of Maoists opened fire on the patrol before slipping away into the jungle. "Four of our men were killed. Seven injured have been taken to hospital in the state capital Raipur," Shukla said. Last year Maoist rebels killed 24 paramilitary policemen in the same state in an ambush on their convoy. The guerrillas, who say they are fighting for the rights of tribal people and landless farmers, often collect funds through extortion. The Maoists are believed to be present in at least 20 states but are most active in Chhattisgarh, Orissa, Bihar, Jharkhand and Maharashtra.

#### Organ donor leak

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Malaysia has launched an investigation after the details of 220,000 people who registered as organ donors were reportedly leaked online, the second big data breach in recent months. Details including the name, identity card number, age, race and address of people who had signed up between 2009 and 2016 were included in the data dump, technology website Lowyat.net reported. The data, which appeared to have come from a central database, also contained details of next of kin of those who had registered, it said. The Personal Data Protection Commission, which is under the authority of the communications ministry, said it viewed the report of the leak "seriously" and had started an investigation. It came just three months after Malaysian police launched a probe into an attempt to sell details of more than 46 million mobile phone subscribers online. The data included addresses and identity card numbers. The investigation into the breach is continuing.

#### Flag of 'Saigon regime'

**HANOI:** Vietnam has jailed four men for flying the flag of the US-backed Republic of Vietnam, the former state that spanned the southern half of the country until it was reunified at the end of the Vietnam War in 1975, state media said yesterday. Vuong Van Tha, 49, and his 28-year-old son, Vuong Thanh Thuan, were jailed for 12 and seven years each for "conducting propaganda against the state", state-run Vietnam News said. Twin brothers Nguyen Nhat Truong and Nguyen Van Thuong, both 33, received six-year sentences. The four were arrested in May last year but tried on Tuesday, state media said, and will serve a further three years under house arrest upon release. Despite sweeping economic reform in Vietnam, and increasing openness towards social change, including gay, lesbian and transgender rights, the ruling Communist Party retains tight media censorship and does not tolerate criticism. Vietnam News said the incident took place on April 30 last year, the anniversary of the fall of Saigon, now celebrated as "Reunification Day".

#### 'Spreading communism'

**BANYUWANGI:** An Indonesian environmentalist has been sentenced to 10 months in prison under a tough anti-communism law, a legacy of one of the darkest chapters in its history. A court in East Java handed down the sentence Tuesday after finding Ileri Budiawan, 38, guilty of spreading communism during a demonstration last year against the opening of a local gold mine. Some protesters were seen carrying banners with an image of a hammer and sickle—a widely-recognized symbol of communism—during the protest and Budiawan was fingered as the rally organizer. Three other banner-carrying protesters were also charged under the rarely-used law and are awaiting trial. A change to the criminal code in the late 1990s made it illegal to spread communism or other leftist ideologies, with possible sentences of up to 12 years in jail.

## Rohingya in no man's land caught in repatriation limbo

**COX'S BAZAR:** With a barbed wire fence on one side and a putrid creek on the other, 6,000 Rohingya Muslims in a strip of land between Bangladesh and Myanmar anxiously wait to see if they will be sent back to homes few want to return to. A tense behind-the-scenes battle is being fought by the two governments over their future and that of more than 750,000 other Rohingya who escaped a military crackdown in Myanmar and now live in camps on the Bangladesh side of the border.

Bangladesh decided this week to delay the start of repatriating refugees who began streaming over the border in October 2016. That stream turned into a flood in August last year, as Rohingya fled what the United Nations has described as "ethnic cleansing". While Myanmar claimed it was ready to accept the refugees, Bangladesh said it needed more time to prepare. Diplomats say the Dhaka government faces pressure not to send the Rohingya back to their hostile homeland.

Life is not easy at Konarpura, a sliver of no man's land officially neither Bangladesh nor Myanmar, where hundreds of tarpaulin and bamboo shanties have sprouted up on a former rice paddy since last August. Those scratching out an existence there were among thousands of Rohingya who fled in the early days of the crisis and were blocked from entering Bangladesh. They can see Myanmar soldiers patrolling the border and Burmese children flying kites beyond the frontier. Bangladesh border forces control the other side, letting the refugees cross into their territory to collect aid and see doctors. Husne Ara, a 26-year-old mother of five who said her husband and two sons were killed in Myanmar, would rather die in limbo than return. —AFP

## Pope says fake news is satanic

**VATICAN CITY:** Pope Francis yesterday condemned fake news as satanic, saying journalists and social media users should shun and unmask manipulative "snake tactics" that foment division to serve political and economic interests. "Fake news is a sign of intolerant and hypersensitive attitudes, and leads only to the spread of arrogance and hatred. That is the end result of untruth," Francis said in the first document by a pope on the subject. The document was issued after months of debate on how much fake news may have influenced the 2016 US presidential campaign and the election of President Donald Trump.

"Spreading fake news can serve to advance specific goals, influence political decisions, and serve economic interests," the pope wrote, condemning the "manipulative use of social networks" and other forms of communication. Called "The truth will set you free - fake news and journalism for peace", the document was issued in advance of the Catholic Church's World Day of Social Communications on May 13. "This false but believable news is 'captious', inasmuch as it grasps people's attention by appealing to stereotypes and common social prejudices and exploiting instantaneous emotions like anxiety, contempt, anger and frustration," Francis said.



**VATICAN CITY:** Pope Francis poses with a group of faithful at the end of a weekly general audience in St Peter's square yesterday in Vatican. — AFP

### 'Satan's serpent'

False stories, the Pope said, spread so quickly that even authoritative denials often could not contain the damage done and many people run the risk of becoming "unwilling accomplices in spreading biased and baseless ideas". He called for "education for truth" that would help people discern, evaluate and understand news in order to recognize the "sly and dangerous form of seduction that worms its way into the heart with false and alluring arguments".

Francis compared the use of fake news to the Bible story of the devil, who, disguised as a serpent, persuaded Eve to eat the fruit of the forbid-

den tree. He said she was fed wrong information by Satan, who told her the fruit would make her and Adam as all-knowing as God. "We need to unmask what could be called the 'snake-tactics' used by those (purveyors of fake news) who disguise themselves in order to strike at any time and place." Vatican spokesman Greg Burke, a former reporter for US outlets, told Reuters Television: "The Pope is not saying that all journalists are snakes but he is certainly acknowledging that they can be."

The pope said the role of journalists was "not just a job, it is a mission" and they had particular responsibility to stem fake news. —Reuters



## Analysis

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EDITORIAL : 24833199-24833358-24833432  
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FAX : 24835620/1  
CIRCULATION : 24833199 Extn. 163  
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## Battle of the beans: Monsanto faces a fight for soy market

**M**onsanto Co is facing major threats to its historic dominance of seed and herbicide technology for the \$40 billion US soybean market. Rivals BASF SE and DowDuPont are preparing to push their own varieties of genetically modified soybeans. At stake is control over seed supply for the next generation of farmers producing the most valuable US agricultural export.

The market has opened up as Monsanto's Roundup Ready line of seeds - engineered to tolerate the weed killer glyphosate - has lost effectiveness as weeds develop their own tolerance to the chemical. Compounding the firm's troubles is a national scandal over crop damage linked to its new soybean and herbicide pairing - Roundup Ready 2 Xtend seeds, engineered to resist the chemical dicamba.

The newly competitive sector has sown confusion across the US farm belt, particularly among smaller firms that produce and sell seeds with technology licensed from the agricultural giants. Many of these sellers told Reuters they are amassing a surplus of seeds with engineered traits from multiple developers - at substantial extra cost - because they can only guess which product farmers will buy. "Our job is to meet our customers' needs, and we don't know what those are going to be," said Carl Peterson, president of Peterson Farms Seed near Fargo, North Dakota. "I don't think I've ever seen anything quite like this."

Monsanto has much to lose. Soybeans are the key ingredient in feed used to fatten the world's cattle, pigs, chickens and fish. Net sales of Monsanto's soybean seeds and traits totaled almost \$2.7 billion in fiscal 2017, or about a fifth of its total net sales. Gross profits from soybean products climbed 35 percent over 2016, beating 15 percent growth of its bigger corn seed franchise. The firm faces multiple lawsuits, along with regulatory restrictions in some US states, because dicamba has drifted onto neighboring farms and fields and damaged crops not genetically modified to resist it.

BASF and DowDuPont, however, have their own obstacles to overcome, fueling unprecedented uncertainty among farmers over which seeds they will plant on an estimated 90 million acres of US farmland this spring. BASF is just entering the market, aiming to compete with an older soybean line called LibertyLink, which the firm is acquiring from Bayer AG. DowDuPont is eager to join the fray but needs approval from Chinese regulators before it can broadly market and sell its new soybean product, Enlist E3.

Monsanto declined comment to Reuters on competition from rivals in the soybean market. But the firm has previously acknowledged the intensifying threat to its bottom line as rivals launch new products. "Our competitors' success could render our existing products less competitive, resulting in reduced sales compared to our expectations or past results," Monsanto said in an annual report filed with the US Securities and Exchange Commission last year.

### Dicamba Disaster

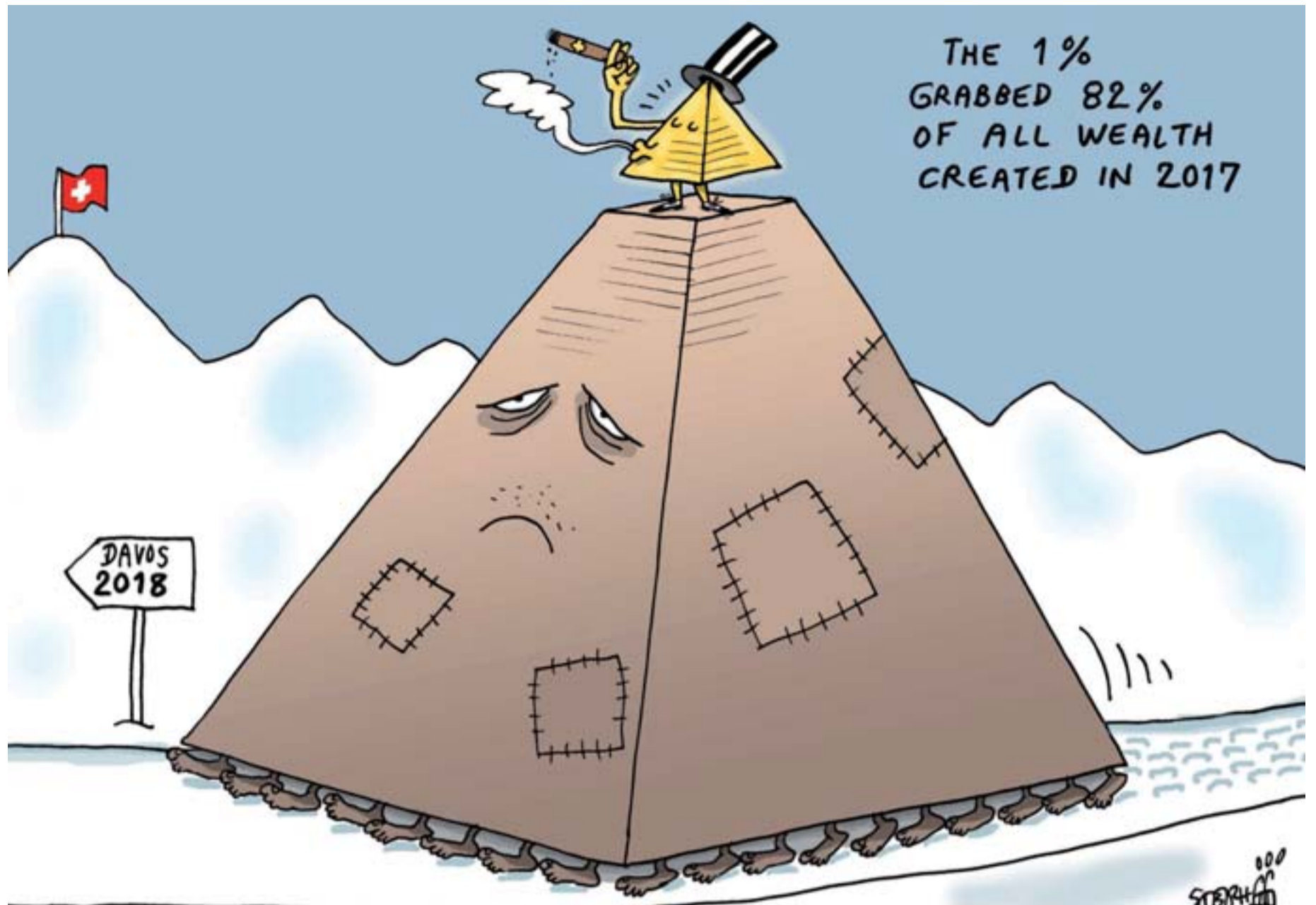
The name of Monsanto's new dicamba-based herbicide - XtendiMax with VaporGrip - reflects the problem it tries to solve: The chemical's tendency to vaporize and drift to neighboring fields, damaging crops. But last summer, after farmers planted Monsanto's new dicamba-resistant seeds en masse, the herbicide damaged an estimated 3.6 million acres of soybeans, or 4 percent of all US plantings. Monsanto maintains its new formulation of dicamba reduces drift effectively. It blames farmers for not following spraying instructions and for illegally applying older versions of dicamba on Xtend seeds. Despite the controversy, Xtend soybeans have sold briskly, spanning 20 million US acres in 2017, their second year of sales. Monsanto projects that acreage will double this year, accounting for about 44 percent of all planted acres.

Still, Monsanto faces a slew of regulatory, legal and public relations challenges from the crop-damage crisis. Regulators in Arkansas, where crops were heavily damaged in 2017, have prohibited the use of dicamba-based herbicides between dates that likely will cover the entire growing season. Missouri, Minnesota and North Dakota have also restricted when farmers can spray dicamba. Missouri farmer Bobby Aycock joined one of several class-action lawsuits against Monsanto after dicamba spraying by nearby farmers damaged his crops in 2016.

He then planted Xtend in 2017 to ensure that drifting dicamba could not harm his crop again. He found another benefit at harvest time: his highest yield in 33 years of soybean farming. Despite his lawsuit against Monsanto, Aycock plans to sow Xtend seeds again this spring. "If something's working," he said, "I hate to change it."

### Basf Enters Bean Battle

BASF is waiting for Monsanto and Bayer to close their proposed \$63.5 billion merger before it can take over Bayer's LibertyLink brand of seeds, which are engineered to withstand the chemical glufosinate. The timing of the takeover, expected in the spring planting season, is awkward because farmers may have already bought seeds. BASF aims to prevent any "customer disruption" when it assumes control of the LibertyLink brand as part of a \$7 billion deal with Bayer. BASF vice president Scott Kay said in an interview. —Reuters



## At 92, Mahathir seeks to be PM again

**A**t 92, Mahathir Mohamad will become the world's oldest person to be voted prime minister if he wins Malaysia's upcoming general election. But to do that, he needs to woo people in their 20s and 30s, the country's dominant - and mostly undecided - vote block. With the Southeast Asian nation's next election due by August, Mahathir is reworking his image - no longer the autocratic prime minister who ruled Malaysia for over two decades, he is projecting himself as the opposition's avuncular elder statesman.

He has a vibrant Twitter feed, peppered with selfies and cheerful posts to endear himself with millennials. "Seeking inspiration to fight Dark Forces," read a tweet Mahathir posted in December with a photo of him and his wife watching 'Star Wars: The Last Jedi'. It went viral, with over 8,500 retweets and around 15,000 likes. Mahathir's makeover includes burying the hatchet with his fiercest critic and former deputy prime minister, Anwar Ibrahim, who he sacked in 1998 and jailed the following year on charges of corruption and sodomy, which is a crime in Malaysia. Their feud has shaped the country's political landscape over the past two decades.

Anwar is now serving a second prison term on a sodomy charge, but has signalled his acceptance to Mahathir leading the opposition campaign to oust current Prime Minister Najib Razak and his ruling Barisan Nasional (BN) alliance. In return, Mahathir has promised he will seek a royal pardon for Anwar if he wins the election and then step aside and let him be prime minister. "I'm not apologetic for Mahathir's past," said Nurul Izzah, the 37-year-old daughter of Anwar who is the co-director for the opposition's election campaign. "I put on record, he has a lot to answer for and I'm appreciative that he did not defend himself on the day of taking up the position (of prime ministerial candidate)," she said in an interview.

Anwar's wife, Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, has been named the candidate for deputy prime minister. "I am indebted and I say thank you to Anwar," Mahathir said after he was declared the prime ministerial candidate, saying it would not have been easy for Anwar to accept the deal.

### Divisive Figure

Mahathir's image on social media is that of a droll but sage father-figure coming out of political retirement to

help right the wrongs of Najib and his government. "He has reincarnated himself well. You can't find 'Mahathir the dictator' on his social media platforms," said Adib Zalkapli, an analyst with risk consultancy Vriens & Partners. "Young voters, especially those below the age of 30, do not remember his history with Anwar or his leadership style."

Syed Saddiq Syed Abdul Rahman, the youth chief of Mahathir's party and manager of his Twitter account, says the ex-premier carefully works on his online image. He writes down social media posts on paper and hands it over, Syed Saddiq said. "I only help type in. He does everything," said the 25-year-old youth leader. The



### Ex-PM carefully works on his online image

messaging appears to be working - Mahathir's Twitter following rose from 15,000 early last year to over 300,000 now.

"On Facebook, his target demographic are in their 30s and 40s, and on Twitter he interacts with millennials. He's also planning on starting an Instagram account," said Syed Saddiq, adding he finds it hard to keep up with Mahathir. Between 2013 and 2017, about two million new voters registered in Malaysia, many of whom are between the ages of 21 and 30, according to estimates by independent polling agency Merdeka Center.

Malaysians between 21 and 40 accounted for 42 percent of the 14.6 million registered voters in the second quarter of 2017, according to estimates by youth voting advocacy group Watan. A survey published in September

valued on-demand services platform Meituan Dianping. Didi is also dealing with the fallout of a costly subsidy battle with Uber in China. The company said it cut subsidies after the deal with its rival; drivers confirmed their incomes suffered as a result.

"In 2016 (Uber) and Didi were fighting like dogs. If you earned 100 yuan, they gave you 100 yuan in subsidies," said one Beijing driver, surnamed Hu, who said he took out a loan to buy his Honda Civic that year when earning more than 18,000 yuan a month. "Now I still work eight hours a day, six days a week, but if I'm lucky I earn 6,000 yuan," Hu said, adding that he had only managed to pay off the loan in December with help from his wife's family.

### New Rivals

In China, the number of rides per day on Didi's platform rose from 14 million to 20 million following the August 2016 deal with Uber. New regulations and a drop in subsidies caused a slump in the company's ride growth soon afterward, but company data shows rides bounced back to 20 million a day, then edged up to 25 million at the end of 2017.

But competitors are pressing in. Meituan Dianping, backed by Sequoia Capital and Tencent Holdings Ltd, launched its first ride-hailing project in Nanjing last year and is rolling out seven more pilot projects in 2018, including in Beijing, Shanghai and Chengdu, a spokeswoman said. "My hope is that (Meituan Dianping) will pay a lot of attention to attracting drivers," said a 28-year-old Beijing Didi driver surnamed Zhou, who says he has been too lazy to switch employers until now. "If there's subsidies around their early launch then I'll definitely go to Meituan," Zhou said. "I want to try something new."

The Internet company, better known for its ticketing and restaurant services, is hoping to gain an advantage from its sophisticated location-based technology, and lure drivers like Zhou, whose loyalty to Didi has suffered as pay has fallen. Cao Cao, another platform backed by

Merdeka Center, an independent polling agency, found that 70 percent of respondents between the ages of 21 to 30 were not interested in politics and were far more concerned with inflation, corruption and their livelihoods. Most young Malaysians only know Mahathir as the "father of modernization", who brought a diversified and high-tech manufacturing base to an economy that had long relied on plantations and mining.

### Jailed Without Trial

But many others remember the accusations against him of cronyism, undermining the judiciary and suppressing dissent. In the 1980s, many opposition and civil society leaders were jailed without trial, and newspapers critical of Mahathir's administration were shut down. Kua Kia Soong, a former opposition lawmaker who was among those detained in the 1980s, says he blames Mahathir for building the very system that he is now trying to fight. "To have such a person as the leader of the opposition to Najib and the Barisan Nasional is a big let-down," he said. "He hasn't shown he is a born-again democrat."

Mahathir turned on his former protege Najib in 2015 after news broke of a multibillion-dollar scandal involving state fund 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB), which faces money-laundering probes in at least six countries. Najib has denied any wrongdoing. A Merdeka Center survey in December showed that Najib is likely to retain power in the next elections thanks to a divided opposition and the redrawing of electoral boundaries that critics say favors the government.

The opposition Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party (PAS) has refused to join Mahathir's coalition, raising the possibility of multi-cornered contests that will likely split opposition votes. Najib's alliance won 133 seats of 222 parliamentary seats in the 2013 elections but lost the popular vote. The opposition got 89 seats, including 21 that went to PAS. The opposition will need to lean on Mahathir to bring in young voters and rural Malays - a demographic that the opposition has long failed to win. Mahathir, his supporters say, appeals to both segments. "In rural areas, Mahathir is a household name. He is an important factor when it comes to the rural Malays," said Saifuddin Abdullah, an opposition leader aligned with Mahathir. —Reuters

automotive giant Geely Automobile Holdings Ltd, which owns Swedish car brand Volvo, raised 1 billion yuan in funding this month and now has around 10 million users across 17 cities. Popular bike sharing platform Mobike, also backed by Tencent, announced this month it would launch its own car ride-sharing platform in Guizhou province, backed by investors such as FAW Car Co Ltd. Didi says it has an advantage in technically complex services, such as the car-pooling feature that now makes up roughly 30 percent of its total private car rides and cuts down on the number of drivers required. "This market is not about burning cash, it's not about subsidies anymore. People want reasonable wait times (and) reliable service," a Didi spokeswoman said.

### Tougher Rules, 'Fast Passengers'

All the companies will have to grapple with tightening Chinese regulations, already slowing growth in larger, congested cities. Migrant drivers, for example, cannot get a permit to work and live - called a hukou - in major urban centers such as Beijing and Shanghai. And cars used for ride-hailing services in those cities must be registered there. "It has made the barrier to entry higher for all the ride-sharing players," Jia said.

Drivers who evade the regulations can face big fines. Statistics released by Didi show that drivers accepted 13 to 40 percent fewer ride calls in some densely populated areas across China's largest cities. Two drivers in the southern Chinese city of Guangzhou said sting operations involving police are common, where drivers are hailed by police and photographed. "There's a couple of solutions," said one driver surnamed Deng, 41, who has been working as a Didi driver for four years in Guangzhou even though his car is registered elsewhere.

"You can put the trunk of your car up so they don't see your number plate, or instead of stopping you can drive very slowly past and the passenger gets in quickly" to avoid police noticing a waiting car, Deng said. "Times are tough," he added. "So these 'fast passengers' make me especially happy." —Reuters



News

## 'White oil': Saudi Arabia seeks place on tourism map

**AL-WAHBAH, Saudi Arabia:** Gazing at a shimmering salt pan below, a group of first-time Saudi hikers descended craggy slopes into a volcanic crater, part of a hidden trove of natural wonders being promoted to kick-start tourism. Saudi Arabia will soon begin issuing tourist visas, opening up one of the last frontiers of global tourism - a sector touted as the desert kingdom's "white oil" - as it steps up diversification efforts to wean itself off its crude oil dependence.

But the conservative country, notorious for sex segregation and its austere dress code, is seen as an unlikely destination for global tourists aside from Muslim pilgrims visiting holy sites in Makkah and Madinah. Now in the midst of historic social change, the kingdom is seeking a place on the global tourism map by promoting sites such as the Al-Wahbah crater, widely unheard of even within Saudi Arabia with the near absence of local tourism.

On a warm winter weekend, Amr Khalifa, a private tour operator, brought a group of first-time Saudi campers to hike to the bottom of the crater. Clutching hiking poles, the hikers picked their way through the slippery, boulder-strewn path to the salt pan. "I told my friends about Al-Wahbah," said Jeddah-based corporate banker Mohamed Bahroon. "They had no clue."

The little-known crater, barely a four-hour drive from the western city of Jeddah, is a remnant of volcanic activity - local folklore, however, has it as having been formed when two mountains were so passionately in love that one uprooted itself to unite with the other, leaving a bowl-shaped depression in its place. In recent months, authorities have built roads and markers to the site and

erected picnic shelters around the rim of the crater. "The key challenge is to make such tourism sites accessible," said Khalifa, adding that he only had one camping group at the site that weekend.

Tourism is one of the centerpieces of Vision 2030, the blueprint to prepare the biggest Arab economy for the post-oil era, which was conceived by powerful Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. In August the kingdom announced a multi-million dollar project to turn 50 islands and other pristine sites on the Red Sea into luxury resorts. It also plans to develop historic sites such as the centuries-old Madaen Saleh, home to sandstone tombs of the same civilization which built the Jordanian city of Petra. The kingdom aims to nearly double the annual number of tourists it attracts to 30 million by 2030, with the sector projected to become one of its top revenue earners.

Tourism chief Prince Sultan bin Salman bin Abdulaziz told AFP last month that preparations were afoot to launch electronic visas in the first quarter of 2018 to "all nationals whose countries allow their citizens to visit" the Gulf state. "The kingdom is a very big treasure," Prince Sultan said, describing its stunning landscapes. "We're not just oil traders."

In an effort to change perceptions, Saudi Arabia has relaxed some of its most rigid rules - lifting a cinema ban, allowing gender-mixed sporting events and announcing that women will be allowed to drive from next June. But its absolute ban on alcohol still makes it a hard sell for many global tourists, experts say. Rumors have swirled about plans to create exclusive resorts for foreign tourists, which, similar to many expat compounds in Riyadh, would have more relaxed norms.

But Prince Sultan said the kingdom, home to Islam's holiest sites, would not permit alcohol as "we do not want to give up our culture and our local values". "Given the sensitivities of opening up to large numbers of non-Muslim tourists, I'd expect the authorities to focus more on encouraging local and regional visitors in the first



**AL-WAHBAH, Saudi Arabia:** A Saudi guide leads a group of foreign tourists through the Al-Wahbah volcanic crater in the Al-Wahbah desert on Nov 17, 2017. — AFP

instance, while the tourist infrastructure is developed," said Kristian Ulrichsen, a fellow at the Baker Institute for Public Policy at Rice University in the United States. "And then cautiously start to market the kingdom to the wider world."

But global travel agencies such as Britain-based Steppes Travel are already planning to offer packaged tours. "There is a lot of potential for Saudi tourism - we know this not least from the pent-up demand we have within our own database," Justin Wateridge, managing director of Steppes Travel, told AFP. "There is interest in those that know and understand Saudi Arabia and not much needs to change other than the issuing of tourist

visas. Travel breaks down barriers and prejudice."

Tourism is still a "new concept" for Saudi Arabia, said Khaled Batarfi, a Jeddah-based writer. "Serving others in our tribal heritage is unacceptable, except your own guest," he wrote in the Saudi Gazette newspaper, calling for the need for professional training. Back at Al-Wahbah, that seems to be changing. When the hiking group emerged from the crater, guide Khalifa swung open the boot of his SUV to remove tents, folding chairs, firewood and platters of meat to set up camp near the rim. "When Saudis go camping they take their full house with them," he said as the group settled in for the chilly night. "That needs to change." — AFP

## Morocco hotline struggles against endemic graft

**RABAT:** After years fighting to evict tenants he believes are backed by corrupt officials, Slimane Brihmi called a much-heralded anti-graft hotline in Morocco - but it made no difference. Like many countries struggling with endemic corruption, the North African kingdom has launched various initiatives to tackle the phenomenon. The toll-free "Green Number" is an anonymous service launched with much fanfare in June 2015 to let members of the public report on corrupt officials.

Hicham Mellati, acting director for criminal cases at the justice ministry and head of the project, said the line received some 6,000 calls a day in its early months, later falling to around 500 a day. But 30 months on, it has produced only 36 prosecutions, official figures show. "The anonymity of calls is a guarantee of security, but some whistleblowers back out when it comes to filing a complaint," Mellati said. He added that around 80 percent of calls either lack evidence or do not "really" relate to corruption.

Brihmi, a 41-year-old bus driver from Sale on the outskirts of Rabat, is convinced that his tenants, who taunt him and refuse to pay up, have "backup" from a ministry. He called the anti-corruption hotline to complain that magistrates and police had not enforced repeated eviction orders from the courts. But he had no evidence against them. "I don't have any trust anymore,

I have rights and those who should be enforcing them don't do it," he said.

### 'Systemic corruption'

A 2016 study by the NGO Transparency Maroc shows that Moroccans have little trust in state institutions and that bribery is widespread. "Between 2014 and 2015, almost one in two Moroccans (48 percent) handed over 'baksheesh' at least once in exchange for a public service," it said, using an Arabic term for a tip or bribe. The judicial sector is seen as the most corrupt, followed by police and hospitals, it said.

Transparency Maroc said that despite high-profile projects aimed at tackling it, the kingdom "continues to suffer from systemic corruption". King Mohammed VI has repeatedly called for the law "to apply to all", while the ruling Justice and Development Party (PJD), head of the government since 2011, has said it prioritizes the fight against corruption.

But it took six years for the National Commission Against Corruption, created and given extensive powers under a 2011 constitution, to finally see the light of day last October. Its members, meant to include civil society figures including from Transparency Maroc, have yet to be appointed. "There is a clear lack of political will to give the signal that impunity is over," said Fouad Abdelmoumi, the NGO's head. Abdelmoumi had initially praised the anti-corruption hotline, but said the project now seemed "counterproductive". "There was a lot of hype, which fuelled expectations, but the level of performance has been very low," he said.

The service has limited resources: five magistrates assisted by five other officials at the justice ministry field calls and put together cases, at the same time as work-



**CASABLANCA:** A man holds bills of Moroccan dirhams on Tuesday. — AFP

ing on other files. Mellati said the service would improve in 2018, with 16 trained officials fielding calls and building cases in Arabic, Amazigh of Morocco's Berbers, and French. But he defended the hotline, saying that by

prompting 36 investigations, all resulting in officials being convicted, it had proved its worth. Those convicted included a court of appeal judge who had accepted money to sway his decision, Mellati said. — AFP

## Nuqat opens 'human capital' conference

Continued from Page 1

When you get STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) along with arts (art, design and humanities), you get a whole new creativity," Kharafi added.

He revealed that Zain will invest in creativity, as children aged five use 80 percent of their creative potential. "Our cooperation with Nuqat is to invest in children of employees and involve them in a creative learning program. If we succeed, we will then take it to the next level. 'In-Dig-Go' is about discovering new experiences and exploring them, then launching themselves into the world," he said.

Kharafi added that Zain is also working with Injaz to support the younger generation's ideas. Also, 'Generation Z 2018' program for Kuwaiti graduates

focuses on developing soft skills to foster collaboration and team effectiveness, develop creativity and enable innovative thinking, thereby preparing graduates to enter the workforce and contribute successfully.

Furthermore, Kharafi said that Kuwait must support women. "Countries that support gender equality have a higher GDP (expected at \$12 trillion by 2025), and will lead to an increase in the happiness factor," he said, adding, "65 percent of graduates are females, but we do not see them in the work market. That is why we need to give them flexible hours, home working oppor-

tunities and equal opportunity and salaries. But to change the laws first - parliament has to approve them, but the parliament has only one woman. So we need to change ourselves and give more chances to qualified women in Kuwait to be leaders."

Nuqat is a nonprofit that organizes and develops workshops, seminars and cultural events throughout the year to nurture curiosity in kids and adults. Once a year, Nuqat's flagship conference attracts thousands of participants from all over the world to discuss the current state of creativity in the Arab world.

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## Sports

# Jones delighted England are Six Nations rivals' key target

## England, second only to world champions N Zealand in global rankings

LONDON: England are the team everyone else always wants to beat in the Six Nations Championship—and coach Eddie Jones would not have it any other way. The Australian's injury-hit squad head into next month's edition looking to become the first side in the tournament's long history to win three successive outright Championship titles.

But even when they have not been at the summit of European rugby union, the Red Rose have always been an inviting target. "Everyone wants to beat England," said Jones at the Six Nations launch in London yesterday.

"We have to live with that expectation and embrace that because we have the most money, the most players. It's like the Rugby Championship where everyone wants to beat New Zealand and South Africa but they don't necessarily want to beat Australia. But in this tournament, you can feel it, the priority of every team, they can make their tournament a success if they beat England."

### 'INJURY OPPORTUNITY'

Jones, Australia's coach when they lost the 2003 World Cup final to England, added: "It just raises the stakes for us. We're up for it. All these injuries create an opportunity for us—we'll show you how good we are."

Jones has lost just one game—when Ireland denied his side a second straight Six Nations Grand Slam last season — since taking over as England coach following their first-round exit on home soil in the 2015 World Cup.

Yet despite that impressive run of results, Jones has sought to portray England, second only to world champions New Zealand in the global rankings, as outsiders to retain their title. "I've read a number of commentaries on the Six Nations... Ireland's provincial sides are doing well, Scotland had a good autumn

series, we had a muddling autumn series and have a list of injuries as long as my arm. We sneaked one team (Saracens) through to the quarter-finals of the European Cup... it's all doom and gloom."

### 'BORDERLINE' QUINS PAIR

Injuries, however, are a real concern with Chris Robshaw, the former England captain, and fullback Mike Brown now among those who could miss the Six Nations opener away to Italy in Rome on February 4. Flank forward Robshaw has a back problem and Brown is struggling with blurred vision.

The Harlequins duo will continue their rehabilitation at England's training camp in Portugal. "Chris Robshaw would win any sort of water Olympics at the moment. He's unbelievable in the pool," Jones said. "If we play Italy in the pool he'd be all right, but if we're playing rugby then he'd be borderline to get there."

## England are now without 16 players heading to Italy

"Mike Brown is starting to do some light skills and we'd be hopeful that by the middle of next week he'd be all right to train. He's also borderline for Italy." Meanwhile Jones said reserve tighthead prop Kyle Sinckler could miss the entire tournament with a hamstring strain "of significance".

England are now without 16 players heading into the Italy match although they are not alone among the Six Nations teams this season in dealing with a raft of injuries, raising fresh concerns about player welfare in the brutal world of modern rugby union.

Jones said last year's British and Irish Lions tour of New Zealand may have had an impact, but accepted that alone could not explain the injury toll. "You just have these runs. I don't think it's anything significant," he said.

"For the Lions players you can understand that the injury risk is high because of the lack of a proper pre-season that they have, but obviously they're not all Lions players." — AFP



LONDON: England's coach Eddie Jones (L) and captain Dylan Hartley pose with the trophy during the 6 Nations Launch event in west London yesterday. — AFP

## Ex-US gymnastics team doctor Nassar awaits sentence

CHICAGO: Disgraced former USA Gymnastics team doctor Larry Nassar faced a sentence of life in prison yesterday for sexual abuse after a week of gut-wrenching victim impact statements from dozens of girls and women he treated. Nassar, 54, has pleaded guilty to 10 counts of criminal sexual conduct.

He was scheduled to be sentenced later in Michigan on seven of the counts, with a separate sentence on the final three charges to be handed down at the end of the month. Nassar, who had also been employed for decades by Michigan State University, has already been sentenced to 60 years in prison after pleading guilty to child pornography charges.

The body overseeing US collegiate sports, the NCAA, opened an investigation Tuesday into the university's handling of the Nassar case. The presiding judge at Nassar's sentencing hearing has received approximately 158 victim impact statements, according to prosecutors. The list of people asking to speak with Nassar in court-tripled since the hearing began a week ago.

One of them, Alison Chauvette, on Tuesday said Nassar's abusive behavior was so brazen, common and unchecked that she and fellow gymnasts discussed his strange treatments and simply assumed they must be legitimate. "We young girls were fooled, but the world should not have been. USAG, Michigan State University and society all failed to keep us safe," she said.

Like star gymnast Aly Raisman, many victims have criticized not just Nassar's actions but the inaction of US Olympics and gymnastics officials, and Michigan State University. Mattie Larson, a decorated former member of the US national team, called on lawmakers to pass a new bill that would require amateur athletics organizations to report allegations of sexual misconduct.

"I was shocked to learn that this law did not already exist," Larson said, calling on Speaker of the House Paul Ryan to schedule a vote for the bill that has already cleared the US Senate. "We must ensure that legal steps are made to prevent anything of this nature and magnitude from happening again," she said.



LANSING: Larry Nassar (R) arrives in court to listen to victim impact statements during his sentencing hearing after being accused of molesting more than 100 girls while he was a physician for USA Gymnastics and Michigan State University, in Lansing, Michigan. — AFP

### 'GOING TO HELL'

Raisman, who won Olympic team gold in 2012 and 2016 and the 2012 floor exercise crown, noted that the first allegations against Nassar came ahead of the Rio Olympics. "Survivors courageously came forward sharing stories of sexual abuse and alleging organizational mishandling," Raisman wrote on Twitter. "The next day, the USOC said they wouldn't investigate (and even praised USAG's work in the area of sexual abuse)."

At day five of his sentencing hearing Monday in Michigan, more victims spoke, including Taylor Livingston, who called life a "chore" and "constant fight" due to the guilt she felt concealing the abuse from her father, who died last year.

"When you die, you're going to hell," she told Nassar. "But there will be a pit stop on the way where you'll have to face my dad, who now knows what you've done... and when you do, you will suffer." Emma Ann Miller, the youngest to speak at 15, described Nassar's actions in a supply closet during a 2016 medical appointment at a clinic she said is still trying to bill her family for the appointment.

"I'm possibly the last child you will ever assault," Miller told Nassar, saying she plans to keep going while Nassar "fades into a federal prison cell." —AFP

## Ogier at home at Monte Carlo season opener

MONTE CARLO: Local resident Sebastien Ogier embarks on his bid for a sixth straight world title in the season-opening Monte Carlo Rally this weekend. "Only a sixth world title will satisfy me, anything less will be a failure," Ogier told AFP.

"It's going to be a fight, tougher than ever, but that is what we want," the 34-year-old said. Belgium's Thierry Neuville secured most wins last year with four in his Hyundai. But French ace Ogier of Ford clinched the title despite only winning twice, including around the hills of Monte Carlo.

Toyota, Citroen, Hyundai and Ford are all providing top drivers for the brand new 13-rally season. Monte Carlo's Casino Square is the start for the famed curtain-raiser, a tight-winding course through the scenic Monaco hills on one of only four rallies contested on tarmac.

On Sunday huge crowds will be expected at the Col de Turini for the pinnacle of the race which finishes outside the Palace of Monaco, with Prince Albert of Monaco presenting the trophy. From Monaco, the world rally championship moves to snow and ice in Sweden next month while seven legs of the championship are contested on dirt tracks including the dust-

blown searing heat of Turkey, back on the roster at the expense of Poland.

The only other change to the 2018 calendar is the swapping of October weekends between Wales, which is traditionally a mud-fest, and Catalunya. Europe is home to 10 of the rallies with the others on dirt in Mexico, Argentina and Australia. Ogier is counting on his car to once again deliver the goods.

"The truth is it's the same car as last year," Ogier said. "There are evolutions here and there, but no revolutions," he said. "But Ford will make it perform better-like all the other teams though, the car is the same."

Nine-time former world champion Sebastien Loeb is set to return to the fray for three rallies for Citroen at Mexico, Corsica and Catalunya. "I've always loved racing on tarmac, although I'm not familiar with the current route of the Rally of Corsica," said the 43-year-old who last won the title in 2012.

He added: "Spain seemed like a good option too. I also wanted to contest a gravel rally. We opted for Mexico, since I have good memories of racing there." Ogier praised his compatriot's grit. "Few people would have had the courage to do that and I for one would be far from surprised if he did well again. He has rarely disappointed." While the Monte Carlo rally boasts top quality drivers there will also be an expert pair of hands at the wheel of the course car which checks for safety and is being driven by Carlos Sainz Jr.

The Renault Formula One driver is maintaining a family tradition as his father Carlos Sainz won at Monte Carlo in his rally days before switching to the Dakar Rally, which he claimed for a second time last weekend. — AFP



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Sports

# LeBron gets 30,000 as Spurs beat slumping Cavaliers 114-102

## Seventh player in NBA history to reach 30,000 career points

**CLEVELAND:** LaMarcus Aldridge scored 30 points, and Dejounte Murray added 19 points, 10 rebounds and seven steals as the host San Antonio Spurs rolled to a 114-102 win over the reeling Cleveland Cavaliers on Tuesday.

Tony Parker added 14 points off the bench for San Antonio. Davis Bertans hit for 13 and Kyle Anderson scored 10 points and pulled down 12 rebounds for the Spurs, who ended a two-game losing streak. LeBron James scored 28 points to lead Cleveland, which lost for the third time in four games and for the eighth time in its past 11 contests. By scoring eight points in the first quarter, James became the seventh player in NBA history to reach 30,000 career points, as well as the youngest to do so at 33 years and 24 days of age (supplanting Kobe Bryant, 34 years and 104 days).



### Cavaliers star surpasses Bryant

**WARRIORS 123, KNICKS 112**  
Stephen Curry bombed in four 3-pointers in the third quarter as Golden State rallied from a half-time deficit with a 37-point explosion en route to a victory over New York in Oakland, Calif. Curry finished with eight 3-pointers and 32 points, helping the Warriors win for a 10th straight time this season in the next game following a loss. Kevin Durant added 14 points and 14 assists for Golden State before getting his league-leading fourth ejection for arguing a call late in the contest. Michael Beasley had 21 points and

Courtney Lee 20 for the Knicks, who were playing without star Kristaps Porzingis, out due to a sore left knee.

**LAKERS 108, CELTICS 107**  
Kyle Kuzma scored 17 of his 28 points in the fourth quarter to help Los Angeles avoid a season-series sweep against visiting Boston. Kuzma's fourth-period point total was a season high for a Laker in any quarter. Jordan Clarkson finished with 22 points, Julius Randle had 14 points and 14 rebounds for Los Angeles, which won its third consecutive game. Kyrie Irving had a game-high 33 points, Marcus Smart added 22 and both Al Horford and Marcus Morris scored 13 for the Celtics, who dropped their fourth straight. Horford also grabbed 12 rebounds.

**THUNDER 109, NETS 108**  
Russell Westbrook scored 32 points and hit the go-ahead layup with 3.3 seconds remaining as Oklahoma City rallied from a 15-point deficit to edge visiting Brooklyn. Westbrook capped his 14th game with at least 30 points by starting his drive from well behind the 3-point arc after getting the inbound pass from Paul George. He drove past Jarrett Allen and DeMarre Carroll and gave Oklahoma City the one-point lead. Westbrook made 12 of 27 shots and scored eight of Oklahoma City's last 12 points down the stretch. George added 28 points for the Thunder, who outscored the Nets 35-23 in the fourth quarter. Brooklyn's Joe Harris



SAN ANTONIO: LeBron James #23 of the Cleveland Cavaliers shoots the ball during the game against the San Antonio Spurs on Tuesday at the AT&T Center in San Antonio, Texas. — AFP

led a career high with five 3-pointers en route to 19 points.

**KINGS 105, MAGIC 99**  
Garrett Temple scored 17 of his career-high 34 points in the final 6:58, rallying visiting Sacramento to a victory over Orlando. Temple easily surpassed the 23 points he tallied twice previously in his NBA career, helping the Kings snap an eight-game losing streak. Sacramento, which entered the game with the worst record in the NBA, rested Zach Randolph and George Hill. Willie Cauley-Stein had 21 points for the Kings. Evan Fournier scored 22 points to lead the Magic. — Reuters

### NBA results/standings

Sacramento 105, Orlando 99; Oklahoma City 109, Brooklyn 108; San Antonio 114, Cleveland 102; Golden State 123, New York 112; LA Lakers 108, Boston 107.

Eastern Conference				Western Conference					
Atlantic Division				Northwest Division					
W	L	PCT	GB	Minnesota	31	18	0.633	-	
Boston	34	13	.723	Oklahoma City	26	20	0.565	3.5	
Toronto	31	14	0.689	Portland	25	22	0.532	5	
Philadelphia	22	21	0.512	Denver	24	23	0.511	6	
New York	21	26	0.447	Utah	19	28	0.404	11	
Brooklyn	18	29	0.383	16	Pacific Division				
					Golden State	37	10	0.787	-
Central Division				LA Clippers	23	23	0.5	13.5	
Cleveland	27	19	0.587	LA Lakers	17	29	0.37	19.5	
Indiana	25	22	0.532	Phoenix	17	30	0.362	20	
Milwaukee	24	22	0.522	Sacramento	14	33	0.298	23	
Detroit	22	23	0.489	4.5	Southwest Division				
Chicago	18	29	0.383	9.5	Houston	33	12	0.733	-
					San Antonio	31	18	0.633	4
Southeast Division				New Orleans	25	21	0.543	8.5	
Miami	27	20	0.574	Memphis	17	29	0.37	16.5	
Washington	26	21	0.553	Dallas	16	31	0.34	18	
Charlotte	19	26	0.422	7					
Atlanta	14	32	0.304	12.5					
Orlando	14	33	0.298	13					

## Zain congratulates Jet Ski Champion Yousef Al-Abdulrazzaq

**KUWAIT:** Zain, the leading telecommunications company in Kuwait, congratulated Kuwaiti Jet Ski champion Yousef Al-Abdulrazzaq, who recently achieved first place in the UAE Championship for the year 2018 during the first round of the Jet Ski Championship held at YAS Beach in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

Zain expressed its pride in Al-Abdulrazzaq's latest achievement, which the Kuwaiti champion attained as part of the UAE Marine Sports Federation Championship. Al-Abdulrazzaq competed against professionals from across the globe, and achieved the first place title in the JBI category. Zain's support to the Kuwaiti Champion Yousef Al-Abdulrazzaq during the past 10 years comes in line with the company's Corporate Sustainability and Social Responsibility strategy towards Kuwaiti sports and athletes. Al-Abdulrazzaq continues to raise the Kuwaiti flag high by achieving many internationally renowned titles year after year.

Zain's role not only concentrates on economic and business activities, but also extends to contribute significantly in various areas within the Kuwaiti society, including sports. The company has endless confidence in the competencies of Kuwaiti athletes and their capabilities in excelling in different fields, on both regional and international levels. It is worth noting that Al-Abdulrazzaq represented Kuwait throughout the past years in several local and international competitions, winning a number of prominent titles, which encouraged Zain to continue supporting him. The Union International Motonautique (UIM), the world's governing body for all Powerboating activities, officially declared Al-Abdulrazzaq a Guinness World Record holder by attaining World Championship title four times. The Kuwaiti champion proudly attained the four titles during 2013, 2015, 2016, and 2017.



Yousef Al-Abdulrazzaq (right) receiving the cup.

## Buzz builds for Tiger's Torrey Pines return

**LA JOLLA:** All eyes are on Tiger Woods this week as the former world number one returns to the US PGA Tour at the Farmers Insurance Open, and that's just the way defending champion Jon Rahm likes it. "The more attention on Tiger, the better for me, quite frankly," Rahm said Tuesday. "We all know the power of media and social media. You can put all the attention on what Tiger's doing and forget about what I'm doing, it will be actually great."

Expectations surrounding Rahm have ratcheted up thanks to his playoff triumph on Sunday at the CareerBuilder Challenge in La Quinta, California. The 23-year-old Spaniard jumped from third to second in the world rankings, supplanting US star Jordan Spieth.

A winner of two European Tour events in 2017 as well, Rahm is even within striking dis-

tance of Dustin Johnson's world number one ranking. "Hopefully I keep playing good and give you guys something to talk about," Rahm said. "But it's not bad that the attention's on Tiger. It's good for golf, it's good for all of us."

Woods was on the Torrey Pines South Course on Tuesday, playing nine holes with Australian Jason Day and Bryson DeChambeau. "I'm hitting a lot of golf balls and building up my endurance," the 42-year-old superstar told ESPN. "You have to do it. You have to beat balls for a little bit of time to build up your endurance and muscles. I feel like I've done that and now it's time to play a tournament." Woods hasn't played a US PGA Tour event since missing the cut at Torrey Pines last year, when he was returning from an 18-month absence. That comeback was cut short by recurring back pain that led to spinal fusion surgery and another 10 months away from competition. He made an encouraging return at the unofficial Hero World Challenge in the Bahamas in December, where he finished ninth in a field of 18 and said he was finally playing without pain.

**TOUGH TORREY TEST**  
Torrey Pines will offer a much tougher

test, but Woods has plenty of success to draw on at the course hugging the Pacific Ocean north of San Diego. He's won the US PGA Tour tournament at Torrey seven times, and he won the 2008 US Open in a playoff over Rocco Mediate despite playing with a damaged ligament in his left knee and two stress fractures. That was Woods' 14th and most recent major title. Not only did his pursuit of Jack Nicklaus's record of 18 majors stall, Woods admitted that there were times he wondered if he would resume his career at all. His performance in the Bahamas, however, raised hopes that Woods—whose 79 career PGA Tour wins are three shy of Sam Snead's all-time record—could contend again.

A raft of young stars who were inspired by Woods are now hoping to get a crack at their one-time idol in crunch-time of a tournament. That includes Rahm. "I think a lot of us dream about having the opportunity to maybe walk the

back nine with Tiger in contention and have a battle hand to hand," he said. "I hope it happens for somebody. I hope I'm the one, and quite truly I hope I come out on top if it happens." — AFP

## Rapturous welcome for N Korea pair in Taiwan

**TAIPEI:** North Korea's figure skaters Ryom Tae-Ok and Kim Ju-Sik were greeted by an enthusiastic crowd who threw them toys and flowers at the Four Continents championships in Taipei yesterday, ahead of their much anticipated Olympic bid.

Fans clapped and shouted at the end of their performance of Jeff Beck's rendition of The Beatles' "A Day in the Life", with one spectator flying a South Korean flag.

Although their routine ranked them first initially in the pairs short programme and gave them a personal record score of 65.25 points, they were eventually just edged out of the top three and ended fourth. US duo Ashley Cain and Timothy Leduc placed first with 66.76 points, Australians Ekaterina Alexandrovskaya and Harley Windsor took second with 66.45 points and Tarah Kayne and Danny O'Shea, also of the US, came third with 65.74 points.

Interest in the pair has skyrocketed since North Korea made a surprise announcement earlier this month that it was sending a team to the Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang, South Korea, even though the two sides are still technically at war.

The announcement eased months of international tension over the North's banned missile and nuclear programmes. Dressed in silver and black outfits, Ryom caught a Pikachu toy thrown from the crowd after the performance, with Kim catching a flower. Their coach stood

to applaud them at the rink gate after the performance and hugged them as they came off the ice.

The pair also skated to The Beatles track when they secured their Olympic place last September at the Nebelhorn Trophy in Germany. Speaking after the performance, Ryom, 18, said they were "not satisfied", according to the International Skating Union website. Kim, 25, said they must hold on to their leads better.

"All competitions are important to us, so we will keep working hard, not only for the Olympics but also for winning in upcoming competitions," Ryom said. Ryom and Kim are among North Korea's top athletes and the country's only competitors to have officially qualified for a place at the February 9-25 Games.

While the majority of their compatriots are cloistered from the outside world, the pair have travelled globally to compete. South Korean skater Kim Kyueun, who had to drop out from the pairs competition after her partner Alex Kam was injured, told AFP the pair were "very friendly and kind and a little bit shy".

Japanese skaters dominated the ladies' short programme yesterday. Defending champion Satoko Miyahara, ranked seventh in the world, took the lead with 71.74 points but said she could have done better. "I am not so happy because I think it was not my best (performance) and I want to do my best at free skating and concentrate on my performance," she told AFP.

She was followed closely by compatriots Kaori Sakamoto on 71.34 points and Mai Mihara on 69.84 points. In the ice dance competition, US duo Kaitlin Hawayek and Jean-Luc Baker led after the short dance with 69.08 points, followed by Japan's Kana Muramoto and Chris Reed on 65.27 points, with Canadians Carolane Soucisse and Shane Firus on 65.11 points. — AFP



## Sports

# Devils lose Cory Schneider to injury in 3-2 loss to Bruins

## Radulov's two goals lead host Dallas to a win over Florida

**BOSTON:** Brad Marchand's go-ahead goal in the last minute of the second period helped the surging Bruins claim their fourth consecutive victory as Boston edged the visiting New Jersey Devils 3-2 on Tuesday. The win pushed Boston's points streak to 17 games (13-0-4), the Bruins' longest such streak since a 15-0-2 stretch during the 1982-83 season. The franchise-record streak of 23 games took place in 1940-41. Marchand's tally was his team-leading 21st, while Riley Nash (seventh of the season) and Patrice Bergeron (20th) also scored for the Bruins. Tuukka Rask tied a season-high 37 saves to improve to 15-0-2 in his past 17 starts. Miles Wood scored his 13th goal of the season and Damon Severson added his seventh for New Jersey, which dropped its third straight and lost for the ninth time in 11 games (2-6-3).



### Bernier turned in a 36-save performance for the Avalanche

**CANADIENS 4, AVALANCHE 2**  
A goal and two assists from Jonathan Drouin helped Montreal snap Colorado's winning streak at 10 games. It was the first loss since Dec. 27 for Colorado, which was one of the NHL's worst teams last season but had emerged as one of the hottest in 2018. The Canadiens got 20 saves from Carey Price in the win, while Nicolas Deslauriers, Alex Galchenyuk and Brendan Gallagher collected goals. Jonathan Bernier turned in a 36-save performance for the Avalanche, who received third period goals from Nathan MacKinnon and J.T. Compher.

**BLUES 3, SENATORS 0**  
Brayden Schenn netted his 20th goal of the season in a two-point outing and Carter Hutton stopped 25 shots for his second shutout of the campaign as St. Louis beat visiting Ottawa. Vladimir Sobotka and Vladimir Tarasenko also scored for the Blues, who have won three of their last four games. Craig Anderson made 38 saves for the Senators, who are now on a four-game losing skid.

**FLYERS 3, RED WINGS 2 (OT)**  
Travis Konecny scored his second consecutive game-winning overtime goal to lift streaking Philadelphia to a victory over Detroit. Konecny also scored in overtime against Washington on Sunday. This time, he did it 27 seconds into the extra session. The Wings' Dylan Larkin lost the puck to Sean Couturier near his own blue line. Konecny then took control of it, skated in and beat Detroit goaltender Petr Mrazek for Philadelphia's fourth straight win and eighth in the last nine games.

**PENGUINS 3, HURRICANES 1**  
The Pittsburgh Penguins scored a pair of goals in a short span in the second period, including the first career goal for Jean-Sebastien Dea, in a victory against visiting Carolina. Dominik Simon and Dea scored 76 seconds apart to take the Penguins from a deficit into the lead. Jake Guentzel added a third-period goal for Pittsburgh, which boosted its home-ice winning streak to four games. Sidney Crosby's assist on Simon's goal gave him 1,079 career points, tying him with Jaromir Jagr for second on the Penguins' all-time list.

## Canadian hockey brat drives women's game in Korea

**NORTH HAVEN:** As the daughter of a former NHL coach and a two-time US collegiate champion in her own right, Sarah Murray knows a thing or two about ice hockey and its culture. She knows you "pinch" the boards with your body to keep a puck in the offensive zone. You jump over the boards for a fast line change.

And you hang on to your stick and helmet during the national anthem. What is second nature to a Canadian like her, though, has sometimes been a foreign concept to the players she now coaches on the South Korean women's hockey team.

Murray, hired in 2014 by Stanley Cup winner Jim Paek, now the head of South Korean hockey, recalls her first world championship tournament behind the bench when her players dropped their sticks, helmets, even gloves to the ice as the national anthem started - a major taboo in the hockey world. "No one had taught them to do it differently. There's a lot of pieces of hockey culture that they weren't taught," Murray said during a recent pre-Olympic US tour. "The first year was a lot of learning as we go," Murray said. "Now it's a lot better. The team is very professional."

### ON THE UP

The team is also a lot better at hockey. Under Murray, South Korea has surged six spots to No. 22 in the world rankings. Last year, they won their division's world title and earned a promotion. When she took over, her main goal was growing the sport in a country that has not taken much to ice hockey, especially not by women and girls.

The International Ice Hockey Federation counts just 319 female players in Korea, out of a total fewer than 3000. "It's really difficult, the system in Korea," Murray said. "Girls can play youth hockey, but there are no teams once they become teenagers."

"They can practice with the boys teams, but they don't get to play any games. So that's not any fun. So then they quit. Unless they make our team." The result is a squad with the oldest player, at 30, being roughly twice the age of her youngest teammates, who are 16.—Reuters

### LIGHTNING 4, PREDATORS 3 (OT)

Yanni Gourde's wrist shot at 1:45 of overtime led Tampa Bay past host Nashville. Gourde's 16th goal gave Tampa Bay its 33rd win and an NHL-high 69 points while spoiling the Predators' hopes of sweeping a five-game homestand. Steven Stamkos forced overtime by scoring his 18th goal at 17:49 of the third period, taking a pass from Slater Koekkoek and beating Nashville goalie Juuse Saros on a slap shot.

### STARS 6, PANTHERS 1

Alex Radulov scored two goals and added an assist to lead host Dallas to a win over Florida. Devin Shore, Jamie Benn, Mattias Janmark and Tyler Pitlick also scored for the Stars, who are 10-3-1 in their past 14 games. John Klingberg, who leads all NHL defensemen with 48 points, added two assists. Florida got a goal from Aaron Ekblad, his ninth of the season, but lost

goalie James Reimer to an apparent right-leg injury. Panthers first-string goalie Roberto Luongo is already out with a similar injury and is scheduled to return early next month.

### SABRES 5, OILERS 0

Jack Eichel had a goal and three assists, and Ryan O'Reilly scored twice to lead Buffalo to a 5-0 road win over Edmonton. The Sabres have won consecutive games for the first time since late October. Sam Reinhart collected a goal and two assists for Buffalo, which also got a goal from Zemgus Girgensons. Robin Lehner made 33 saves in the shutout victory. Edmonton failed in its attempt to win four games in a row for the second time this season.

### CANUCKS 6, KINGS 2

Loui Eriksson had two goals and an assist, and Brock Boeser also tallied twice as host Vancouver thumped struggling Los Angeles. Thomas Vanek added a goal and two assists, and Sven Baertschi also scored for the Canucks, who dominated at home for a rare time this season. Bo Horvat and Alexander Edler each supplied two assists for the victors. Anze Kopitar furnished a goal and an assist for the Kings, who took their seventh loss in eight games. Alex Iafallo scored the other Los Angeles goal.

### DUCKS 6, RANGERS 3

Andrew Cogliano scored the tiebreaking goal as Anaheim scored four times in the first period en route to a victory over visiting New York. Cogliano was among six different scorers for Anaheim, which chased Rangers goaltender Henrik Lundqvist after only taking seven shots on him. Lundqvist yielded four goals in the game's first 16:21. Rick Nash scored twice for the Rangers, who lost for the sixth time in eight games.

### GOLDEN KNIGHTS 6, BLUE JACKETS 3

William Karlsson scored two goals and Marc-Andre Fleury made 29 saves to lead host Vegas to a victory over Columbus. James Neal, Colin Miller, Brad Hunt and Erik Haula also collected goals for Vegas, which improved to an NHL best 19-2-2 at home. The Golden Knights earned their

## Rabada gets three as S Africa restrict India in third Test

**JOHANNESBURG:** Fast bowler Kagiso Rabada took three wickets as South Africa bowled India out for 187 to take the opening day honours on a seaming wicket in the third and final Test at the Wanderers in Johannesburg yesterday. South Africa were six for one in reply at the close, with opener Dean Elgar (4) and nightwatchman Rabada (0) to resume today as the hosts look to build a sizeable first innings lead on a difficult pitch. Aiden Markram (2) was the only South African wicket to fall as he edged a delivery from Bhuvneshwar Kumar to wicketkeeper Parthiv Patel, with the pitch giving plenty of encouragement to both sides' all-seam attacks. The hosts will be pleased with their day's work after India had won the toss and elected to bat, despite having dropped catches, eschewed what would have been a successful review and at times bowled too short and wide. The key wicket was that of Virat Kohli (54), though he was twice dropped off relatively simple chances when on 11 and 34. He was finally removed when Lungi Ngidi (1-27) induced an edge to AB de Villiers at third slip.

De Villiers bruised the middle finger of his right hand in taking the catch and had to leave the field for treatment. Cheteshwar Pujara (50) was the only other Indian batsman to post a half-century, with his patient innings taking 179 deliveries as he tried to stifle the home attack. He had a slice of early luck when given not out after Ngidi struck him on the pads. South Africa did not review umpire Ian Gould's decision and replays showed the ball would have hit leg stump. Pujara's vigil came to an end when he edged all-rounder Andile Phehlukwayo (2-25) to wicketkeeper Quinton de Kock, one of five dismissals for the gloveman.

Rabada (3-39) was perhaps the pick of the home bowlers, both fast and accurate. He removed opener Murali Vijay (8), caught by De Kock, before grabbing the wickets of Ishant Sharma (0) and the stubborn Kumar (30).

Morne Morkel (2-47) and Vernon Philander (2-31) also chipped in with wickets but were guilty at times of bowling with too much width, failing to make the batsmen play. The home side had already claimed the series with an unassailable 2-0 lead but are chasing a first clean-sweep against India. — Reuters



**DETROIT:** Jordan Weal #40 of the Philadelphia Flyers looks for a shot on Petr Mrazek #34 of the Detroit Red Wings during the third period at Little Caesars Arena on Tuesday in Detroit, Michigan. Flyers won the game 3-2 in overtime.—AFP

### NHL results/standings

Boston 3, New Jersey 2; Pittsburgh 3, Carolina 1; Montreal 4, Colorado 2; Philadelphia 3, Detroit 2 (OT); St. Louis 3, Ottawa 0.

Eastern Conference						Western Conference							
Atlantic Division						Central Division							
W	L	OTL	GF	GA	PTS								
Tampa Bay	33	12	3	170	124	69	Winnipeg	29	13	7	161	132	65
Boston	28	10	8	153	114	64	Nashville	28	11	7	142	123	63
Toronto	26	18	5	155	143	57	St. Louis	29	18	3	145	129	61
Detroit	19	20	8	125	141	46	Dallas	28	17	4	154	130	60
Montreal	20	22	6	124	150	46	Colorado	27	17	3	156	136	57
Florida	19	21	6	130	154	44	Minnesota	26	17	5	141	134	57
Ottawa	15	22	9	122	163	39	Chicago	22	19	6	139	132	50
Buffalo	13	26	9	110	163	35	Pacific Division						
							Las Vegas	32	11	4	163	126	68
							San Jose	26	14	7	138	127	59
Metropolitan Division						Calgary	25	16	6	133	129	56	
Washington	28	15	5	146	136	61	Los Angeles	25	18	5	137	120	55
New Jersey	24	15	8	144	143	56	Anaheim	23	17	9	137	138	55
Philadelphia	24	16	8	140	136	56	Edmonton	21	24	3	131	154	45
Columbus	26	19	3	129	136	55	Vancouver	19	23	6	127	155	44
Pittsburgh	26	21	3	145	150	55	Arizona	12	28	9	117	170	33
NY Islanders	24	20	5	170	179	53							
NY Rangers	24	20	5	147	146	53							
Carolina	21	19	8	131	149	50							

Note: Overtime losses (OTL) are worth one point in the standings and are not included in the loss column (L)

32nd victory, just one off the NHL record for wins in an inaugural season. Markus Nutivaara, Josh Anderson and Matt Calvert scored goals and Sergei Bobrovsky stopped 32 shots for Columbus, which lost for the third time in four games.

### JETS 5, SHARKS 4 (OT)

Bryan Little netted his second goal of the night in overtime to give Winnipeg a victory at San Jose. Little scored

18 seconds into the extra period for his team's first overtime win of the season, which came on a night when the Jets blew leads of 3-0 and 4-3. The Jets lost their first six games decided in OT. Connor Hellebuyck stopped 29 shots for the Jets, who are on a three-game winning streak and a 9-2-1 run since the Christmas break that has taken them to top spot in the Central Division. The Sharks fell to 5-1-1 record in their past seven games. — Reuters



**JOHANNESBURG:** South African bowler Lungi Ngidi (C) reacts as Indian batsman Virat Kohli (R) and Indian batsman Cheteshwar Pujara (L) take runs during the first day of the third test match between South Africa and India at Wanderers cricket ground yesterday in Johannesburg.— AFP

### SCOREBOARD

**JOHANNESBURG:** Scores at the end of India's first innings on the first day of the third and final Test between South Africa and India at the Wanderers Stadium yesterday:

<b>India, first innings</b>		Extras (b10, lb8, nb2, w6)	26
M. Vijay c De Kock b Rabada	8	Total (76.4 overs)	187
L. Rahul c De Kock b Philander	0	Fall of wickets: 1-7 (Rahul), 2-13 (Vijay), 3-97 (Kohli), 4-113 (Rahane), 5-144 (Pujara), 6-144 (Patel), 7-144 (Pandya), 8-163 (Shami), 9-166 (Sharma)	
C. Pujara c De Kock b Phehlukwayo	50	Bowling: Morkel 17-5-47-2 (Inb, 1w), Philander 19-10-31-2 (Inb), Rabada 18.4-6-39-3 (1w), Ngidi 15-7-27-1, Phehlukwayo 7-1-25-2.	
V. Kohli c De Villiers b Ngidi	54	<b>South Africa:</b> F. du Plessis, D. Elgar, A. Markram, H. Amla, A. de Villiers, Q. de Kock, V. Philander, A. Phehlukwayo, K. Rabada, M. Morkel, L. Ngidi	
A. Rahane lbw b Morkel	9	Match situation: India are all out for 187 in the first innings	
P. Patel c De Kock b Morkel	2		
H. Pandya c De Kock b Phehlukwayo	0		
B. Kumar c Phehlukwayo b Rabada	30		
Mohammed Shami c Rabada b Philander	8		
I. Sharma c Du Plessis b Rabada	0		
J. Bumrah not out	0		



## Sports

# Manchester City into first final of Guardiola era

## 'I'm proud of the boys and proud to be part of this team'

**BRISTOL:** Pep Guardiola saw his Manchester City side pushed hard before defeating second-tier Bristol City in an entertaining League Cup semi-final on Tuesday to leave him one game away from winning his first major trophy in English football.

Guardiola's runaway Premier League leaders, eyeing an unprecedented season quadruple given they also remain involved in both the FA Cup and Champions League, won 3-2 on the night for a 5-3 aggregate win over the Championship side. They kicked off with a narrow advantage at Ashton Gate after a 2-1 first-leg win at the Etihad Stadium.

But goals either side of half-time from Leroy Sane and Sergio Aguero effectively saw Manchester City to a win on Tuesday and success over the two legs as they reached their first final under former Barcelona and Bayern Munich manager Guardiola.

Bristol City were undaunted, however, with Marlon Pack pulling a goal back in the 64th minute before Aden Flint scored deep into stoppage time. However, there was still time for Kevin De Bruyne to round off the scoring for Manchester City.

Guardiola's men will now face the winners of Emirates Stadium semi-final between their Premier League rivals Arsenal and Chelsea at Wembley today, with the two London clubs deadlocked at 0-0 after a first-leg stalemate.

"We are so happy to be there, to reach this final," Guardiola, whose debut season as City boss last term saw him end a campaign without a trophy for the first time in his managerial career, told Sky Sports. "We played an amazing game until 2-0 and then we lost control, these type of games never end until the end.

“We are happy to be there, to reach this final”

"This is a lesson for next weekend in Cardiff in the FA Cup and especially for the Champions League," the Spaniard warned.

### 'JUDGED ON TROPHIES'

"At 2-0 we knew it would be easier because they needed three or four goals but with one minute left it was 2-2 and anything could happen." Guardiola played down the personal importance of reaching a Wembley final, saying: "It's not for me, it's for Manchester City, a club who are trying to reach another level.

"I know that we will be judged by trophies we win but we are so happy," he insisted. "Nobody can take away what we have done, but Chelsea or Arsenal are strong teams." Meanwhile Pack summed up the mood of the home side by saying: "I'm proud of the boys and proud to be part of this team. Hopefully we can take this into the league now and

keep it going."

It looked as if Bristol City would deny Manchester City a goal in the first half of Tuesday's match. But three minutes before the break, Hordur Magnusson made the mistake of trying to shepherd the ball out of play rather than clearing and was dispossessed near the byline by Bernardo Silva.

His cross was fired in by Sane and left Bristol City, chasing promotion to the lucrative Premier League, with a mountain to climb. Four minutes after the restart Aguero, Manchester City's all-time leading goalscorer, seemed to put the result of the tie beyond doubt.

The Argentina striker, fresh from a hat-trick in a 3-1 league win over Newcastle United last weekend, still

clarify that they were not and are not a true and genuine reflection of either my character or beliefs, and would like to apologise. "I am fully aware of my responsibilities as the England Women's head coach and am immensely proud and honoured to have been given the role. I am now looking forward to the future and will work tirelessly to try and help bring success to the team." Neville has also faced flak for a lack of previous experience coaching in the women's game, although he has enjoyed brief stints in the backroom staffs of Manchester United, England men's Under-21s and Spanish club Valencia.

The Women's Sports Trust has questioned his credentials, saying: "We are also saddened by Phil Neville's historical tweets and the lack of comment about this from the FA." The WST also highlighted concerns over how the FA had come to select Neville as the successor to Mark Sampson, who was sacked in September over allegations of misconduct in a previous role and amid a racism row that led to widespread criticism of senior FA officials.

### 'PARACHUTED'

It said it was "disappointed at the apparent lack of transparency and process in the appointment of Phil Neville as the new manager for the England women's football team. "Our national women's team deserve the very best coach available to fulfil their enormous potential and inspire millions of men and women.

"To see a high-profile, former professional footballer virtually parachuted into such a significant role in football without the level of experience required,



**BRISTOL:** Bristol City's English goalkeeper Luke Steele makes a save during the English League Cup semi-final, second leg football match between Bristol City and Manchester City at Ashton Gate Stadium in Bristol. —AFP

had plenty to do following De Bruyne's cross-field ball. But he made light of a tight angle by letting fly with a shot into the top corner from 18 yards out.

It would have been easy for Bristol City to be overwhelmed from then on in but, to their credit, it was the southwest side who scored next, in the 64th minute. John Stones made a mess of a clearance and when it

came back into the box, Pack guided a well-directed header across Manchester City goalkeeper Claudio Bravo and into the top corner. Flint turned in a header late on to give Bristol City fans hope of extra time but, pressing for that goal, their side were wide-open to a counter-attack, with Sane cutting the ball back for De Bruyne to fire home. —AFP

## Under-fire Neville apologises for sexist tweets

**LONDON:** Phil Neville apologised yesterday for the sexist tweets that have overshadowed his appointment as the new coach of the England women's football team. No sooner had the former Manchester United and England defender been named to his new position on Tuesday then old messages from his Twitter handle @fizzer18 re-appeared.

They included a 2012 post that said: "U women of (sic) always wanted equality until it comes to paying the bills #hypocrites". In another post that same year, Neville tweeted: "Morning men couple of hours cricket be4 (before) work sets me up nicely for the day."

Asked why he had only referred to men in his message, a reply on Neville's account said: "When I said morning men I thought the women would be busy preparing breakfast/getting kids ready/making the beds-sorry morning women!" Neville, 41, appeared to delete his Twitter account after the comments were republished.

### 'NOT A TRUE REFLECTION'

In a statement issued yesterday by his employers at England's Football Association, Neville said: "Following comments made a number of years ago I would like to

## Barca confirm Mascherano departure for Heibe

**MADRID:** Barcelona midfielder Javier Mascherano is to leave the club after seven-and-a-half years at the Nou Camp with the Spanish league leaders confirming yesterday that the player is joining Chinese Super League side Heibe China Fortune.

In China, the 33-year-old will link up with Argentine compatriot Ezequiel Lavezzi at a side coached by former Real Madrid and Manchester City boss Manuel Pellegrini. Mascherano made 334 appearances in a successful spell at the Catalan side, lifting 18 major honours, including two Champions League triumphs and four La Liga titles.

"Javier Mascherano is leaving FC Barcelona after seven-and-a-half seasons. The Argentinian will be receiving an institutional farewell from the club on Wednesday," Barcelona said in a statement.

"The club president, Josep Maria Bartomeu and the first team squad will be present. The player will say goodbye to the fans on the pitch ahead of the club's King's Cup tie against Espanyol on Thursday."

Heibe, who finished fourth in last year's Chinese Super League, announced Mascherano's signing on their official social media account soon after Barcelona confirmed his departure. "After discussions with FC Barcelona and the player, we hereby announce that the Argentina captain Javier Mascherano has officially joined Heibe China Fortune Football Club," Heibe said. "He will wear the number 14 shirt in the new Chinese Super League season. We warmly welcome him and hope he can lead the team to a higher level." Mascherano joined Barcelona from Liverpool in 2010 for a reported 22 million euros (\$27.15 million) and was converted by coach Pep Guardiola from a holding midfielder into a centre back, often deputising for the injury-plagued Carles Puyol.

His departure also frees up the number 14 jersey made famous by Dutch great Johan Cruyff. Spanish media have reported that recent arrival Philippe Coutinho—who signed for a club record 142 million pounds (\$200.18 million). —Reuters

## Saha backs Lukaku to be more consistent

**MUMBAI:** Romelu Lukaku has the ability to rip apart defences but the Belgian marksman may need a year under his belt at Manchester United to be more consistent, the Premier League club's former striker Louis Saha has told Reuters.

The 24-year-old joined United for 75 million pounds (\$105.24 million) on a five-year contract last July after scoring 25 league goals in 37 matches in the last campaign for Everton. His prolific form garnered interest from several leading sides in Europe, including former club Chelsea, where he previously worked under United manager Jose Mourinho.

Lukaku made a stellar start to life at the Manchester club, scoring 11 times in his first 10 games but the goals have since dried up for the Belgian international. "He started well, we can see that he has got more in him," Saha, who scored 42 goals during his four-and-a-half year spell at United, said in an interview. "We want to see him rip apart some defenders because he can do it.

"Physically he's so strong. I will say that he can do more but that's easy to say. Sometimes Lukaku might not be helped with Mourinho's style of play. "I wish next season maybe, with one year under his belt, he'll be even more consistent."

Mourinho let Lukaku go at Chelsea but the Portuguese has continued to back his striker since their reunion, saying the Belgian offers more on the pitch than just goals. But with the arrival of



Phil Neville

undermines the coaching pathway and will be a blow to hundreds of football coaches, both male and female, currently working towards their badges at all levels." Chelsea Ladies manager Emma Hayes ruled herself out of the England job contention by signing a new long-term contract with the Women's Super League side. —AFP

Chilean forward Alexis Sanchez from Arsenal this week, United have more attacking options and a further lack of goals could relegate Lukaku to the bench.

Saha, who has also played in the Premier League for Everton, Fulham, Sunderland and Tottenham, hoped Sanchez could emulate Dutchman Robin van Persie, who left Arsenal for a successful spell at the Manchester club in 2012.

### UNPLAYABLE SANCHEZ

Van Persie ended up as United's highest scorer in his debut campaign at Old Trafford and helped guide the club to their 20th league title. "His speed, he has no fear. It's impossible to mark those kind of players. He can play right, left, in the middle, play behind defenders... it's unplayable," Saha said of Sanchez. "When these players get players around them as well with desire to win titles... he can do amazing things at United.

"If you remember Van Persie, who also came from Arsenal and destroyed the Premier League by himself in the first season. He killed it, we hope Sanchez will do the same." The 39-year-old Saha was speaking in Mumbai as part of Gulf Oil's fan-building campaign for United's supporters, who were invited to a live screening of the Premier League away fixture at Burnley on Saturday.

United have struggled to compete for the title since the departure of long-term manager Alex Ferguson in 2013, but Saha feels they are a much-improved side under Mourinho. "They are consistent and look like a team who want to attack more than it used to," Saha said, with United now 12 points behind leader Manchester City after 24 league matches. "Fans are happy, confidence is growing and the fear factor is back.

"We need to get closer to City, they have been very consistent. I think it's a good season, we will talk about it more in May." — Reuters

## FIFA report details spending of Blatter era

**LAUSANNE:** A copy of a report seen by AFP into the state of FIFA commissioned by Gianni Infantino after his election as president shines a light on the murky ways of the old regime at world football's governing body. The 98-page "Progress at FIFA - Status Report" gives details of lavish spending, particularly by Sepp Blatter, the former president, and Jerome Valcke, his Secretary General, who had a taste for private jets and unjustified expenses.

The report covers the period from 2006 to 2015, the year the FIFA corruption scandal exploded, and was put together by Swiss audit company BDO who submitted it in October last year, though it has remained confidential. BDO highlighted the lack of "a clear set of rules and regulations concerning expense reimbursement" resulting in payments "that would not be permitted under today's guidelines."

Without giving any names, the report says "two former members of the FIFA Executive Committee were reimbursed for expenses in the aggregate amount of over \$780,000 (632,000 euros) and \$390,000, respectively, incurred during only one year."

Over a five-year period, "a former high-ranking FIFA official was reimbursed for travel expenses in the total amount of over \$300,000." According to a source close to the report who was interviewed by AFP, that official was Worawi Makudi of Thailand, who has been suspended for five years for other misdeeds.

The late Chuck Blazer, an American member of the FIFA Executive Committee until he was accused of corruption in 2013 and turned FBI informer, is also singled out. Even though he was skimming millions of dollars from television rights contracts as a US court heard last year, Blazer did not scorn smaller scams. Having attended two FIFA events at the same venue a few days apart, Blazer was reimbursed for two return flights even though he had only made one. The non-existent extra tickets cost \$13,000.

The son of a former member of the Executive Committee obtained \$15,000 in compensation and expenses for a FIFA event which his father did not attend. The source identified the father as the late Isaac Sasso Sasso, from Costa Rica, who, according to FIFA, had one son, Alfredo.

The audit also highlights the lack of any "approval process for the use of private jets," particularly by Valcke, who has since been suspended by FIFA. FIFA spent an average of US \$4.9 million per year on jets 2010 and 2014, and \$7.9 million in 2014 alone.

In 2016, the first year of Infantino's reign, "spending on private jet flights dropped by 88 percent" compared to 2010-14, said the report. Until 2014, Blatter and Valcke each had sole control of an account into which FIFA paid money for them to donate to charities and organisations of their choice. —AFP



Matches on TV  
(Local Timings)

SPAIN COPA DEL REY  
Barcelona v Espanyol 23:30  
beIN SPORTS



**13** LeBron gets 30,000 as Spurs beat slumping Cavaliers 114-102



**14** Rabada gets three as S Africa restrict India in third Test



**15** Under-fire England's coach Neville apologises for sexist tweets



LAUSANNE: Portuguese former football player Deco (L) and UEFA director of competitions Giorgio Marchetti perform the UEFA Nations League draw at the headquarters of the European football organisation in Lausanne, yesterday. — AFP

## Germany face France in Nations League

### England draw Spain, Croatia in UEFA Nations League

LAUSANNE: Germany will face old rivals France and the Netherlands after the trio were drawn together in the same three-team group for the inaugural UEFA Nations League, the latest addition to the football calendar, yesterday.

The trio will feature in Group One of League A, the top division of the four-tier tournament that UEFA has introduced to replace international friendlies and which will run alongside the traditional European championship qualifiers.

It was an early boost for the competition which critics say is too complex, adds to an already crowded calendar and, because it provides an additional path to tournaments such as Euro 2020, makes it too easy for the top teams to qualify.

UEFA, concerned that international football is losing popularity to the club game, argues that the league will provide the top nations with more competitive matches against each other.

In the other League A groups, Italy, who failed to qualify for this year's World Cup finals, will face European champions Portugal and Poland in Group Three while Spain take on England and Croatia in Group Four.

Belgium will meet Switzerland and Iceland in Group Two, arguably the easiest. The Nations League features all 55 of Europe's national teams divided into four divisions—Leagues A to D—that are themselves split into four groups, to be played between September and November. In League A, the winners of each group qualify for

the semi-finals, which will be played in June 2019, followed by the final. The four last-placed teams are relegated to League B. In the other leagues, the four group winners are promoted and last team in each group goes down.

Each league also has one place at Euro 2020, offering a back door for teams who do not qualify through the regular qualifiers. This mechanism guarantees that one fourth-tier side—such as Georgia, Azerbaijan, Faroe Islands or Malta—will reach Euro 2020. Germany coach Joachim Loew said the new com-

petition was "really interesting." "I like these kind of games," he told reporters. "France is a big nation, very good players, and Netherlands too, so it's interesting for us, our players and of course our fans. It's better than the friendly games we have sometimes. "I'm really happy."

Poland coach Adam Nawalka agreed. "It's a very good idea to have this competition instead of friendlies, we have a very interesting group with the European champions Portugal and four-times world champions Italy," he told Reuters.

Portugal coach Fernando Santos told UEFA's website: "One of the positives with this competition is more games between teams of a similar standard. "Some countries knew they will always struggle to get to a World Cup or a EURO, and they will now have another reason to invest in grassroots development and, of course, all European football will benefit from that." —Reuters



**New competition was "really interesting: Loew"**

### Federer faces Chung semi test, Kerber and Halep shine

MELBOURNE: Roger Federer zeroed in on a 20th Grand Slam title yesterday with Chung Hyeon next in his Australian Open firing line as dominant Angelique Kerber and Simona Halep raced into a semi-final showdown. The clinical Swiss ace strode into the last four at Melbourne Park for a 14th time with a clinical 7-6 (7/1), 6-3, 6-4 dismantling of old foe Tomas Berdych. He now faces Chung on Friday for a place in the final after the unseeded South Korean kept his dream run going by battling past American Tenny Sandgren 6-4, 7-6 (7/5), 6-3 to become the lowest-ranked semi-finalist since Marat Safin in 2004.

Germany's Kerber, champion two years ago, swept aside Madison Keys 6-1, 6-2, easily taming the American's big serve and will go into her clash with the world number one on a 14-match win streak. Top seed Halep was equally

impressive on Rod Laver Arena in thumping sixth seed Karolina Pliskova 6-3, 6-2, reeling off nine games in a row after going 0-3 behind in the first set. Defending champion Federer, chasing a sixth Australian title, held a 19-6 lead over the Czech 19th seed going into the match and after a close first set, it was one-way traffic. "I'm very happy I got out of that first set, it was key to the match in the end," he said, adding that he was excited to now be up against Chung. "It's great to see new names on the scene. He reminds me a lot of Novak (Djokovic)." Ranked 58, the bespectacled Chung, nicknamed "The Professor", proved too hot for his fellow quarter-finalist Sandgren, although he needed six match points before claiming victory.

**PLAN IN HEAD**

"I'm just trying to stay focused," added the 21-year-old as he prepares to face Federer, having already knocked out an injured Djokovic. Sandgren, who wiped his Twitter account ahead of the game after being dogged by controversy over his political views, paid tribute to the Korean.

"He's a fantastic player," he said, adding that he was also upbeat about his own future after a breakthrough tournament. "I'm excited about that. Hopefully I can keep playing well."

Kerber, who won the title in 2016, is in scintillating form after an unbeaten singles campaign in the Hopman Cup and her triumph in the Sydney International warm-up. Keys was expected to be a stiff challenge, having not dropped a set en route to the quarters, but she melted under the German's relentless groundstrokes and pinpoint return of serve.

"I'm just trying to find the feeling back I had like 2016," said Kerber, who had a forgettable 2017 after winning not only in Australia but also the US Open in 2016. "Madison is a hard hitter, and she served good. So I was trying to play from the first point aggressive and moving good and also bringing a lot of balls back," she added. The win ensures Kerber, seeded 21, will move back into the world's top 10. Halep is next for her on Thursday, with the nuggety Romanian taming towering Czech Pliskova's serve to scamper into the last four for the first time in Melbourne. "I didn't have the best start, but I restarted after three games. I stopped missing so much and moved better," said Halep, who showed no signs of the ankle injury that has been troubling her in previous rounds.

She is wary of Kerber and vowed to "stay calm and play like I did today". "I have the plan in my head. I know most of the time where she's hitting. That's why maybe I can win against her," she said. —AFP



MELBOURNE: Romania's Simona Halep celebrates beating Czech Republic's Karolina Pliskova in their women's singles quarter-finals match on day 10 of the Australian Open. — AFP



## Business

THURSDAY, JANUARY 25, 2018

**18** Ahli United Bank wins 'Sukuk Deal of the Year - Kuwait 2017 Award'**19** Aqaba and Thessaloniki join flydubai's growing network**21** Alghanim Lotus takes its iconic Evora 400 to Kuwait Motor Show

**DAVOS:** (From left) The Co-Chairs of the annual World Economic Forum (WEF), IMF Managing Director Christine Lagarde, Norway Premier Erna Solberg, IBM Chairperson and CEO Ginni Rometty, Founder and Chair of Mann Deshi Foundation Chetna Sinha, European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) Director-General Fabiola Gianotti, ITUC General Secretary Sharan Burrow and ENGIE CEO Isabelle Kocher attend a session of the annual World Economic Forum (WEF) on Tuesday in Davos.—AFP

# US defends 'America First' agenda

## Davos financiers reject talk of markets 'bubble'

**DAVOS:** Senior US officials hit back yesterday against suggestions that Donald Trump's "America First" agenda was hurting globalization and trade, setting an aggressive tone ahead of the US president's visit to the World Economic Forum. In keeping with Trump's combative trade stance, US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin also welcomed a weaker US dollar, helping to send the world's reserve currency to a three-year low against a basket of major peers.

"Obviously a weaker dollar is good for us as it relates to trade and opportunities," Mnuchin told a press briefing at the annual summit in the Swiss ski resort of Davos. World leaders, including Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Canada's Justin Trudeau and Brazilian President Michel Temer, raised concerns this week at the summit about growing protectionism, in remarks that delegates said seemed aimed at Trump's policies.

Under his America First agenda, Trump has threatened to withdraw from the North American free-trade agreement (NAFTA), disavowed the global climate change accord and criticized global institutions including the United Nations and NATO. Trump is expected to arrive today and deliver a keynote address to the forum tomorrow, mingling with the same elite "globalists" that he bashed during his 2016 presidential run.

Mnuchin and US Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross mounted a joint defense of Washington's aggressive trade actions in Davos yesterday and said more were to come. "This is about an America First agenda. But America First

does mean working with the rest of the world," Mnuchin said. "It just means that President Trump is looking out for American workers and American interests no different than he expects other leaders would look out for their own."

Ross said US trade actions were provoked by "inappropriate behavior on the part of our trading counterparts."

On Tuesday, for example, the United States slapped steep import tariffs on washing machines and solar panels, in moves billed as a way to protect American jobs. China and South Korea condemned the tariffs, with Seoul set to complain to the World Trade Organization over the "excessive" move. "Many countries are very good at the rhetoric of free trade but in fact actually practice extreme protectionism," Ross said.

The slide in the dollar also helps US exports, but Mnuchin noted: "Longer term the strength of the dollar is a reflection of the strength of the US economy and the fact that it is and it continues to be the primary currency in terms of the reserve currency."

Almost a decade after the Lehman crisis, the world's

financial elite in Davos say not to worry about a potential bubble inflating out of record stock prices: this time it's different.

The global economy is finally firing on all cylinders and for bosses gathered in Davos, any risks to the bull market arise more from terrorism or cyberattacks than from the sort of panic that engulfed investment bank Lehman Brothers in September 2008, triggering a worldwide crisis.

"I'm not going to tell you that we're not going to have another financial crisis, sales of my book would collapse," said Harvard economics professor Kenneth Rogoff, the author of a book on the crisis called "This Time It's Different", which warned of the dangers of complacency. "But I'm kind of optimistic going forward, and I actually think we're at the tail end of the last one (crisis)," he said in Davos. Still, talk of a bubble is re-emerging as the US stock prices ramp up to historic levels. Wall Street's closely watched S&P 500 is up nearly five percent so far this year, and it's still only January.

Collaboration between banks and regulators "is at a

whole other level than it was pre-crisis", Barclays chief executive Jes Staley told a Davos panel. "If you go back to 2005, 2006, the bank would meet with the Fed (Federal Reserve) maybe once every quarter. Today we have the (regulators) in the bank everyday," he said.

### 'Quacks like a duck'

Others pointed at lurking dangers that could reboot a crisis. "Of course you have some housing bubbles again in some selected markets," Angel Gurría, the head of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, told AFP. But Gurría said the soaring stock markets, especially in the US, were linked to widespread enthusiasm about Trump's tax cut.

"Imagine the combination. Lower taxes on corporations, repatriation for investment and a big infrastructure program," he said. "That looks and tastes and quacks like a duck; it looks like what you are going to have is growth." But this vision of the economy was too "short term", he said, a view shared by insurance giant Allianz CEO Oliver Baete.

"Underlying growth ... has been much better than people predicted. That's the good news despite all the political turmoil," Baete told CNBC in Davos. "But ... markets are very, very dangerous, and you don't see that, because valuations are at ever-higher levels, and credit risk looks like it's disappeared. Well, it hasn't disappeared," he warned. But to many in Davos, the markets will only fall back to earth due to unforeseen external shocks.—AFP



## Mnuchin supports a weaker dollar

## Saudi regulator asked to study local impact of Aramco IPO

**KHOBAR/RIYADH:** An advisory council to Saudi Arabia's government has asked the securities regulator to study the impact of listing Saudi Aramco on the local bourse amid concern that a huge initial public offer could damage the market. The Shura Council's fiscal committee has also requested the Capital Market Authority (CMA) makes sure the stock market's liquidity would not become concentrated in the giant oil company alone, state news agency SPA reported late on Tuesday.

The government has said it plans to sell about 5 percent of Aramco, hoping to raise some \$100 billion or more in

what would likely be the world's biggest initial public offer (IPO). The sale is expected in the second half of 2018. Saudi officials have said they may list Aramco on one or more foreign markets such as New York, London and Hong Kong in addition to Riyadh, which would boost the company's global profile and reduce the strain on the Saudi market. But after more than a year of deliberations, a decision on a foreign market has not been announced and some officials have suggested Aramco might list in Riyadh alone, possibly also selling some shares to strategic foreign investors in a private placement.

There is concern in Saudi financial circles that the IPO could be too large for the local market to absorb. The market has a capitalization of about \$470 billion, meaning it could be destabilized by Aramco's listing if other stocks are sold to raise funds for investment in the oil giant. The SPA report did not say whether the CMA's study should look at the impact of listing Aramco in Riyadh alone, or scenarios in which it was listed in Saudi Arabia as well as foreign markets. The Saudi exchange's chief executive Khalid Al-Hussan told Reuters this month that Riyadh hoped to be the only venue for the Aramco listing and could handle all of

the IPO. Liquidity would not be a problem, he said. The Shura Council and the Capital Market Authority had no immediate comment when contacted by Reuters yesterday. Saudi Aramco declined to comment.

### Market dynamics

At a meeting this week at the Council of Saudi Chambers, a national business association, two businessmen expressed concern about the local impact of the Aramco listing. "Historically, when a substantial heavy-weight company is going into the market, the main concern is if individuals will liquidate their shares to invest in this company, and hence the concern is mainly about market dynamics and activity," said one.

Mazen Al-Sudairi, head of research at Al-Rajhi Capital, said listing in Riyadh alone could hurt the Saudi economy by sucking in funds from elsewhere. Listing 1 percent of Aramco locally would absorb more than the government's entire domestic borrowing last year, which totalled \$14.3 billion, he said. In addition, the correlation of the Saudi stock index to oil prices would rise to almost 100 percent from about 50 percent, making the market a play on

volatile oil prices rather than a diversified Saudi economy, he said. Sudairi said the government was unlikely to go for a local listing alone for both those reasons.

However, analysts say some other factors could lead it to consider that option seriously. Listing on multiple markets with different regulatory regimes would involve additional paperwork and compliance costs for Aramco and potentially force the company, which acts as an arm of Saudi oil policy, to disclose more about itself.

A lawyer based in the Gulf said the Saudi government might also be concerned by the risk of Aramco becoming more vulnerable to foreign lawsuits because of listings abroad. The US Justice Against Sponsors of Terrorism Act, passed in 2016, allowed lawsuits to proceed against the Saudi government claiming it had helped to plan the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks on the United States and should pay damages to victims. Riyadh denies the allegations.

A Saudi banker who is following official discussions on Aramco's listing said, however, that authorities remained unlikely to choose Riyadh as the sole listing venue. "That won't happen as \$100 billion is too much for the local market to absorb," he said.—Reuters







Business

# Aqaba and Thessaloniki join flydubai's growing network

Dubai-based airline grows its network to 102 destinations in 46 countries

**KUWAIT:** Dubai-based flydubai has announced the start of flights to Thessaloniki in Greece and Aqaba in Jordan from June 2018. The latest additions to the growing flydubai network give passengers from the UAE and the region the option to travel to more than 100 destinations through Dubai's aviation hub.

flydubai is the first UAE carrier to operate flights to Aqaba and Thessaloniki. Flights to Thessaloniki will operate three times a week starting from 15 June, while flights to Aqaba will operate four times a week from 16 June.

Commenting on the launch, Ghaith Al-Ghaith Chief Executive Officer of flydubai, said: "With the addition of Aqaba and Thessaloniki to our network, we increase the number of underserved markets served by flydubai with direct flights from the UAE to 71 destinations. The fact that around 70 percent of our network was previously underserved means that we remained committed to the vision set for us to create free flows of trade and tourism and the strengthen direct air links with the UAE."

flydubai earlier announced the launch of several new routes for 2018 including Tivat, Krakow, Dubrovnik, Catania, Kutaisi, Qabala and Batumi from March onwards. This brings the number of destinations served by the carrier in Eastern and Southern Europe to 27, Caucasus and Central Asia to 11 and GCC and Middle East to 30.

"We are looking forward to the start of flydubai's flights to Aqaba and Thessaloniki. Both cities are major economic, industrial, commercial centers and very popular leisure des-

tinations especially in the summer. Making these destinations more accessible to travellers looking for new destinations to explore, will undoubtedly stimulate the traffic flows and tourism between the UAE, Greece and Jordan," said Jeyhun Efendi, Senior Vice President Commercial (UAE, Middle East, Europe & CIS). "flydubai's passengers and passengers connecting from other airlines including Emirates, will be able to enjoy our reliable and affordable services to these new routes whether choosing to fly Business or Economy," he added.

Thessaloniki is the second-largest city in Greece with over one million inhabitants and a major transportation hub for the country and southeastern Europe, notably through the Port of Thessaloniki. The city is renowned for its festivals, events and vibrant cultural life and is considered to be Greece's cultural capital. Annual events such as the Thessaloniki International Trade Fair and the Thessaloniki International Film Festival attracts thousands of visitors especially during the summer period.

Aqaba Airport (also known as King Hussein International Airport) serves the city of Aqaba in Jordan. Aqaba is located on the Gulf of Aqaba and is the country's major seaport, as well as being an important industrial center and a growing tourist destination. Home to many luxurious hotels and resorts, the city attracts visitors interested in visiting Aqaba and diving in the Red Sea, doing a day trip to Petra, camping in the neighboring Wadi Rum along with a number of historical and cultural attractions.



Flights to new destinations from June 15, 16



## Europe's Brexit serenade failing to lure many London bankers

**FRANKFURT/DAVOS/PARIS:** Frankfurt and Paris are set to see a trickle rather than a wave of London bankers arrive in 2018, with the prospect of a softer Brexit discouraging them from leaving Britain immediately, executives and lobbyists say. Both cities had been positioned to benefit as Britain prepares to leave the European Union, prompting London banks to seek a foothold elsewhere within the bloc in order to continue taking full advantage of the EU single market.

But conciliatory signals from British Prime Minister Theresa May and progress in talks with Michel Barnier, the European Commissioner's chief negotiator, have prompted some banks to delay large staff moves, at least for now. Frankfurt's chief promoter, Hubertus Vaeth, had expected up to 6,000 new arrivals in Germany's financial capital this year in the event of a hard Brexit. Vaeth said he has now pared back that assessment to less than 1,000.

The small city had been the most popular among banks looking for an EU base. But optimism that Frankfurt could profit has been dampened by the prospect of a Brexit compromise.

"There will be a reluctant, minimal move," said Vaeth, though he cautioned that this could change in coming years. Speaking to an audience of financiers at Deutsche Boerse, the Frankfurt stock exchange, on Monday, Germany's European Union commissioner, Guenther Oettinger, raised the possibility that Britain might not leave the EU at all.

"That would be no loss, quite to the contrary," said Oettinger, an ally of German Chancellor Angela Merkel. The developments have prompted a change of heart at Deutsche Bank, which had originally examined moving up to 4,000 staff from London. It will now initially shift less than 200 jobs, according to one person with knowledge of the matter.

That is in keeping with remarks made by Stefan Hoops, an executive at the bank, who said this month: "Not thousands will move from London, but rather hundreds." The group has more than 8,000 staff in London.

The larger initial figure was used in a Reuters survey last September that predicted around 10,000 finance jobs could be shifted out of Britain or created overseas, suggesting this may not be reached in 2018.

No hurry'

In Paris, a similar picture is emerging. France has stepped

up efforts to attract London banks preparing for Brexit to Paris after the election of President Emmanuel Macron, who has begun to make labor law more flexible and has offered some tax cuts. Among most recent announcements, Goldman Sachs Chief Executive Lloyd Blankfein said in November the bank would have hubs in Frankfurt and Paris after Brexit and that it would be up to staff to decide where they want to move to from London.

But one person familiar with the Wall Street bank's strategy said that only dozens of staff might move initially. Even French bankers based in London are not rushing to return.

"There is no hurry for us," said Frederic Oudea, chief executive of Societe Generale, when asked about moving staff from London to Paris. France's third-largest bank has said that it plans to move up to 400 people.

"The good thing is that there has been an agreement on a divorce settlement which means that there is more time," he told Reuters at the World Economic Forum in Davos. "At this stage we have not moved people. We can wait to have more clarity."

Florence Soule de Lafont, a partner at headhunter Heidrick & Struggles, said banks would be unlikely to follow their initial schedule to transfer certain activities by September 2018, given that they believed Brexit negotiation would now take more time.

"Big players continue to advance on their strategies, plans for the future positioning in Europe ... but with a feeling that there is less pressure," said Jean-Louis Laurens, an "ambassador" for the French asset management sector.

"There is still too much uncertainty for people to make firm decisions." The final outcome of the talks is anything but certain, and a hard Brexit-in which the UK would lose full access to the EU single market-cannot be ruled out. Spain's foreign affairs minister Alfonso Dastis told Reuters TV in Davos yesterday that he felt the outcome would be "closer to a hard Brexit".

But positive signals from regulators and politicians in Britain have nonetheless encouraged banks. Late last year, the Bank of England said it intended to spare them costly extra capital requirements after Brexit-an important move for international banks. A thaw in relations between Britain's financial centre, the City of London, and British politicians, some of whom had been disinterested in or even hostile to the sector, has also helped. Speaking from Davos, one senior banker said he had been reassured by a meeting he attended with May in Downing street this month, where he was told that the future of financial services was a core government priority.

This was in stark contrast to her stance a year earlier when she met senior bankers in Davos: "The government focus on the need to safeguard the city of London has increased." — Reuters

## Eurozone businesses start 2018 on decade high as work floods in

**LONDON:** Eurozone businesses kicked off 2018 in much better shape than anyone polled by Reuters expected, ramping up activity at the fastest rate since the middle of 2006, a survey showed yesterday. The upturn was driven by a strong performance in the bloc's dominant service industry, where new business flooded in at a rate not seen in over a decade. That will cheer the European Central Bank as it moves towards tighter monetary policy.

IHS Markit's composite flash Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) for the euro zone jumped to 58.6 this month, its highest since June 2006 and confounding the median forecast in a Reuters poll for a dip to 57.9 from a final December reading of 58.1. Anything above 50 indicates growth and the preliminary reading was higher than any estimate given by the 33 economists Reuters polled.

"The PMI adds to the list of positive January indicators. We believe 2018 could again be a year in which euro zone growth beats expectations," said Bert Colijn at ING. Consumer confidence jumped much more than expected this month to a 17-year high, a flash estimate from the European Commission showed on Tuesday, further underlining the momentum in an economy growing at its fastest in a decade.

French business activity was stronger than expected and Germany's private sector continued to grow robustly in January, according to earlier data, showing the bloc's two biggest economies had a strong start to 2018. IHS Markit said it maintained the euro zone PMI pointed to first quarter GDP growth of 1.0 percent, much faster than the 0.6 percent predicted by a Reuters poll last week.

In other good news for ECB policymakers, who have failed for years to get inflation up to where they want it, price pressures increased. The output prices sub-index bounced to 54.6 from 53.2, a level not seen for almost seven years. "On the face of it, the data strengthen the case for the ECB to 'revisit' its forward guidance early this year, as it has hinted it will," said Jessica Hinds at Capital Economics.

"But with core inflation still subdued and the euro continuing to strengthen, we expect that the ECB will tread very cautiously at today's (Thursday's) meeting." Earlier this month, the ECB signalled a growing appetite for revising its policy message in "early" 2018. But it is unlikely to ditch a pledge to keep buying bonds at Thursday's meeting as rate setters need more time to assess the outlook for the economy and the euro, three sources close to the matter said. The U.S. dollar hit fresh lows yesterday following the PMI data and after US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said he welcomed the greenback's weakness.

### Services strength

The PMI covering the bloc's dominant service industry bucked a forecast for a slight dip to 56.4, instead rising from December's 56.6 to 57.6, the highest since August 2007. That increase came after firms reported new business accelerating and the sub-index was 57.2, up from 56.7 and its highest since August 2007. Manufacturers, however, performed less well than predicted. The sector's PMI fell to 59.6 from December's 60.6 and was below all 42 forecasts in a Reuters poll whose median was 60.3.

An index measuring output which feeds into the composite PMI suffered a similar fate, slipping to 61.1 from 62.2. "That suggests that the recent strength of the euro and the rise in oil prices at the margin may have dented activity in the industrial sector," Hinds said. Since the ECB's December meeting the euro has gained around 5 percent, making the bloc's goods more expensive abroad. Still, the three-month average of the headline number, ironing out fluctuations over the Christmas period when numbers are more volatile due to factory closures, was nevertheless the highest on record.—Reuters

## Palestinians get 3G mobile services in West Bank

**RAMALLAH:** Palestinian cellular providers launched high-speed data services in the occupied West Bank yesterday, narrowing a technological gap with Israel after a lengthy and costly Israeli ban on the operation of local 3G networks. Two Palestinian companies, Jawwal and Wataniya Mobile, will compete with the West Bank's black market high-speed providers - Israeli cellular firms.

Industry experts said the Israeli providers already have a customer base of some 500,000 Palestinians using smuggled, pre-paid SIM cards that connect with 3G and 4G network cell towers in Israel and Jewish settlements. Israeli cellular companies say they have no control over where the SIM cards - many of them purchased by Palestinians working in Israel and classified as illegal by the Palestinian Authority (PA) - are used. The World Bank, in a 2016 report, estimated that Palestinian cellular companies lost between \$436 million and \$1.5 billion in potential revenue in 2013 to 2015 due to Israeli restrictions on frequencies and equipment imports, and unauthorized competition by Israeli operators.

"We have launched the 3G network service in the West Bank, while the Gaza Strip is still deprived of it because of Israeli restrictions," Ammar Aker, CEO of the Palestine Telecommunications Group (Paltel) that operates Jawwal, said in an interview with Reuters in his Ramallah office.

The 3G is mobile phone technology that allows users to make calls and texts and gain high-speed access to the Internet. The 2G, the network in operation in Gaza, allows calls and limited data transmission. Aker said some \$40 million was invested in building a 3G infrastructure for the West Bank that includes 1,000 new cell towers. Jawwal says it has three million customers in Gaza and the West Bank, and Wataniya says it has 800,000.

Israel, where 3G networks went into service in 2004, withheld frequencies for the Palestinians for nearly 12 years. In November 2015, it agreed to allow 3G in the West Bank alone and not in Gaza, an enclave dominated by the Hamas Islamist group that advocates Israel's destruction.—Reuters



DAVOS: Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos (L) attends a session of the annual World Economic Forum (WEF) yesterday in Davos. — AFP

## For Rent

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Good location for living space close to the sea, 1 km from 22 schools

<b>Duplex &amp; Triplex Villas</b>	3/4 Bedrooms + 3/4 Bathrooms +Big Salon + Separate pool All Master Bathrooms is Marble
Volleyball Court / Basketball Court / Hotel Lobby Pools + Jacuzzi / Billiard / 213 Car Parking Areas	

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## Business

# Merkel and Macron take Davos spotlight ahead of Trump show

## 'America First' show rolls into town tomorrow

**DAVOS, Switzerland:** European leaders take the stage at the Davos summit yesterday, jostling to position themselves as a counterweight to US President Donald Trump before his "America First" show rolls into town.

French President Emmanuel Macron arrives in the Swiss ski resort fresh from rallying big business bosses on Monday in his drive for a "renaissance" in French and world business.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel, on the other hand, needs to settle her own leadership problems before leading the resistance to Trump, who appears tomorrow. Merkel was late in confirming that she would attend, tearing herself away from efforts to form a new government back home after an election setback in September.

"Merkel doesn't have a government yet. Macron is the new deal," one prominent business delegate at Davos, PR company boss Richard Edelman, told AFP. For German economic daily Handelsblatt, Merkel is heading to Davos with her hands "tied". It said she will be obliged to "stay in the shadow of Macron and Trump". Macron is riding high, having managed to push through sensitive labor and tax reforms in France.

"The time when Merkel could assume that Europe could soldier on under her leadership, but under a very weak leadership in France, is over," Judy Dempsey of Carnegie Europe, a think tank, wrote in a blog post. "Emmanuel Macron has radically changed the dynamics, the pace, and the ambition of the European Union."



## Canada hails Asia-Pacific trade deal

From Versailles to Davos  
At his pre-Davos gathering at the Versailles palace on Monday, the 40-year-old centrist Macron bathed in the attentions of bosses from companies such as Facebook and Google, who announced major investments in France. "He's the hope. He's a guy who has built his own party... He has an ambitious reform package," said Edelman.

The Europeans will grab the spotlight at Davos after India and Canada rallied Tuesday against Trump's protectionist stance. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi gave the main opening address, defending free trade. Canadian premier Justin Trudeau weighed in later on Tuesday, celebrating the announcement of a new Asia-Pacific trade agreement between 11 countries to replace one that Trump pulled out of last year.

Several other European leaders are also speaking yesterday, at the start of a potentially turbulent year for the continent. Italy's Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni will give an address, less than two months ahead of general elections in his country.

Greece's left-wing Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras, whose country is looking to emerge from its international bailout program, joins a panel discussion on "Stabilizing the Mediterranean". And there will be a talk by King Felipe VI of Spain, which is grappling with a political crisis over independence demands in the Catalonia region. Delegates will have to wait until today to hear from British Prime Minister Theresa May, who is struggling with questions over the future of Britain's trade relations as it prepares to leave the European Union. But British International Trade



DAVOS: German chancellor Angela Merkel (L) waves next to Founder and Executive Chairman of the World Economic Forum (WEF) Klaus Schwab after addressing the annual World Economic Forum (WEF) yesterday in Davos, eastern Switzerland. —AFP

Secretary Liam Fox said he was undeterred by Macron's charm offensive, and said the Davos meetings were the perfect opportunity to press London's case. "There is a

strong willingness to do business with the UK, but then who doesn't want to get access to the world's fifth biggest economy?" Fox told AFP in an interview. —AFP

## Dollar slides on US Mnuchin remarks, booming Europe

**LONDON:** The US dollar hit new lows yesterday after US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said he welcomed its weakness and figures showed that the euro zone economy started the year at its strongest pace in over a decade. Fear of protectionism from the US economy, the world's largest, had already pushed the greenback to a three-year low, but Mnuchin's remark at the annual Davos summit of business and political leaders pushed it down further.

It was down half a percent against a basket of currencies in European trade. Meanwhile eurozone businesses enjoyed a much better start to 2018 than anyone polled by Reuters expected, ramping up activity at the fastest rate since the middle of 2006, a survey showed yesterday.

The euro touched a three-year high of \$1.2356, the dollar fell below 110.00 yen for the first time since September and hit new three-year lows on a trade-weighted basis, while sterling was at its highest level against the greenback since the Brexit referendum vote in June 2016. US President Donald Trump is due to speak Friday at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, and investors are concerned he will use the speech to signal a more protectionist policy stance.

"It looks as if US politics are indeed affecting the currency market, especially as they start to affect trade policy," said Marshall Gittler, chief strategist at ACLS Global, pointing to recently-introduced import tariffs as an example.

Trump slapped steep tariffs on imported washing machines and solar panels on Monday, giving a boost to Whirlpool Corp and dealing a setback to the renewable energy industry in the first of several potential trade restrictions. Fresh signs of growth elsewhere in the developed world provided compelling alternatives for investors worried about the greenback. Japan's exports to China and Asia hit record levels as shipments rose for a 13th straight month in December and manufacturing growth hit a four-year high in January, pointing to an economy that powered through the fourth quarter and into 2018.

The euro surge, meanwhile, comes ahead of Thursday's European Central Bank meeting, which is in focus following recent commentary that the central bank could change its policy guidance early this year. This after the eurozone's economy outpaced that of the U.S. in 2017 and shows further signs of strength in the New Year.

In a strong sign of the positive sentiment towards the region, Spain generated over 40 billion euros of demand in a sale of 10-year government bonds on Tuesday in what is likely one of the largest order books in Europe ever. Most low-rated "peripheral" euro zone government bond yields are now trading at their lowest level against benchmark German peers for months and in some cases years; another sign of confidence in the region. Most emerging market currencies climbed on Wednesday, with the yuan and South Africa's rand both touching a more than two-year high as the dollar extended its weakest run since 2010-11.

### Stocks divided

MSCI's world equity index, which tracks shares in 47 countries, hit new highs in a continuation of a long running theme but yesterday it was a bit more of a mixed picture. Wall Street scaled new heights overnight on the back of US President Donald Trump's tax cuts, which will see J.P. Morgan implement a \$20 billion investment plan. Stock futures pointed to another higher open yesterday, up 0.18 percent in European trade.

But MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan .MIAPJ0000PUS eased 0.2 percent, having jumped 1.2 percent on Tuesday to an all-time peak. European shares were also mixed, with a decline in utility stocks and tumbling tech stocks on fresh Apple worries weighing although a strong update from Novartis NOVNS provided support. The British pound also powered above \$1.41, its highest since the vote to leave the European Union in June 2016, aided by the weak dollar and optimism around Britain's chances of securing a favourable Brexit deal. The dollar's decline has been a boon to commodities priced in the currency, with gold edging up to \$1,341.81 an ounce.

Oil prices were somewhat more subdued after jumping more than 1 percent on Tuesday when Brent crude hit \$70 a barrel for the first time in a week. Brent futures was down 7 cents at \$69.89, still not far off the three-year high of \$70.37 reached on Jan. 15, while US crude was higher 20 cents to \$64.67 a barrel.

### Kuwait stocks mixed

Meanwhile, Boursa Kuwait, Kuwait's stock exchange, yesterday ended trading on mixed boards. The Price Index went by 5.95 points to 6,636 points, while the Weighted and KXS 15 indexes fell by 0.89 points and 2.4 points respectively. As many as 95.8 million shares worth KD 10.6 million (USD 35.3 million) were traded in 3,564 transactions. —Agencies

## Europe watches as German unions battle for more pay

**BERLIN:** Emboldened by an economy running at full steam, workers in other sectors of the German economy are following the call of the metalworkers' union for higher pay—and Germany's trading partners are rooting from the sidelines. Leading the fight is the powerful IG Metall union, which represents about 3.9 million workers in the nation's crucial metal and electrical engineering industries.

It is seeking a six-percent wage hike and the right for staff to switch from a 35- to a 28-hour week for two years—with limited salary loss in some cases.

After mobilizing more than 600,000 workers in a series of short "warning strikes" this month—including at Volkswagen, BMW, Bosch and Siemens—union leaders return to the negotiating table yesterday for a decisive round of talks with company bosses.

If no progress is made, IG Metall has threatened 24-hour walkouts and raised the prospect of staging its first open-ended strike since 2003. "We are prepared for anything," IG Metall boss Joerg Hofmann said last week. With tensions rising, the battle is being closely watched at home and abroad.

### Leading the way

The biggest hurdle in the talks is IG Metall's insistence that employers top up the salaries of some of the workers who choose to reduce their hours, such as low-earning shift workers or those caring for children or ailing relatives.

Employers have slammed the demands as too costly and even discriminatory to staff already working part-time without additional compensation. They have so far only offered a two-percent wage increase. But the union, which was instrumental in pushing through a 35-hour week in the 1990s, says it is fighting for a better work-life balance and insists German companies can afford it at a time when order books are full and unemployment is at a record low. The influential IG Metall has already inspired other unions to flex their muscles too. The DBB public service union said it will ask for "a significant" salary hike in next month's negotiations with the government, and wants the work week low-



KIEL: Metal workers hold up a banner claiming the right to temporarily switch to a 28-hour work week as they demonstrate yesterday in Kiel, northern Germany. —AFP

ered from 41 to 39 hours for nearly a million civil servants. "We held back in the previous wage negotiations. That won't be the case this time," DBB head Ulrich Silberbach told the business weekly Wirtschaftswoche. The union will unveil its demands on February 7. Last year, it sought a five-percent wage increase. Germany's largest services sector union Verdi is meanwhile calling for a six-percent salary boost for 130,000 Deutsche Post workers or the option to trade some of the cash for more time off.

The "period of wage moderation" that has played a key role in German competitiveness has "ended", the country's "wise men" council of economic experts said in its latest report, a trend that has accelerated in the past two years as the economy picked up speed.

### Powering inflation

The fight for bigger pay slips in Europe's powerhouse economy is welcome news for the European Central Bank which sees higher wages as key to driving up stubbornly low inflation. Despite a robust economic recovery, eurozone inflation remains far

off the bank's goal of just under 2.0 percent, discouraging it from ending crisis-era stimulus measures. The unions' demands are also likely to be cheered by critics of Germany's huge current account and budget surpluses, who believe giving Germans more spending power will drive up consumption and spur demand for imports—indirectly benefiting other countries. "Faster wage growth in Germany—where the economy is operating above capacity—would also help Germany's European peers because it would help lift euro area inflation," Christine Lagarde, head of the International Monetary Fund, wrote in a recent blog post.

The German government has largely kept mum on the salary debate as Chancellor Angela Merkel's conservatives and the center-left Social Democrats remain locked in tortuous talks on forming another coalition government. But Berlin will have to show its hand soon. On February 26, Interior Minister Thomas De Maiziere will open the negotiations with the DBB civil servants' union and face down their demands for more pay—at a time when Berlin's state coffers are fuller than ever. —FP

## China's economic mastermind pledges more reform at Davos

**DAVOS:** The man behind China's economic policy took the stage at Davos yesterday, pledging to push forward the country's four-decade reform and further open the country to the world.

Liu He, President Xi Jinping's main economic advisor, echoed his boss's lofty pro-globalization words from last year's Davos summit, promising foreign companies greater access to China's financial services market, manufacturing and some service industries.

He promised to carry out China's financial services liberalization, which was unveiled late last year.

Banking, securities and insurance industries will allow more foreign access, he said, adding that these measures would be implemented one at a time. China will work to increase imports, do better at protecting intellectual property and "gradually lower the imported automobile tariff rate", he said.

Noting this year was the 40th anniversary of China's reform and opening policy that brought about the country's economic miracle, he said "we will continue to press our reform and opening policy in China". Those market reforms were "behind China's growth", he said.

Added to the Communist Party's 25-member



DAVOS: (From L) Italian Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni, Financial Times Deputy Editor Roula Khalaf, Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras and Organization for Migration (IOM) Director-General William Lacy Swing listen a refugee telling his story during a session on mass migration across the Mediterranean during the annual World Economic Forum (WEF) yesterday in Davos. —AFP

politburo in October, Liu holds substantial clout in China and analysts forecast the 65-year-old will take on greater responsibilities in China's government this year. Liu began his speech to the forum of global elite leaders with a rundown of Xi's three-and-a-half-hour address to the 19th Party Congress delivered

last October, telling the crowd the address was the place to start for insight into China's policy priorities.

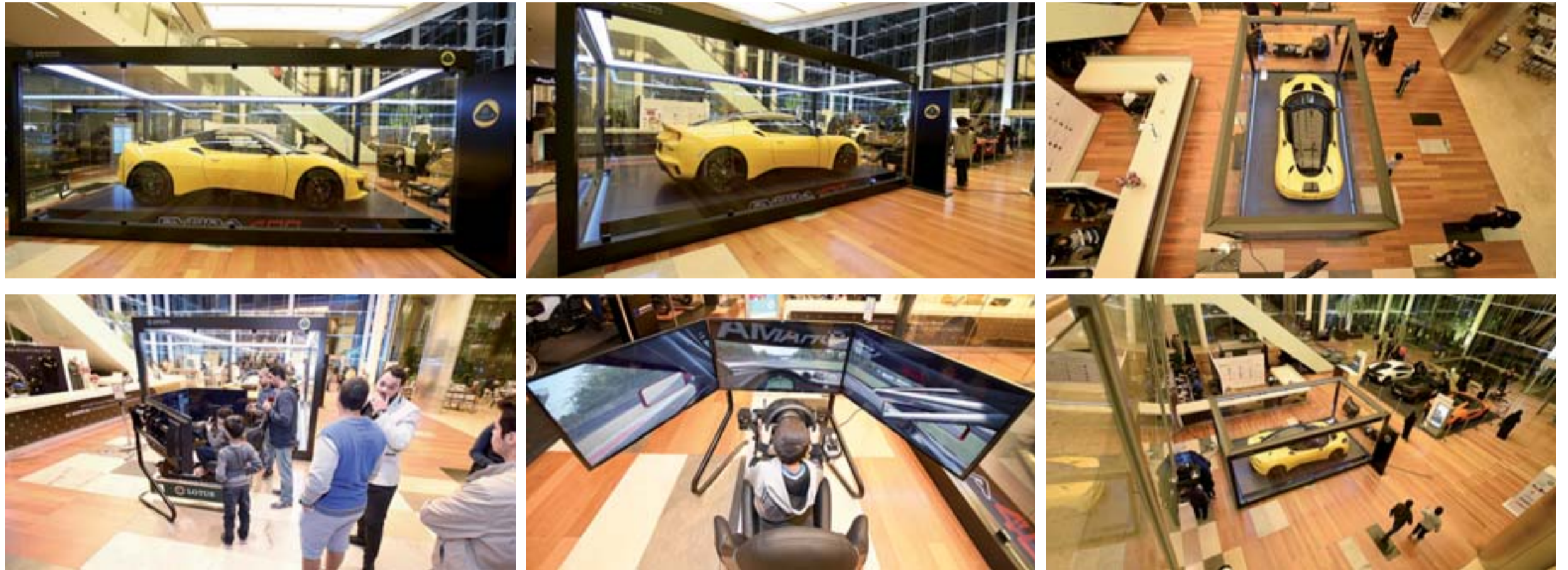
He reiterated China will focus on three battles in coming years: resolving risks, reducing poverty and controlling pollution. China will make our "skies blue again", he vowed. —AFP



Business

# Alghanim Lotus takes its iconic Evora 400 to Kuwait Motor Show

Top-of-the-range sports car redefines driving, speed and advanced engineering



**KUWAIT:** Always engaging with luxury sports car enthusiasts, providing them with unique experiences, Alghanim Lotus displayed its fastest yet and most recently revealed sports car, the 2018 Evora 400, at the Kuwait Motor Show held at 360 Mall, impressing visitors with exclusive offerings on the top-of-the-range sports car, which has redefined driving, speed and pure advanced engineering.

During the show, Alghanim Lotus launched three exclusive offers: enabling car enthusiasts to enjoy a driving experience in a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to own of the limited number of Lotus Evora 400 hand-built this year. Offers included financing solutions for 6 and 12 months, lease to own contract for 12 to 24 months, as well as free warranty and full-coverage insurance and registration.

In a unique display worthy of the advanced engineering of Lotus cars, visitors and sports car enthusiasts experienced the fastest and most luxurious car in the world in a virtual reality (VR) simulation during the display.



**Free warranty, full-coverage insurance and registration**

Over two thirds of the Lotus Evora 400 is new, including its supercharged and charge-cooled mid-mounted 3.5-liter V6 engine that produces a horsepower of 400 and 410 Nm of torque. A new aluminum chassis incorporates a new interior, and the lightweight composite body has changed significantly both in the front and rear of the miracle car.

The new Evora is 22 kilograms lighter, an accomplishment that has been achieved through careful and clever design and attention to details. This weight reduction is even more impressive considering that the supercar has more power and a higher standard specification than before.

Alghanim Motors, the mother company of Alghanim Lotus, is dedicated to providing customers with superior products, outstanding services and features that continue to position the company as a leader in the automotive market.

Experience the purity of speed and unique experience of the 2018 model of Lotus Evora 400 by visiting Arraya Mall in Sharq, Kuwait City, before the end of the month to take advantage of an unprecedented sportscar engineering experience and exclusive offers.

Car enthusiasts can also be the first to know what is new by following Alghanim Motors on Instagram at @AlghanimLotusKW. Car enthusiasts can experience the purity of speed and unique engineering of Lotus cars at the Alghanim Lotus showroom located in Shuwaikh Industrial, Block 1, Street 7 next to Xerox and Kromozone on Saturday to Thursday starting from 9 am to 12:30 pm and from 4:30 pm to 8:30 pm.



## Turkish Airlines announces its '2018 targets'

**DUBAI:** After completing 2017 successfully, Turkish Airlines has now set its targets for 2018, the year in which the carrier will move its hub to the 3rd Airport of Istanbul. According to the non-consolidated 2018 budget that was approved by the Board of Directors under the presidency of M Ilker Ayci, Chairman of the Board and the Executive Committee of Turkish Airlines, the guidance regarding the Incorporation's targets and expectations for the year 2018 are as follows:

### Traffic Development

- Total number of passengers carried is targeted to reach 74 million including 33 million on domestic

routes, 41 million on international routes.

- While passenger load factor is expected to be in the band of 79% and 80%, total Available Seat Kilometers (ASK) will approximately reach to 183 billion with an increase of between 5% and 6% compared to 2017. Capacity (ASK) increase is expected to be 10% in Turkey, 9% in Middle East, 6% in Europe, 6% in Far East, 4% in America and 3% in Africa regions.

- In 2018, cargo/mail carried is expected to increase by 21% reaching 1.3 million tonnes.

### Financial Development (Unconsolidated)

- In 2018, jet fuel consumption is expected to increase by 9 percent compared to 2017.

- Average jet fuel (including fuel hedge) is expected to be 633\$/ton in 2018.

- The Incorporation is targeting to generate \$11.8 billion of sales revenue.

- Cost per available seat kilometer (CASK), excluding fuel is expected to increase by between 3



percent-5 percent.

- Unconsolidated EBITDAR margin is targeted to be between 21 percent and 22 percent, whereas consolidated EBITDAR margin is targeted to be in the band of 23 percent and 24 percent.

## Renault Koleos takes center-stage at The Avenues Mall for three days only!

**KUWAIT:** Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al-Babtain Co, the authorized agent of Renault in the State of Kuwait will be displaying the powerful and refined SUV model - Renault Koleos at the Avenues mall starting today until January 27. Renault Al-Babtain invites everyone to come and visit the team and additionally benefit from the numerous special offers in store.

The charismatic SUV is finely tuned with the Middle Eastern requirements backed by a local product range. The vehicle was specifically designed after having undergone extensive road testing in real-world conditions over several million kilometers during its course of development. In keeping with Renault's design strategy, the Koleos exterior holds a taste for



adventure all that is expected of a D-segment SUV.

It's robust and muscular features amplifies the athletic exterior design with door protective moldings, large diameter two-tone alloy wheels, alloy roof rails, shark antenna, fender chrome lines and silver front skid. The four wheel drive technology, all-terrain ability, engine and transmission line-up has been tailored to meet the needs and expectations of the Kuwaiti market. The 2.5-litre petrol engine is also an atmospheric, four-cylinder, power is 170hp (126kW) at 6,000rpm, with peak torque of 233Nm at 4,000rpm. Ensuring equal appeal internally, it is embedded



with comfortable seats including technology and design amongst the very best in its category, class-leading cabin space, including 289mm of rear knee room, 8.7" touchscreen tablet with R-LINK 2 multimedia & navigation system. Koleos drivers can indulge in the Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS) such as Easy Park Assist and Blind Spot Warning.

Renault Al-Babtain encourages Renault fans to stop by at Dome 3, next to Sephora in the Avenues mall to review the dynamic model for themselves and enjoy the new offers that come with it.

## Six days remaining to enter Al-Danah's first quarterly draw

**KUWAIT:** Gulf Bank has announced that 31 January 2018 is the last date for customers to open an Al-Danah account or deposit more to increase their chances of winning Al-Danah's first quarterly draw for the prize of KD 200,000. Until the end of March, Gulf Bank's Al-Danah eligible customers will continue to have a chance to win in the daily draws in which two winners will be receiving KD 1000 every working day. However, from April onwards, Al-Danah's draw lineup will be replaced with weekly draws, in which there will be five selected winners of KD 1,000 each, every week. This year's first Al-Danah much-coveted quarterly draw offering a prize of KD 200,000 will be held on 28 March 2018. Anyone interested in entering this exciting draw is encouraged to open an Al-Danah account before January 31st as to have a chance in winning the large prize. In January 2019, the award value will be replaced with KD 150,000.

Gulf Bank's Al-Danah second quarterly draw 2018 for the prize of KD 250,000 will be held on 27 June 2018 and the third quarterly draw for the prize of KD 500,000 on 26 September 2018. The final Al-Danah draw for KD 1 million - the Guinness World Record acclaimed largest prize linked to a bank account in the world - will be held on 10 January 2019, when the Al-Danah millionaire will be announced. Gulf Bank encourages existing customers to increase their chances by depositing more money into their Al-Danah account. This can be done immediately from any local bank, using the new 'e-Pay' (self-pay) service, which is available on Gulf Bank's Online and Mobile Banking. Al-Danah also offers a number of unique services including: the Al-Danah Deposit Only ATM card which helps account holders deposit their money at their convenience; as well as the Al-Danah calculator to help customers calculate their chances of becoming an Al-Danah winner.

Gulf Bank's Al-Danah account is open to Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti residents of Kuwait. Customers require a minimum of KD 200 to open an account and the same amount must be maintained as for customers to be eligible for the upcoming Al-Danah draws. If the customer's account balance falls below KD 200 at any given time, a KD 2 charge will be made on a monthly basis to the account until the minimum balance is met. Customers who open an account and/or deposit more will enter the daily draw within two days.



## Technology

# Two US spacewalkers replace latching end of robotic arm

## The arm is used to grasp incoming cargo ships

**MIAMI:** Two US astronauts floated outside the International Space Station on Tuesday for a seven-hour, 24-minute spacewalk to repair the orbiting outpost's aging robotic arm, NASA said. During what NASA commentator Rob Navias described as a "textbook" spacewalk, NASA flight engineers Mark Vande Hei and Scott Tingle replaced a faulty latching end on the 57-foot Canadian-made robotic arm, called Canadarm2.

The arm is used to grasp incoming cargo ships and to move items around outside the space lab. The station's robotic arm "has experienced some degradation of its snaring cables," NASA said in a statement. The arm has been a key piece of equipment at the orbiting outpost for 17 years, but in August it lost its ability to grip effectively.

In October 2017, NASA astronauts completed three spacewalks to repair the robotic arm and replace cameras necessary to get a good view of the approaching cargo ships. Tuesday's outing was the first career spacewalk for Tingle, and the third for Vande Hei. It was the 206th in support of space station assembly and maintenance.

Another spacewalk is planned for January 29, including Vande Hei and flight engineer Norishige Kanae of the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency

(JAXA), to make more repairs outside the space station.

### Rocket Lab successful launch

In other news, aerospace company Rocket Lab said Sunday it had successfully fired a rocket into orbit for the first time from its New Zealand launch base. "Electron is orbital. Successful payload deployment," the company tweeted. The Electron rocket, named "Still Testing", took off from Mahia, on the east coast of the North Island, at 2:45pm (0145 GMT) on Sunday and reached orbit eight minutes later.

The 17-metre-long carbon-fiber rocket is carrying three satellites into space-one to take images of Earth for United States company Planet Labs, and two to capture weather and ship tracking data for Spire Global. "Speechless. Just like that, @rocketlab reaches orbit and sets a new bar for launch by reaching orbit on just their 2nd test," satellite-powered data company Spire tweeted. Rocket Lab conducted its first launch last May when the firm put a rocket into space, but it did not reach orbit.

Although New Zealand-founded, Rocket Lab lists itself as an American company with headquarters at a wholly-owned New Zealand subsidiary. Backers include US companies Khosla Ventures, Bessemer Venture Partners, Lockheed Martin, Promus Ventures and Data



This NASA TV video grab image shows NASA astronauts Mark Vande Hei(L) and Scott Tingle as they step out on a spacewalk to repair the robotic arm at the International Space Station. —AFP

Collective. The company says its mission is to provide "frequent launch opportunities to low Earth orbit" with a range of rocket systems and technologies "for fast and

affordable payload deployment". Rocket Lab launch services with Electron are reported to cost US\$4.9 million per flight. —Agencies

“ Degradation of its snaring cables ”

”

## Mosquito drones could give extra bite to Zika fight

**TEPIC, Mexico:** Spraying thousands of chilled, sterile mosquitoes from specially adapted drones could prove a cost-effective way to slash numbers of the insects and curb the spread of Zika and other mosquito-borne diseases, say the backers of the technology. WeRobotics, a non-profit trialling the method, plans to start mosquito-release tests shortly in Latin America.

It has recently piloted ways to transport medicines and medical samples in Peru's Amazon region and the Dominican Republic using the unmanned aerial vehicles. But this time the cargo will be sensitive insects that must survive the process. "It makes no sense to release mosquitoes that are 90 percent dead or damaged - we need to make sure the quality of the mosquito is very high so they can compete for females," said drone maker Adam Klaptocz, co-founder of WeRobotics, which is based in Switzerland and the United States. "The ultimate goal is to integrate drones into future vector control campaigns," he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

### Aerial dissemination

Mosquito-control programs using sterile insects often rely on trucks to disperse the bugs, or people releasing them from backpacks. Both of these are time-consuming methods unsuited to hard-to-reach places. With aerial dissemination, the sterilized insects must be cooled down before they are packed into the container of the drone which would then expel them at altitude, said Klaptocz.

In the trial, the mosquitoes will be marked, trapped and inspected to see how they fare and how far they are dispersed, he said. The drones cost around \$5,000 each. If successfully released, the sterile male *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes would compete with wild insects to breed with females, eventually suppressing numbers and helping stop the spread of diseases including Zika, Klaptocz explained.

Pregnant women infected with Zika risk having babies with the birth defect microcephaly, which is defined by an unusually small head and can result in developmental problems and other severe brain abnormalities. The Zika epidemic that hit Brazil in 2015 affected thousands of babies. Usually found in urban and semi-urban areas, the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito also transmits dengue, chikungunya and yellow fever. Two or three drones could control mosquitoes across an entire city, replacing a few hundred trucks and the staff needed to run the operation, Klaptocz said. "It's beneficial to a larger population if you have this (drone) technology," he said. WeRobotics, which is working with the US development agency USAID and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), is awaiting final approval for its upcoming drone test, before announcing where it will be held, he added.

### Blitzing an area

Besides legal permission, a local laboratory is needed to sterilize the insects using radiation. Obtaining community "buy in" is also key, by explaining the method to local leaders and health authorities, said Klaptocz. "You never go in, fly drones, drop mosquitoes and ask questions later," he said. "It's not about technology, it's not about drones; it's about people getting less sick - and that's very understood by communities." Repeatedly blitzing an area with sterile mosquitoes could help suppress populations within months, said experts.

When sterile males are introduced, "they're like little heat-seeking missiles, looking for females that will then induce a population crash," said Conor McMeniman, assistant professor at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, who is not involved in the project. Releasing sterile insects has previously helped suppress pests including fruit and tsetse flies, said the IAEA, which is also working with the UN Food and Agriculture Organization to reduce malaria with sterile *Anopheles* mosquitoes. But the drone method would need to be combined with other controls such as fumigation and stagnant water removal, as the *Aedes aegypti* can lay its eggs in any sources of standing water, from used car tyres to rubbish and even soda-bottle caps, said McMeniman. —Reuters

## Rupert Murdoch says Facebook should pay for 'trusted' news

**WASHINGTON:** Media tycoon Rupert Murdoch said Monday that large online platforms like Facebook should pay "trusted" news organizations as part of efforts to improve credibility and stem misinformation. In a statement issued by his News Corp, the publishing unit which includes newspapers in the United States, Britain and Australia, Murdoch offered up his idea as a way to boost trust in online news and support journalism, using the "carriage fee" model in the cable TV industry.

"Facebook and Google have popularized scurrilous news sources through algorithms that are profitable for these platforms but inherently unreliable," Murdoch said. "There has been much discussion about subscription models but I have yet to see a proposal that truly recognizes the investment in and the social value of professional journalism." Murdoch's comments come days after Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg unveiled plans for the leading social network to enlist its user base to rank the quality of news sources as part of an effort to curb the spread of false news.

Murdoch said: "We will closely follow the latest shift in Facebook's strategy, and I have no doubt that Mark Zuckerberg is a sincere person, but there is still a serious lack of transparency that should concern publishers and those wary of political bias at these powerful platforms." The 86-year-old media baron, who is executive chairman of News Corp, as well as the media-entertainment group 21st Century Fox, added that "the time has come to consider a different route."

"If Facebook wants to recognize 'trusted' publishers

## Apple says delayed HomePod speaker is ready for release

**SAN FRANCISCO:** Apple said Tuesday its HomePod speaker, the digital assistant device challenging rivals from Amazon and Google, was now ready after a delay of several months. HomePod, which missed the key holiday shopping season in the fast-growing market for connected speakers, will be available for pre-order tomorrow and in stores February 9 in the US, Britain and Australia. A statement said it would hit markets in France and Germany "this spring."

Apple is arriving late to a market dominated by Amazon's Alexa-powered devices and to a lesser degree Google Home, which includes voice-activat-

ed devices that can answer questions and be a smart home hub.

The iPhone maker however is seeking to position HomePod, powered by its Siri digital assistant, as a high-end device designed for music as well as other services. It starts at \$349, making it more expensive than most competing speakers. "HomePod is a magical new music experience from Apple," said Philip Schiller, Apple's senior vice president of marketing. "It brings advanced audio technologies like beam-forming tweeters, a high-excursion woofer and automatic spatial awareness, together with the entire Apple Music catalog and the latest Siri intelligence, in a simple, beautiful design that is so much fun to use."

While Amazon and Google have released no specific sales figures, private surveys indicate Amazon has grabbed the lion's share of the market with Google a distant second. The market is also seeing new devices powered by Microsoft's digital assistant Cortana and Samsung is set to launch devices with its Bixby assistant. —AFP



SAN JOSE: This file photo taken on June 5, 2017 shows Apple's Senior Vice President of Worldwide Marketing Phil Schiller speaking during the opening keynote address at the 2017 Apple Worldwide Developer Conference (WWDC) at the San Jose Convention Center. —AFP



MENLO PARK: This file photo taken on November 4, 2016 shows the Facebook sign and logo. —AFP

then it should pay those publishers a carriage fee similar to the model adopted by cable companies," he said.

"The publishers are obviously enhancing the value and integrity of Facebook through their news and content but are not being adequately rewarded for those services. Carriage payments would have a minor impact on Facebook's profits but a major impact on the prospects

for publishers and journalists." The remarks also come with most traditional news organizations struggling as readers shift to online news sources, and as digital ad revenues are increasingly going to Facebook and Google because of their dominance in the online ecosystem. Facebook and Google did not immediately respond to requests for comment. —AFP

## US State Department creates Cuba Internet Task Force

**HAVANA:** The US State Department said on Tuesday that it had created a Cuba Internet Task Force to promote "the free and unregulated flow of information" on the Communist-run island, an action denounced by Cuban state media as subversive. "The task force will examine the technological challenges and opportunities for expanding internet access and independent media in Cuba," the agency said in a statement. It said the task force of US government and non-governmental representatives would meet for the first time on Feb 7. Cuban Communist Party newspaper Granma said it was "destined to subvert Cuba's internal order."

"In the past, Washington has used phrases like 'working for freedom of expression' and 'expanding access to internet in Cuba' to cover up destabilizing plans," Granma wrote, adding that some 40 percent of Cubans connected to the internet in 2017, 37 percent more than in 2010. Some analysts said the creation of the task force seemed counterproductive.

"By casting the issue of internet access in an explicitly political frame, it will only create greater obstacles for those US telecom companies that have made inroads toward partnerships with the Cuban side," said Michael Bustamante, an assistant professor of Latin American history at Florida International University. "Measures like these strengthen the hand of those in Cuba for whom the prospect (and reality) of external meddling justifies maximum caution with respect to internal reform."

Cuba has created public Wi-Fi hotspots and hooked up more homes to the internet, but most Cubans cannot get access on cellphones and only a tiny share of homes has broadband access. The \$1.50 hourly tariff for using a Wi-Fi hotspot in Cuba represents 5 percent of the average monthly state salary of \$30. Havana has said it has been slow to develop network infrastructure because of high costs, attributed partly to the US trade embargo. Critics have said the government fears losing control.

Former US President Barack Obama made improved internet access a central part of his efforts to normalize relations with Cuba. Telecommunications equipment and services were among the first exemptions to the embargo after Washington and Havana said in 2014 that they would restore diplomatic relations. Google signed an agreement with Cuba in 2016 granting internet users there quicker access to its branded content. Cuba has balked at allowing US companies to participate in wiring the country. —Reuters



Health

# Vaping, e-cigs under threat in tobacco-loving Indonesia

## Key growth market for global tobacco firms

JAKARTA: Chain-smoking Indonesia is moving to stub out its booming e-cigarette sector, sparking criticism that the government is siding with giant tobacco firms at the expense of public health. The Southeast Asian nation has one of the world's highest smoking rates—some 65 percent of adult men smoke—with a pack costing just \$2.

Cigarette advertising is everywhere across the vast archipelago which once had the dubious distinction of being home to one of the world's youngest nicotine addicts—a chain-smoking toddler who made global headlines in 2010. Smoking cessation products are tough to find and Indonesia stands out as a key growth market for global tobacco firms increasingly shut out of countries with tough anti-smoking legislation.

Despite its tobacco-haven status, e-cigarette cafes have been popping up across Indonesia in recent years amid debate over their safety. In response, Jakarta said it will impose a whopping 57 percent tax on non-tobacco alternatives starting this summer. Hasbullah Thabrany, health expert and advisor for the National Commission on Tobacco Control, warned that while customs and excise law required the government to set taxes for such products, it was possible that authorities were using the levy to take sides. He added: 'I do believe that the policy sides with

the [tobacco] industry.' Rhomedal Aquino, spokesman for the Association of Indonesian Personal Vaporizers, told AFP: 'We agree with a tax plan to control consumption, but a 57 percent duty is too high—it will kill a growing industry.' 'It will make us look like a killing machine when we're not,' he added.

### Relapse risk

E-cigarettes, which have gained popularity in the last decade, are handheld devices that heat up a nicotine-containing liquid so users can inhale the vapors. The early scientific consensus is that they are likely safer than conventional cigarettes for adults. Indonesia's trade minister Enggartiasno Lukita set off a backlash from anti-smoking groups in November when he suggested tobacco farmers would be hurt by the fledgling industry, and that those turning to e-cigarettes—also known as vaping—should smoke regular cigarettes instead. 'We should turn vapers into conventional cigarette smokers,' he said at the time.

The government's plans are not welcome news for IT worker Roy Iskandar, a heavy smoker-turned-vaper who is worried about looming price hikes. Iskandar turned to non-tobacco alternatives after numerous failed quitting attempts. 'If they impose such high taxes, people who feel healthier after quitting conven-

tional cigarettes like me could relapse,' the 38-year-old said. Indonesia's customs office said it hopes the big tax hike will make e-cigarettes unaffordable for children, while the health ministry said it is not sold on the argument that vaping is safe.

'E-cigarettes are just as dangerous and can be even more carcinogenic' than regular cigarettes, said senior ministry official Muhammad Subuh. 'We reject both conventional and electronic cigarettes—it's better to quit smoking altogether. There is no such thing as 'less dangerous' when it comes to smoking.'

### 'Still addictive'

Jakarta disputes claims the new policy puts economics ahead of public health. But tobacco is big business, contributing some \$10.5 billion in taxes annually, while the vaping industry kicks in just \$7.5 million, mostly through sales taxes. Local brand Gudang Garam, which makes ubiquitous clove-infused cigarettes, is one of the country's biggest employers and the two brothers who own rival Djarum top the list of wealthiest Indonesians.

'This is not about siding with one business,' Deni Sirjantoro, spokesman for the Indonesian Customs and Excise office, told AFP. 'State income from the vaping sector is not as big as tobacco duties.' Cigarette duties vary with a top



JAKARTA: This photograph taken on January 9, 2018 shows an e-cigarette cafe employee (L) vaping with customers. — AFP

rate of 54 percent. But activists says some of the most popular brands are taxed at rates around 35-40 percent—far less than the proposed 57 percent vaping duty. 'The tax on conventional cigarettes is not even that high,' said Ety Riqly, a manager at a vaping cafe in Jakarta. Public

health experts say cigarettes should be slapped with higher taxes, but they don't necessarily endorse switching to non-tobacco products. Some worry that their 'safer' image will create a new generation of nicotine addicts and act as a gateway to traditional smoking. — AFP

## Drug companies need to tackle 'superbug' crisis

LONDON: Drugmakers' response to the threat posed by 'superbugs' remains patchy even after years of warnings, according to the first analysis of individual companies' efforts to tackle the antibiotic resistance crisis. The rise of drug-resistant bacteria is a growing threat to modern medicine with the emergence of infections resistant to even last-resort antibiotics — a situation made

worse in recent years by overuse of antibiotics and cutbacks in drug research.

New analysis by the non-profit Access to Medicine Foundation (AMF), published on Tuesday, found that GlaxoSmithKline and Johnson & Johnson were doing more than most among large research-based pharmaceutical companies to tackle the problem, while Mylan led the way among generic

drugmakers and Entasis was top among biotechs. But action taken by such companies is only the start of what could be done to address the problem, which former Goldman Sachs chief economist Jim O'Neill in 2014 estimated could cause 10 million deaths a year worldwide by 2050.

While a few more experimental antibiotics are now moving through development at both pharma and biotech companies, a lot more work still needs to be done to ensure appropriate use of medicines — both new ones and the thousands of tonnes of older pills churned out each year by generic companies. 'There's definitely more that all com-

panies can do,' said Jayasree Iyer, executive director of AMF, which published the analysis at the World Economic Forum annual meeting in Davos.

'We need to strengthen the research and development pipeline and when new products reach the market we need to ensure that they are used in a conservative way, so that misuse and overuse is limited.' There are now 28 experimental antibiotics in late-stage development against critical pathogens but only two of these are supported by plans to ensure they can be both made accessible and used wisely if they reach the market.

The AMF said four companies — GSK, Shionogi, Pfizer and Novartis — had taken steps to separate sales representatives' bonuses from the volume of antibiotics sold, but much more needed to be done across the industry to counter overuse. Another under-recognized problem is the pollution caused by mass production of antibiotics, due to lax oversight of wastewater run-off. In India's Hyderabad region, for example, the presence of hundreds of drug factories and inadequate water treatment has left lakes and rivers laced with antibiotics, making the area a giant Petri dish for anti-microbial resistance. — Reuters

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PAGE

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## What's On

# KIPCO volunteers deliver INJAZ entrepreneurship program



Volunteers from KIPCO - the Kuwait Projects Company (Holding) - acted as mentors in the 'Entrepreneurship Masterclass' program delivered by INJAZ Kuwait. The one-day program was delivered to 60 students from the 8th and 9th grades of the Cambridge English School. In June 2016, KIPCO signed a two-year partnership agreement with INJAZ Kuwait whereby volunteers from across the KIPCO Group would deliver INJAZ programs in the areas of entrepreneurship and work readiness to one thousand students by the end of the 2017-2018 academic year. INJAZ Kuwait is an NGO that aims to drive community service through professional volunteering engagement with youth.

Ms Eman Al Awadhi, KIPCO's Group Communications Director said: "Through our partnership with INJAZ Kuwait, we are encouraging our professionals across the Group to volunteer their time to work directly with students and help them better understand the career opportunities they will find after graduation. Our volunteers also serve as role models and have the chance to exchange their personal experiences working in the private sector. Our work with INJAZ Kuwait has helped us strengthen our internal culture of giving back to society, and especially supporting the young people of Kuwait."



## LOYAC Expressive Cultural Music show

Loyac Academy for performing Arts is proud to present the Expressive Cultural Music Show "between (Qaf and Kaf) in cooperation with the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters, and the French Atakafia." The show is presented within the activities of the 24th Qurain Cultural Festival at Abdelhussein Abdelredha Theater and aims at immortalizing Kuwaiti poets during the period 1800-1950. The overarching idea behind the show is to showcase Mushari Hamad and Abdelazizi Al-Mushari, who cooperated in writing the text. They are also two of academy's most talented youth. It was prepared and supervised by Fariah Al-Saqqaf and directed by Abdelnasser Al-Zayer.



Fariah Al-Saqqaf

## Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel & Spa celebrate success in Horeca Kuwait

Talented chefs and expert housekeeping teams from Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel & Spa showcased their skills in a series of competitions held at the largest annual Hospitality Show, Horeca Kuwait, winning numerous awards for their outstanding efforts.

General Manager, Savino Leone, said: "I am both thrilled and proud to welcome our Culinary Chefs and Housekeeping Teams with prestigious accomplishments. They demonstrated their skills and creativity and took the competitions to another level with their outstanding performances. This is yet another testament to the hard work of our team in positioning us as one of the top leaders in culinary excellence and hospitality. I congratulate them for their exceptional efforts that make up our dedication to extraordinary guest experiences."

For the first time, the show presented an opportunity for Housekeeping members to demonstrate their professionalism, hard work and excellence in front of a jury of highly practiced Housekeeping Executives. At the awards ceremony, the Housekeeping Department at the luxurious landmark was recognized with 2 gold, silver and bronze medals for the "perfect bed" display taking into consideration speed, tidiness and presentation.

And, for the 4th consecutive year, the skilled culinary team scooped several rewards, returning with honorable



achievements of 2 silver and a gold for the pastry team. 1 silver with 6 bronze medals were won by the culinary team competing in Kuwait's biggest culinary challenge featuring 3-plated dessert displays, Asian live cuisine, live meat and pasta preparations as well as 6-course set menus. A further 22 merit certificates were awarded to the culinary team for their gastronomic artistry. The back-to-back series of competitions were evaluated by a panel of international chefs from the Middle East and Europe. HORECA Kuwait is an annual Hospitality Show that explores the country's emerging opportunities in the hospitality and food sector that push the boundaries in quality and innovation across food & beverage, catering, pastry, technology and equipment.



## Alyasra Foods launches Jacobs and Maxwell house at Horeca Kuwait

Leading food and beverage distributor Alyasra Foods has brewed up a treat for Kuwait's coffee drinkers with the launch of global power brands Jacobs and Maxwell House, under the Jacobs Douwe Egberts umbrella, at the recent HORECA 2018, Kuwait's largest hospitality and food industry exhibition, covering hospitality, catering and food industry sectors.

Coffee consumption is a favorite pastime in Kuwait and Alyasra Foods, the largest distributor to Kuwait's FMCG, turned heads at the 17th edition of the mega food industry event HORECA held at Kuwait International Fair, with the introduction of the Jacobs coffee in Kuwait, a company that has more 125 years' experience of producing high-quality coffee. Known globally for its aroma, Jacobs coffee, which is the No.1 or No.2 ranked coffee brand in 15 markets across Europe, Asia and Africa, offers a variety of products including Espresso, Cafe Crema and more.

As for Maxwell House, founded in the US in 1892, it is a rich in taste coffee under its slogan 'Good to the Last Drop', comes in varieties such as Maxwell House Mild Blend and Maxwell House Rich Blend. Meeting evolving consumer trends for quality cover at a reasonable price, 'Maxwell House' seeks to deliver both a



great value and a great taste.

Ayman Mahmoud, Senior Director - Commercial Operations - Food service of Alyasra Foods, said: "As Kuwait's leading food and beverage supplier, we have a deep understanding of the importance of good, quality coffee to hotels, restaurants and catering establishments. Jacobs Douwe Egberts is established as a global power brand and we are pleased to bring its quality and choice to consumers in Kuwait."

Sam O'Brien, Director of Global



Business Development at JDE, said: "We are really pleased to be entering the Kuwaiti market with such strong partners, Alyasra Foods, who will offer full concept solutions to the local market. Our unique



offer of filter, espresso, instant and liquid coffee, along with quality equipment, training, branding, and technical support are key to success in Kuwait, and Alyasra have the ability to offer this concept really well". Under the partnership Alyasra Foods will supply its clients across Kuwait with the various Jacobs coffee and coffee solutions, including ingredients, machines and technical support.





TV



01:35 The Core
03:55 Resident Evil: Vendetta
05:40 Iron Man 3
07:55 Point Break
09:50 The Core
12:10 Virtual Revolution
13:50 Iron Man 3
16:05 Beyond Redemption
17:40 The Last Witch Hunter
19:35 The Avengers
22:00 Crossing Point
23:40 Beyond Valkyrie: Dawn Of The Fourth Reich



00:50 Lone Star Law
01:45 Treehouse Masters
02:40 Bad Dog
03:35 Snake Sheila
04:00 Snake Sheila
04:25 Tanked
05:15 Treehouse Masters: Buxtrolls Special
06:02 Mutant Planet
06:49 Lone Star Law
07:36 Night
08:25 Snake Sheila
09:15 Treehouse Masters
10:10 Bad Dog
11:05 Mutant Planet
12:00 Snake Sheila
12:55 Tanked
13:50 Treehouse Masters: Buxtrolls Special
14:45 Bad Dog
15:40 Mutant Planet
16:35 Lone Star Law
17:30 Treehouse Masters
18:25 Whale Wars
19:20 Whale Wars
20:15 Preposterous Pets
21:10 Snake Sheila
22:05 Whale Wars
23:55 Mutant Planet



00:00 Stella
01:00 Top Of The Lake
02:00 New Tricks
03:00 Doctors
03:30 Eastenders
04:10 Stella
05:05 New Tricks
06:00 Doctors
06:30 The Musketeers
07:30 Stella
08:20 Agatha Raisin
09:10 Doctors
09:40 Eastenders
10:15 New Tricks
11:15 The Musketeers
12:15 Stella
13:05 Agatha Raisin
14:00 Doctors
14:30 Eastenders
15:00 New Tricks
16:00 The Musketeers
17:00 Stella
18:00 Doctors
18:30 Eastenders
19:00 New Tricks
20:00 Bend Sinister
21:00 Holly City
22:00 New Tricks
23:00 Doctors
23:30 Eastenders



00:00 Leah Remini: Scientology And The Aftermath
01:00 American Murder House
02:00 Cursed
03:00 Psychic Kids: Children Of The Paranormal
04:00 Leah Remini: Scientology And The Aftermath
05:00 American Murder House
06:00 Cursed
07:00 Homicide Hunter
08:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
09:00 It Takes A Killer
10:00 The Murder Of Laci Peterson
11:00 Cold Case Files
12:00 The Eleven
13:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
14:00 It Takes A Killer
15:00 The Murder Of Laci Peterson
16:00 Cold Case Files
17:00 Homicide Hunter
18:00 It Takes A Killer
19:00 The Eleven
20:00 The Murder Of Laci Peterson
21:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
22:00 Cold Case Files
23:00 Fred Dineage: Murder Casebook



00:05 Bo Burnham: Words Words Words
00:55 Another Period
01:20 Another Period
01:45 Tosh.O
02:10 The Opposition With Jordan Klepper
02:35 Real Husbands Of Hollywood
03:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
03:25 Tosh.O
03:50 The Opposition With Jordan Klepper
04:15 Kroll Show
04:40 Key And Peele
05:05 Important Things With Demetri Martin
05:30 Impractical Jokers
05:55 Disaster Date
06:20 Ridiculousness Arabia
06:50 The Dude Perfect Show
07:15 The Dude Perfect Show
07:40 The Jm Gaffigan Show
08:05 Impractical Jokers
08:30 Disaster Date
08:55 Workaholics
09:20 Kroll Show
09:45 Key And Peele
10:10 Important Things With Demetri Martin
10:35 The Jm Gaffigan Show
11:00 Impractical Jokers
11:25 Disaster Date
11:50 Ridiculousness Arabia
12:15 Impractical Jokers
12:40 Friendszone
12:50 Friendszone
13:30 Important Things With Demetri Martin
13:55 Friends
14:20 Friends
14:45 Workaholics
15:10 Key And Peele
15:35 Kroll Show
16:00 Friendszone
16:30 Friendszone
16:55 Friends
17:20 Friends
17:45 Disaster Date
18:10 Ridiculousness Arabia
18:35 The Dude Perfect Show
19:00 The Dude Perfect Show

19:25 Impractical Jokers
19:50 Real Husbands Of Hollywood
20:12 Friends
20:35 Friends
21:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
21:30 The Opposition With Jordan Klepper
21:55 Graves
22:25 Broad City
22:50 Chappelle's Show
23:15 Real Husbands Of Hollywood
23:40 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah



00:30 Kids Do The Craziest Things
01:20 Mythbusters
02:10 The Big Brain Theory
03:00 How The Earth Works
03:50 Ultimate Survival
04:40 Tanked
05:30 How It's Made
06:20 Kids Do The Craziest Things
07:00 Ultimate Survival
07:50 How It's Made
08:40 Kids Do The Craziest Things
09:30 Tanked
10:20 How The Earth Works
11:10 NASAs Unexplained Files
12:00 Freaks Of Nature
12:50 How It's Made
13:40 Kids Do The Craziest Things
14:30 Tanked
15:20 Ultimate Survival
16:10 How The Earth Works
17:00 NASAs Unexplained Files
17:50 Freaks Of Nature
18:15 Freaks Of Nature
18:40 Kids Do The Craziest Things
19:05 Kids Do The Craziest Things
19:30 How It's Made
19:55 How It's Made
20:20 Tanked
21:10 NASAs Unexplained Files
22:00 Freaks Of Nature
22:25 Freaks Of Nature
22:50 How The Earth Works
23:40 Ultimate Survival



00:50 Deadline: Crime With Tamron Hall
01:45 I Speak For The Dead
02:40 Drew Peterson: The Wife Killer Cop?
03:35 Drew Peterson: The Wife Killer Cop?
04:30 Deadline: Crime With Tamron Hall
05:25 California Investigator
06:20 I Almost Got Away With It
07:10 Nightmare Next Door
08:00 California Investigator
08:25 On The Case With Paula Zahn
09:15 California Investigator
10:10 Nightmare Next Door
11:05 Disappeared
12:00 The Perfect Murder
12:55 On The Case With Paula Zahn
13:50 I Almost Got Away With It
14:45 Nightmare Next Door
15:40 Disappeared
16:35 Married With Secrets
17:30 True Crime With Aphrodite Jones
18:25 California Investigator
19:20 I Almost Got Away With It
20:15 Nightmare Next Door
21:10 Disappeared
22:05 Reasonable Doubt
23:00 Killer Confessions
23:55 Murder Book



00:10 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
00:35 Binny And The Ghost
01:00 Hank Zipzer
01:25 Alex & Co.
01:45 Disney Mickey Mouse
01:50 Evermoor Chronicles
02:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
02:40 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
03:05 Binny And The Ghost
03:30 Binny And The Ghost
03:55 Hank Zipzer
04:15 Disney Mickey Mouse
04:20 Hank Zipzer
04:45 Alex & Co.
05:10 Alex & Co.
05:35 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
06:00 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
06:25 Binny And The Ghost
06:45 Disney Mickey Mouse
06:50 Rolling With The Ronks
07:00 Jessie
07:25 Tangled: The Series
07:50 Tsum Tsum Shorts
07:55 Elena Of Avalor
08:20 Elena Of Avalor
08:45 Bunk'd
09:10 Stuck In The Middle
09:35 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
10:00 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
10:25 LoloRock
10:50 LoloRock
11:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
11:40 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
12:05 Hank Zipzer
12:30 Alex & Co.
12:55 Alex & Co.
13:20 LoloRock
13:45 LoloRock
14:10 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
14:35 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
15:00 The Zhuzhus
15:15 K.C. Undercover
15:40 Bunk'd
16:05 Disney Mickey Mouse
16:10 Elena Of Avalor
16:35 Bizaardvark
17:00 Tangled: The Series
17:25 Descendants Wicked World
17:30 Stuck In The Middle
17:55 K.C. Undercover
18:20 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
18:45 Hotel Transylvania: The Series
19:10 Star Wars Forces Of Destiny
19:15 Bunk'd
19:40 Girl Meets World
20:00 Disney Mickey Mouse
20:10 Liv And Maddie
20:35 Tangled: Queen For A Day
21:25 K.C. Undercover
21:50 Hotel Transylvania: The Series
22:15 Bizaardvark
22:40 Stuck In The Middle
23:05 Rolling With The Ronks
23:20 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
23:45 LoloRock



00:15 PJ Masks
01:30 Art Attack
01:55 Henry Hugglemonster
02:05 Loopedidoo
02:20 Henry Hugglemonster
02:35 Calimero
02:50 Henry Hugglemonster
03:05 Art Attack
03:30 The Hive
03:40 Loopedidoo
03:55 Henry Hugglemonster
04:10 Art Attack
04:35 Loopedidoo
04:50 Calimero
05:05 Art Attack
05:30 Henry Hugglemonster
06:00 Art Attack
06:30 Henry Hugglemonster
07:00 Loopedidoo
07:15 Calimero
07:30 PJ Masks
08:00 P-King Duckling
08:25 Jungle Junction
08:40 Special Agent Oso
09:00 Handy Manny
09:15 PJ Masks
09:30 Puppy Dog Pals
10:00 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
10:25 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
10:55 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
11:50 The Lion Guard
12:45 Sofia The First
13:35 PJ Masks
14:30 Doc McStuffins
14:55 P-King Duckling
15:20 Vampirina
15:45 Sofia The First
16:10 Puppy Dog Pals
16:35 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
17:05 A Goofy Fairy Tale
17:50 Minnie's Bow-Toons
18:00 Goldie & Bear
18:30 Puppy Dog Pals
18:55 Sofia The First
19:25 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
19:55 Doc McStuffins
20:10 The Lion Guard
20:35 P-King Duckling
21:00 Vampirina
21:30 PJ Masks
22:00 PJ Masks
22:25 Sofia The First
22:50 P-King Duckling
23:20 Puppy Dog Pals
23:45 Mickey And The Roadster Racers



00:15 Yukon Men
01:05 Gold Rush
01:50 Treasure Quest: Snake Island
02:35 Rebel Gold
03:20 Street Outlaws
04:05 Alaska: The Last Frontier
04:50 Deadliest Catch
05:35 How Do They Do It?
06:00 Auction Kings
06:23 Container Wars
06:45 How Do They Do It?
07:10 How Do They Do It?
07:35 Alaska: The Last Frontier
08:20 Auction Kings
08:45 Container Wars
09:10 Deadliest Catch
09:45 Gold Rush
10:45 Treasure Quest: Snake Island
11:30 Rebel Gold
12:20 Auction Kings
12:43 Container Wars
13:05 How Do They Do It?
13:30 How Do They Do It?
13:55 Deadliest Catch
14:40 Yukon Men
15:30 Gold Rush
16:15 Treasure Quest: Snake Island
17:05 Rebel Gold
17:50 Alaska: The Last Frontier
18:40 Deadliest Catch
19:25 Yukon Men
20:15 Street Outlaws
21:00 Blowing Up History
21:50 Tesla's Death Ray: A Murder Declassified
22:40 What On Earth?
23:30 Alaska: The Last Frontier



06:00 Supa Strikas
06:25 Milo Murphy's Law
06:50 Right Now Kapow
07:15 Mech-X4
07:40 Disney Mickey Mouse
07:45 Walk The Prank
08:35 Right Now Kapow
09:25 Mighty Med
09:50 Mighty Med
10:20 Star Wars: The Freemaker Adventures
11:10 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
12:00 Kid vs. Kat
12:25 Two More Eggs
12:30 Kid vs. Kat
12:55 Kirby Buckets
13:45 Supa Strikas
14:10 Disney Mickey Mouse
14:15 Supa Strikas
14:40 Right Now Kapow
15:30 Milo Murphy's Law
16:00 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
16:25 Lab Rats
17:15 Mech-X4
17:40 Marvel's Spider-Man
18:05 Supa Strikas
18:30 Marvel's Ant-Man
18:35 Walk The Prank
19:00 Gravity Falls
19:25 Milo Murphy's Law
19:50 Marvel's Rocket And Groot
19:55 Mech-X4
20:20 Ben Zero: Part Time Hero
20:45 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
21:10 Kid vs. Kat
21:35 Marvel's Rocket And Groot
21:40 Disney Mickey Mouse
21:45 Lab Rats
22:10 Lab Rats
22:35 Phineas And Ferb
23:00 Programmes Start At 6:00am



00:10 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
01:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
01:50 El News
02:50 WAGS
03:40 WAGS
04:35 WAGS
05:30 Celebrity Style Story
06:00 Second Wives Club
06:55 El News
07:10 Second Wives Club
08:10 El News: Daily Pop
09:10 My Fabulous Me
09:40 My Fabulous Me
10:35 Celebrity Style Story
11:05 Keeping Up With The Kardashians

12:00 El News
12:15 WAGS LA
13:10 WAGS LA
14:05 WAGS LA
15:00 El News
15:15 El News: Daily Pop
16:15 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
17:10 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
18:05 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
19:00 El News
20:00 WAGS LA
21:00 WAGS Atlanta
23:00 El News
23:15 The Platinum Life



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



00:10 Masterpiece With Alan Titchmarsh
01:00 Emmerdale
01:30 Coronation Street
02:00 Coronation Street
02:30 Cash Trapped
03:25 The Doctor Blake Mysteries
04:25 Tutankhamun
05:15 Don't Tell The Bride
06:15 Masterpiece With Alan Titchmarsh
07:05 Cash Trapped
08:00 The Doctor Blake Mysteries
09:05 Tutankhamun
10:00 Don't Tell The Bride
11:00 Masterpiece With Alan Titchmarsh
11:50 Cash Trapped
12:45 Emmerdale
13:15 Coronation Street
13:45 Coronation Street
14:15 Masterpiece With Alan Titchmarsh
15:10 Cash Trapped
16:00 Inside Windsor Castle
17:00 Martin Clunes: Islands Of Australia
17:50 Don't Tell The Bride
18:50 Emmerdale
19:15 Coronation Street
20:10 Cash Trapped
21:00 Inside Windsor Castle
22:00 Martin Clunes: Islands Of Australia
22:50 Emmerdale
23:15 Coronation Street
23:40 Coronation Street



00:00 Ancient Impossible
01:00 Ancient Top 10
02:00 The Colour Of War
03:00 In Search Of Aliens
03:50 Ancient Aliens
04:40 Modern Marvels
05:30 Ancient Impossible
06:20 Ancient Top 10
07:10 The Universe: Ancient Mysteries Solved
08:00 The Colour Of War
09:00 In Search Of Aliens
10:00 Ancient Aliens
11:00 Modern Marvels
12:00 Ancient Impossible
13:00 Ancient Top 10
14:00 The Colour Of War
15:00 In Search Of Aliens
16:00 Ancient Aliens
17:00 Modern Marvels
18:00 The Universe: Ancient Mysteries Solved
19:00 Ancient Top 10
20:00 The Colour Of War
21:00 In Search Of Aliens
22:00 Ancient Aliens
23:00 Clash Of The Gods



00:20 Swamp People
01:10 Swamp People
02:00 American Restoration
02:50 Big Easy Motors
03:15 Car Hunters
03:40 Billion Dollar Wreck
04:30 Swamp People
05:15 Swamp People
06:00 Mountain Men
06:50 Forged In Fire
07:40 American Restoration
08:30 Big Easy Motors
08:55 Car Hunters
09:20 American Pickers
10:10 Ax Men
11:00 Forged In Fire
11:50 American Restoration
12:40 Big Easy Motors
13:05 Car Hunters
13:30 Swamp People
14:20 Swamp People
15:10 Mountain Men
16:00 Forged In Fire
16:50 American Restoration
17:40 Big Easy Motors
18:05 Car Hunters
18:30 Mountain Men
19:20 Forged In Fire
20:10 American Restoration
21:00 The Curse Of Oak Island
22:40 Forged In Fire
23:30 Mountain Men



00:15 Places We Go
00:45 A Taste Of South Africa
01:10 Food Lover's Guide To The Planet
01:40 Places We Go
02:05 Places We Go
02:35 A Taste Of South Africa
03:00 A Taste Of South Africa
03:30 John Torode's Malaysian Adventure
03:55 The Game Chef
04:25 The Game Chef
04:50 Migue's Feasts
05:20 Migue's Feasts
05:45 What's For Sale?
06:15 My Pacific Quest
07:10 Places We Go
07:35 Places We Go
08:05 A Taste Of South Africa
08:30 A Taste Of South Africa
09:00 John Torode's Malaysian Adventure
09:25 The Game Chef
09:55 The Game Chef
10:20 Migue's Feasts
10:50 Migue's Feasts
11:15 What's For Sale?
11:45 My Pacific Quest
12:40 Places We Go
13:05 Places We Go
13:35 A Taste Of South Africa
14:00 A Taste Of South Africa
14:50 Andy And Ben Eat Australia
15:25 The Game Chef
15:50 Migue's Feasts
16:20 Migue's Feasts
16:45 What's For Sale?
17:15 My Pacific Quest
18:10 Places We Go
18:35 Places We Go
19:05 A Taste Of South Africa
19:30 A Taste Of South Africa
20:00 Andy And Ben Eat Australia
20:30 The Game Chef
21:00 The Game Chef
21:30 Migue's Feasts
22:00 Migue's Feasts
22:25 What's For Sale?
22:55 My Pacific Quest
23:50 Places We Go



00:10 Breakthrough
01:00 Explorer XL
02:00 Drain The Sunken Pirate City
03:00 The Story Of Us With Morgan Freeman
04:00 Breakthrough
05:00 The Great Food Revolution
06:00 Lawless Island Alaska
07:00 Science Of Stupid
07:30 Science Of Stupid
08:00 Fish Tank Kings
09:00 The Great Food Revolution
10:00 Nazi Megastructures
11:00 Supercar Megabuild
12:00 To Catch A Smuggler
13:00 Lawless Island Alaska
14:00 Fish Tank Kings
15:00 Science Of Stupid
15:30 Science Of Stupid
16:00 Nazi Megastructures
17:00 Supercar Megabuild
18:00 To Catch A Smuggler
19:00 Science Of Stupid
19:30 Science Of Stupid
20:50 Supercar Megabuild
21:40 To Catch A Smuggler
22:30 Science Of Stupid
22:55 Science Of Stupid
23:20 Fish Tank Kings



00:10 Game Of Lions
01:10 Monster Fish
02:00 Desert Lions
02:50 Safari Brothers
03:45 World's Weirdest
04:40 Unlikely Animal Friends: Bark-Tacular
05:35 Desert Lions
06:30 Safari Brothers
07:25 World's Weirdest
08:20 Unlikely Animal Friends: Bark-Tacular
09:15 Animal ER
10:10 Rescue Ink
11:05 Animal Fight Club
12:00 Lost Sharks Of Easter Island
12:55 Hyena Coast
13:50 Monster Croc Wrangler
14:15 Monster Croc Wrangler
14:45 World's Weirdest
15:40 Lion Kingdom
16:35 Animal ER
17:30 Rescue Ink
18:25 Lion Kingdom
19:20 World's Weirdest
20:10 Lion Kingdom
21:00 Animal ER
21:50 Rescue Ink
22:40 Lion Kingdom
23:30 Lost Sharks Of Easter Island

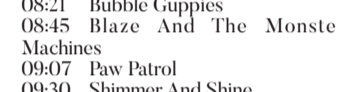


00:12 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
00:36 Rabbids Invasion
01:00 Rabbids Invasion
01:24 Sanjay And Craig
01:48 Sanjay And Craig
02:12 Winx Club
02:36 Winx Club
03:00 Harvey Beaks
03:24 Harvey Beaks
03:48 The Loud House
04:12 The Loud House
04:36 Breadwinners
05:00 Breadwinners
05:24 Get Blake
05:48 SpongeBob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

17:48 Hunter Street
18:12 Henry Danger
18:36 Nicky, Ricky, Dicky And Dawn
19:00 School Of Rock
19:24 Game Shakers
19:48 The Thundermans
20:12 Ride
20:36 SpongeBob SquarePants
21:00 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
21:24 Sanjay And Craig
21:48 Rabbids Invasion
22:12 Breadwinners
22:36 Harvey Beaks
23:00 SpongeBob SquarePants
23:24 SpongeBob SquarePants
23:48 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles



00:15 Shimmer And Shine
00:38 Shimmer And Shine
01:01 Max & Ruby
01:23 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
01:34 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
01:46 The Day Henry Met
01:50 The Day Henry Met
01:56 Blaze And The Monster Machines
02:19 Blaze And The Monster Machines
02:41 Zack & Quack
02:52 Kid-E-Cats
02:56 Kid-E-Cats
03:03 Shimmer And Shine
03:24 Nella The Princess Knight
03:36 Paw Patrol
03:50 Little Charmers
04:11 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
04:23 Dora The Explorer
04:46 Max & Ruby
05:08 The Day Henry Met
05:14 Nella The Princess Knight
05:35 Shimmer And Shine
05:59 Wallykazam!
06:21 Zack & Quack
06:32 The Day Henry Met
06:38 Blaze And The Monster Machines
07:00 Rusty Rivets
07:13 Paw Patrol
07:37 Dora The Explorer
08:00 Nella The Princess Knight
08:11 Kid-E-Cats
08:16 Kid-E-Cats
08:21 Bubble Guppies
08:45 Blaze And The Monster Machines
09:07 Paw Patrol
09:30 Shimmer And Shine
09:53 Nella The Princess Knight
10:14 The Day Henry Met
10:20 Paw Patrol
10:43 Rusty Rivets
11:06 Wallykazam!
11:29 Bubble Guppies
11:52 Team Umizoomi
12:16 Shimmer And Shine
12:39 Shimmer And Shine
13:02 Max & Ruby
13:25 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
13:35 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
13:45 The Day Henry Met
13:50 The Day Henry Met
13:56 Blaze And The Monster Machines
14:19 Blaze And The Monster Machines
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19:00 Science Of Stupid
19:30 Science Of Stupid
20:50 Supercar Megabuild
21:40 To Catch A Smuggler
22:30 Science Of Stupid
22:55 Science Of Stupid
23:20 Fish Tank Kings



01:10 The Amazing Wizard Of Paws
02:55 Step Dogs
04:25 Get Santa
06:10 Molly Moon And The Incredible Book Of Hypnotism
07:50 The Amazing Wizard Of Paws
09:35 Ratchet And Clank
11:10 Step Dogs
12:40 Shelby: The Dog Who Saved Christmas
14:15 Because Of Winn Dixie
16:05 A Simple Wish
17:40 The Adventure Club
19:10 Mostly Ghostly: One Night In Doom House
20:40 Shelby: The Dog Who Saved Christmas
22:15 Because Of Winn Dixie



01:45 Two-Bit Waltz
03:10 The Guilt Trip
04:55 A Midsummer's Hawaiian Dream
06:30 Big Mommas: Like Father, Like Son
08:30 My Bakery In Brooklyn
10:15 Tyler Perry's Boo: A Madea Halloween
12:10 A Stand Up Guy
13:40 Big Mommas: Like Father, Like Son
15:40 The Family Fang
17:35 Made In America
19:30 Big
21:20 The House Bunny
23:05 Someone Marry Barry



01:50 Freeheld
03:40 The Quiet Hour
05:20 Meru
07:00 Coming Through The Rye
08:45 The Quiet Hour
10:25 Meru
12:05 Coming Through The Rye
13:50 Me Before You
15:50 Alex Of Venice
17:30 The Age Of Innocence
20:00 Suffragette
22:00 Closer
23:55 The Dressmaker



00:10 Dinofroz The Origin
01:45 Micropolis
03:15 Teo: The Intergalactic Hunter
04:40 An American Tail: Fievel Goes West
06:10 Dinofroz The Origin
07:45 Rth+ The Vampire Of Seville
09:15 Last Wizard
10:40 The Happy Cricket And The Giant Bugs
12:15 Dinofroz Return To The Past World
13:35 Micropolis
15:05 Scooby-Do! And WWE: Curse Of Speed Demon
16:35 The Happy Cricket And The Giant Bugs
18:10 Emilie Jolie
19:35 Phantom Boy
21:10 Scooby-Do! And WWE: Curse Of Speed Demon
22:40 Last Wizard



00:30 By The Sea
02:35 Dreamgirls
04:45 Max
06:40 We Bought A Zoo
08:45 The Portrait Of A Lady
11:10 The Lovely Bones
13:30 Dreamgirls
15:45 The Count Of Monte Cristo
18:05 This Means War
19:50 In The Heart Of The Sea
22:00 Suspect Zero
23:45 Gone Girl



00:40 Mythbusters
01:30 How Do They Do It?
01:55 Food Factory
02:20 Secrets Of The Underground
03:10 Dangerman
04:00 Da Vinci's Machines
04:48 Mythbusters
05:36 How Do They Do It?
06:00 Food Factory
06:24 Secrets Of The Underground
07:12 Dangerman
08:00 How Do They Do It?
08:26 Da Vinci's Machines
09:14 Mythbusters
10:02 Dangerman
10:50 How Do They Do It?
11:14 Food Factory
11:38 Secrets Of The Underground
12:26 Da Vinci's Machines
13:14 Mythbusters
14:02 How Do They Do It?
14:26 Food Factory
14:50 Dangerman
15:38 Da Vinci's Machines
16:26 Secrets Of The Underground
17:14 Mythbusters
18:02 Dangerman
18:50 Da Vinci's Machines
19:40 Mythbusters: The Search
20:30 How Things Work
21:20 How Do They Do It?
21:45 Food Factory
22:10 Dangerman
23:00 Mysteries Of The Missing
23:50 Da Vinci's Machines



00:15 Night Moves
03:15 About Adam
04:45 The Last Kiss
06:30 Laws Of Attraction
08:15 The Accidental Husband
10:00 Che: Part One
12:30 Scorched
14:15 Night Moves
16:15 Adventureland
18:00 Ask The Dust
20:00 The Third Wheel
21:45 Autumn In New York
23:30 Runaway Bride



00:00 Cedar Cove
01:00 Cedar Cove
02:00 Mistresses
03:00 Fashion Star
04:00 MAFS: The First Year
05:00 Project Runway
06:00 Cedar Cove
07:00 Cedar Cove
08:00 Mistresses
09:00 Fashion Star
10:00 MAFS: The First Year
11:00 Project Runway
12:00 Cedar Cove
13:00 Cedar Cove
14:00 Mistresses
15:00 Fashion Star
16:00 MAFS: The First Year
17:00 Project Runway
18:00 Married At First Sight
19:00 Married At First Sight
20:00 Mistresses
21:00 Fashion Star
22:00 MAFS: The First Year
23:00 Project Runway

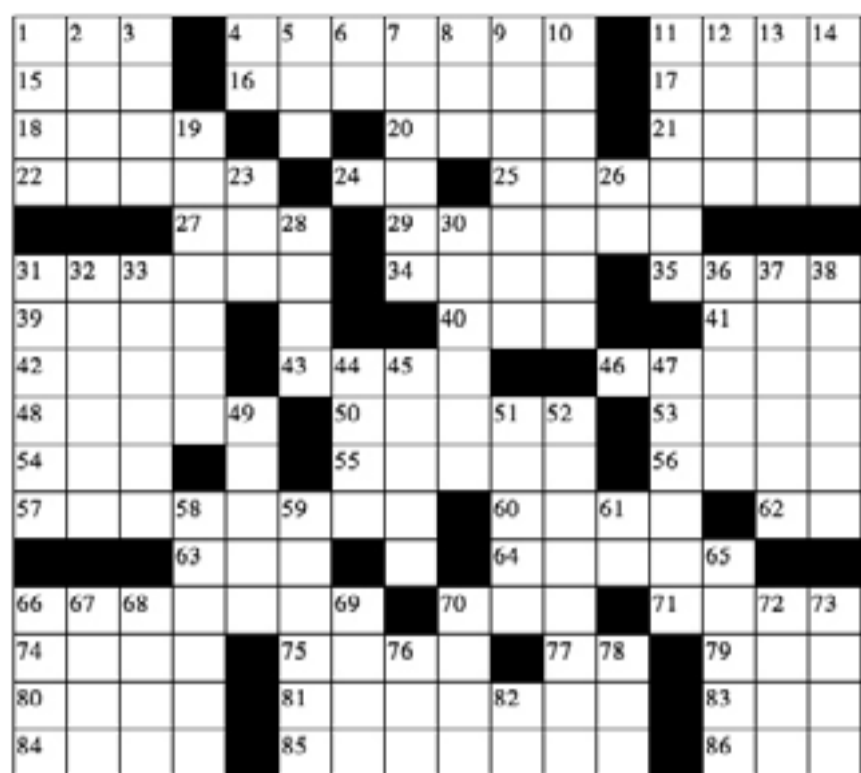


00:20 Ambulance
01:05 What Have I Got?
01:27 What Have I Got?
01:50 Body Bizarre
02:35 Iyanla: Fix My Life
03:20 7 Little Johnstons
04:05 Toddlers & Tiaras
04:50 Randy To The Rescue
05:35 Say Yes To The Dress
06:00 Obsessive Compulsive Cleaners: Country House...
06:45 Outdaughtered: Busby Quints
07:30 Say Yes To The Dress UK
07:52 Say Yes To The Dress UK
08:15 7 Little Johnstons
09:00 Cake Boss
09:25 Toddlers



Stars

CROSSWORD 1818



ACROSS

1. Someone (especially a woman) who annoys people by constantly finding fault.
4. Fleshy lawn or reddish saprophytic herb resembling the Indian pipe and growing in woodland humus of eastern North America.
11. A vigorous blow.
15. A period marked by distinctive character or reckoned from a fixed point or event.
16. Capable of being added or added to.
17. Type genus of the family Arcidae.
18. The Tibeto-Burman language spoken in the Dali region of Yunnan.
20. Having been read.
21. Any of several large turkey-like game birds of the family Cracidae.
22. A member of the Siouan people formerly living in the Missouri river valley in NE Nebraska.
24. Being ten more than one hundred forty.
25. Executed with proper legal authority.
27. (Judaism) Sacred chest where the ancient Hebrews kept the two tablets containing the Ten Commandments.
29. Any of various spiny trees or shrubs of the genus Acacia.
31. Someone who cuts and delivers ice.
34. Large American feline resembling a lion.
35. Go "ding dong", like a bell.
39. Young of domestic cattle.
40. Tag the base runner to get him out.
41. (Irish) The sea personified.
42. Other than what is under consideration or implied.
43. The basic unit of money in Bangladesh.
46. An Indian tree of the family Combretaceae that is a source of timber and gum.
48. United States film maker (1897-1991).
50. The cardinal number that is the sum of five and one.
53. A woman hired to suckle a child of someone else.
54. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
55. Lower in esteem.
56. A quantity of no importance.
57. A river in northeastern Brazil that flows generally northward to the Atlantic Ocean.
60. An unforeseen obstacle.
62. Before noon.
63. The basic unit of electric current adopted under the System International d'Unites.
64. Essential oil or perfume obtained from flowers.
66. Dyed with henna.
71. A Hindu prince or king in India.
74. By bad luck.
75. Open-heart surgery in which the rib cage is opened and a section of a blood vessel is grafted from the aorta to the coronary artery to bypass the blocked section of the coronary artery and improve the blood supply to the heart.
77. A blood group antigen possessed by Rh-positive people.
79. A flexible container with a single opening.
80. Make reference to.
81. Any of various insects that feed and form galls on conifers.
83. 100 avos equal 1 pataca.
84. An unstable meson produced as the result of a high-energy particle collision.
85. Relating to or resembling a cone.
86. A label made of cardboard or plastic or metal.

DOWN

1. (Babylonian) God of wisdom and agriculture and patron of scribes and schools.
2. The biblical name for ancient Syria.
3. (Greek mythology) Goddess of the earth and mother of Cronus and the Titans in ancient mythology.
4. An informal term for a father.
5. An artificial language that is a revision and simplification of Esperanto.
6. A yellow trivalent metallic element of the rare earth group.
7. One of two flaps attached to a cap to keep the ears warm.
8. The compass point that is one point east of due south.
9. A state in the southeastern United States on the Gulf of Mexico.
10. A tricycle (usually propelled by pedalling).
11. Capital and largest city of Iraq.
12. Wild sheep of northern Africa.
13. The act of scanning.
14. A special way of doing something.
19. Two surfaces meeting at an angle different from 90 degrees.
23. A constellation in the southern hemisphere near Telescopium and Norma.
26. A hard malleable ductile silvery metallic element that is resistant to corrosion.
28. A fabric made by knitting.
30. Battle in 401 BC when the Persian King Artaxerxes II defeated his younger brother who tried to usurp the throne.
32. West Indian tree having racemes of fragrant white flowers and yielding a durable timber and resinous juice.
33. Antineoplastic drug (trade name Elspar) sometimes used to treat lymphoblastic leukemia.
36. Tropical American tree grown in southern United States having a whitish pink-tinged fruit.
37. A state in the western United States.
38. United States evangelical preacher famous as a mass evangelist (born in 1918).
44. According to the Old Testament he was a pagan king of Israel and husband of Jezebel (9th century BC).
45. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
47. A large building at an airport where aircraft can be stored and maintained.
49. Small terrestrial lizard of warm regions of the Old World.
51. State in northeastern India.
52. Usually included in genus Cardamine.
58. Norwegian explorer of the Arctic and director of the League of Nations relief program for refugees of World War I (1861-1930).
59. A medicinal drug used to evoke vomiting (especially in cases of drug overdose or poisoning).
61. A highly unstable radioactive element (the heaviest of the halogen series).
65. The capital of Morocco.
67. English essayist (1775-1834).
68. An international organization created in 1949 by the North Atlantic Treaty for purposes of collective security.
69. Panel forming the lower part of an interior wall when it is finished differently from the rest.
70. Large sweet juicy hybrid between tangerine and grapefruit having a thick wrinkled skin.
72. An island in Indonesia south of Borneo.
73. Highly excited.
76. (in Scotland or Ireland) A mountain or tall hill.
78. A lipoprotein that transports cholesterol in the blood.
82. 1,000,000,000 periods per second.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Aries, the people you are associated with oppose your thoughts and actions. The environment you share doesn't seem to fit and you could grow tired of the struggle. When called upon to perform verbally you are second to none; this will help more than you know. Your power of perception is at its zenith; anyone who opposes you will go up against you in vain. You take refuge in your home and family; this could mean people or pets or both! Security is established and provides immense support. You will accumulate property and wealth during this cycle and reach some of the most important goals. Settle down with some beautiful music or film this evening and see what messages you can discern, Aries.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Taurus, disagreements are likely now and with those you normally fit well with. Try to avoid letting yourself be pulled into negative situations. Someone fancies themselves in a competition with you regarding a certain project or sweetheart. You will be spurred on in your attempt to create new surroundings and relationships; let intuition be your guide. You may prefer being alone to ponder things of an emotional nature. A new situation occurs for which you will be approached to repair or mediate; your clear minded input will prove successful. You are at the beginning of attaining abundance in several forms: material, spiritual, physical well-being is strongly indicated. Sit back and enjoy music that soothes your mind with someone dear tonight, Taurus.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Gemini, you could experience some nasty feelings you keep to yourself; you could become leery of having dealings with someone. A sense of harmony and well-being will be strong; this will create positive vibrations throughout your day. Be as cooperative as you can. Music could bring immense pleasure and smiles. This could be a time of achievement; gains in money and real estate are likely. This is a great time to learn to lighten up and take life as it comes. You could see an opportunity to strengthen your professional footing; your current obligations will spur you to go forward with well-laid plans for your future. An amorous relationship will flourish; the needs you seem to have now. Your observation skills are at a high; you will receive news from someone late in the evening regarding something that is being hidden from you, Gemini.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Cancer, you may have a desire to accept an offer of a new job prospect; this will take you off your career path and could lead to disappointment. You may feel thwarted in your attempts to grow spiritually by an elder or simply by where you are in life. Others could be plotting or planning behind your back, at the least they are talking about you in a negative way. Take a deep breath and continue toward your goals. A difficult, most delicate issue could come up in conversation; you have what it takes to deal with this. This is a real time for communication—in any form. Finding your place in a group will be easy and rewarding. Even with blockages and interruptions, you know what you're doing and the results you seek, Cancer.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Leo, you have overcome obstacles and reached some lofty goals this month. You will take great pleasure in your home and personal activities this year. Try to stay on track today as many people needing help with final details of their projects approach you. You could find that you are on solid ground in the area of love and romance; if you are not with a partner you at least know what you are looking for! You may attend a concert or go to a club for dancing; music lifts your spirits every time. Your financial footing grows stronger and you are satisfied that you can have all of your needs and most of your wants. Your thoughts are clear when figuring out how to use your imagination to create plans for a new discovery that could touch many lives, Leo.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Virgo, during this new cycle your thoughts will race and fill your mind with so many new ideas you could feel overwhelmed. Take a deep breath and let your mind be still; picture your favorite place of peace and put yourself there. You will be in touch with people from all over the place; this could mean the other side of town or the other side of the globe. You have a reputation as a person unafraid to use your cunning to get certain information. You could learn that a friend is in trouble and in need of your help. You may have an urge to try something you know would cause problems for you on a personal level, you should think before you leap. Take a break from drama and chaos this evening and instead go to a funny movie with someone you trust, Virgo.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Libra, this is a time of romance and stability in the domestic realm; this is the most secure you have felt in a very long time. You draw your strength and comfort from those who love you whether family or friends; without affection of those you depend on your world would seem rocky. Radio or other means delivers tunes as you work which helps productivity and moral. You are able to complete unfinished business and you pace yourself for the next project. You see light at the end of the tunnel as you near paying off a debt; good job! Friends will request your help decorating for a theme party or be in on the planning of a special surprise party. People rely on your creativity and unique tastes. As you drift off, send thanks to the universe for your talents, Libra.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Scorpio, you badly want to improve your domestic and business environments. You may wonder if you can actually make the changes required for you like things your way, you can be willful. You know your good sides and what endears you to others but you sometimes have problems letting those qualities surface. Listen to your heart and create what you want. Obligations may come to your attention later in the day that involve someone older or in authority. Everyone will pitch in to complete a very large project. Smile, today is in the positive vibration! You could acquire something that makes life easier at home or work; good investment for you! You are in the driver's seat, looking ahead through the front windshield not the rear view mirror, Scorpio.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Sagittarius, you feel ever so grateful when someone close gives just the encouragement you need over a good cup of coffee. The energy of laying foundations and creating longevity is strongly indicated for this year. Mutual interests could be born of musical tastes and exotic forms of musical entertainment, meaning not necessarily tunes you might hear on the radio. Your fear of failure and having nothing will be greatly lessened as you continue to create and enjoy abundance; hard work and faith pays off! If you do not have clear short-term and long-term goals, make it a priority to refocus. Through teamwork an important project will be finished before the deadline; perhaps a bite of dinner to celebrate later with the team, Sagittarius.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Capricorn, you will research items you have put on hold for a long while. The time has come when finances and needed purchases line up perfectly. Your practical side has won and you are prepared for a completely unexpected situation. Answers come easily and they just happen to be the right ones! Something hidden is revealed by a surprising source. Take heed to others' opinions today whether you agree or not. Your worth is apparent to anyone you come in contact with today; you may have to contend with jealousy. You take comfort in the balance and longevity of your situation in life. You will get to the bottom of a situation you have been curious about. Welcome a visit from an amazing person, Capricorn.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

Aquarius, you have entered a new cycle that creates an atmosphere of unity being the best policy. Events seem to block your direction and slow your progress; accomplishments and successes are not likely now. Your organization and leadership are questioned by someone in the group in a confrontational manner. This clash may become volatile and bring negative serious outcomes for the project and people involved. Later you could lose yourself in a daydream and irritate someone you are associated with. Be thoughtful about commitments you make right now. Something interesting could come up but may involve those you don't want to work with. Things are brighter than they seem; take a deep breath, sit back and watch, Aquarius.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Pisces, there is a special way you have of working with younger people; perhaps this pertains to children. The conditions are such that memories could pour in today and remind you of some precious childhood event. You will find that you will be able to convince people easily concerning funding a new project at work. You are sharp when explaining your methods and backing them up with proof. A personal moment will warm your heart sometime today. When given a choice, a group may vote you most valuable member. You could find yourself involved in a passionate disagreement regarding politics or religion; be careful. You will reach far and wide to embrace new understanding in areas you consider important to your life, Pisces.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Look Up!

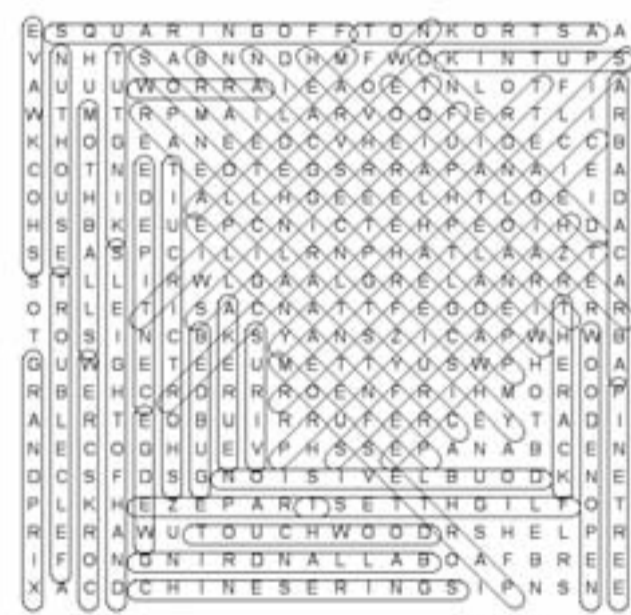
Find and circle all of the items that you might see when you look upward. The remaining 24 letters spell an additional item you might see.



- |               |                 |               |               |
|---------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------|
| AIRPLANE      | GALAXY          | METEOR SHOWER | SMOG          |
| BIG DIPPER    | HAZE            | MOON          | SOLAR ECLIPSE |
| BIRDS         | HELICOPTER      | PLANETS       | STARS         |
| BLIMP         | HOT AIR BALLOON | POWER LINES   | STREET LIGHT  |
| BLUE SKY      | JET EXHAUST     | RAINBOW       | THE SUN       |
| CHIMNEY SMOKE | JUPITER         | SATELLITE     | TREETOP       |
| CLOUDS        | KITE            | SATURN        | UNIVERSE      |
| COMET         | LIGHTNING       | SKYDIVER      | VENUS         |
| DRONE         | MARS            | SKYSCRAPER    |               |
| FIREWORKS     | MERCURY         | SKYWRITING    |               |

Yesterday's Solution

Livewire Puzzles



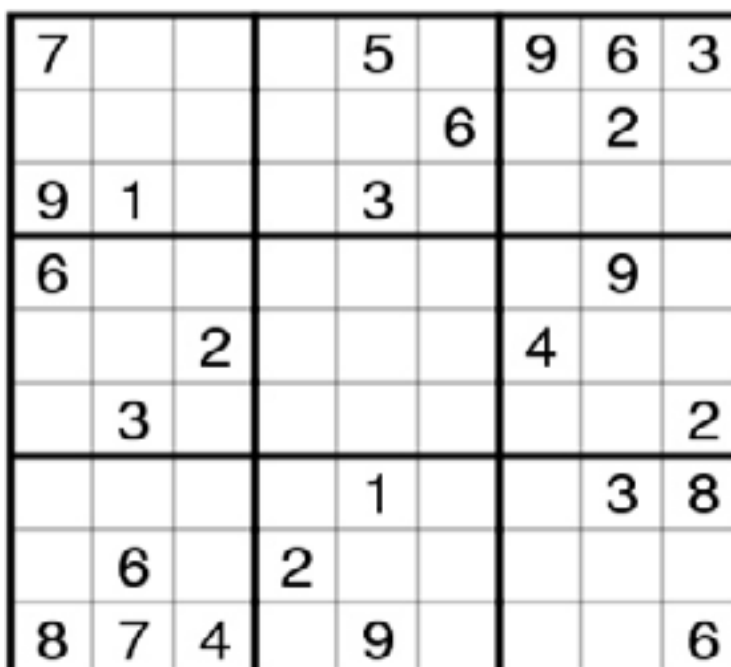
- |                |              |                 |              |
|----------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|
| ASSACADABRA    | EQUALIZER    | PENTANGLE       | THE RACK     |
| ARROW          | EUREKA       | PINETREE        | TOUCH WOOD   |
| ASTRONOMY      | FIRECRACKER  | PRETZEL LOGIC   | TRAPZEZ      |
| BALL AND RING  | FLIGHT TEST  | SHOCKWAVE       | TRIPLE CROWN |
| BEBUG          | GRAND PRIX   | SHORT CIRCUIT   | TRIPLE PLAY  |
| BRIDGE THE GAP | HANDCLIFFS   | SILENT PARTNER  | TRIPWIRE     |
| CENTREFOLD     | HAVE A HEART | SLEIGHT OF HAND | TROUBLE CLEF |
| CHINESE RINGS  | KING TUT     | SLINGSHOT       | VRIS         |
| CORNSCREW      | MELEDA       | SOMETHING FISHY | WEATHERVAN   |
| CRYSTAL CLEAR  | MOTHBALLS    | SPUTNIK         | WEDGE        |
| DEAD END       | MOUSETRAP    | SQUARING OFF    | WOODEN OREN  |
| DOUBLE VISION  | NUT HOUSE    |                 |              |

The hidden phrase is: A HANDFUL OF PATIENCE IS WORTH MORE THAN A BUSHEL OF BRAINS

Yesterday's Solution



Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution





# Classifieds

Thursday, January 25, 2018

**Kuwait Times**  
 Now you can browse  
[www.kuwaittimes.net](http://www.kuwaittimes.net)  
 e-mail: info@kuwaittimes.net

**STATE OF KUWAIT**  
 DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION  
 METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



Tel: (+965) 161 Ext: 6819 - 6817  
 Fax: (+965) 24348714  
[www.met.gov.kw](http://www.met.gov.kw)



## Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

**BY DAY:** Sunny with light variable wind, with speed of 06 - 22 km/h .

**BY NIGHT:** Cold with light variable wind, with speed of 06 - 22 km/h with a chance for fog forming and some scattered clouds will appear.

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings			
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 24/01/2018 0000 UTC			
KUWAIT CITY	21 °C	14 °C				
KUWAIT AIRPORT	22 °C	08 °C				
ABDALY	21 °C	12 °C				
BUBYAN	-- °C	-- °C				
JAHRA	23 °C	11 °C				
FAILAKA ISLAND	19 °C	14 °C				
SALMIYAH	18 °C	16 °C				
AHMADI	18 °C	12 °C				
NUWAISIB	21 °C	11 °C				
WAFRA	23 °C	10 °C				
SALMY	23 °C	09 °C				

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Thursday	01/25	Partly cloudy	22 °C	09 °C	VRB-SE	08 - 40 km/h
Friday	01/26	Partly cloudy to cloudy	24 °C	12 °C	NW-VRB	08 - 32 km/h
Saturday	01/27	Cool with rising dust over open areas	19 °C	09 °C	NW	15 - 45 km/h
Sunday	01/28	Cool with a chance for rising dust	17 °C	07 °C	NW	20 - 45 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	05:19
Sunrise	06:41
Zuhr	12:00
Asr	14:59
Sunset	17:19
Isha	18:39

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	20 °C
MIN. Temp.	08 °C
MAX. RH	81 %
MIN. RH	30 %
MAX. Wind	SE 46 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

## CHANGE OF NAME

I, **Obanapu Usharani**, holder of Indian Passport No. J2199214 issued at Hyderabad, India on 04/11/2010 w/o Obulapu Sankar Reddy shall henceforth be known as Obulapu Usharani w/o Sankar Reddy Obulapu, for the purpose of correction of wrong entries mentioned in my passport.  
 23-1-2018

**EMERGENCY**  
**112**

Automated enquiry about the Civil ID card is **1889988**

## JOB VACANCIES

A Well Known Food Distribution Company is looking to recruit employees in the following fields:

- Cash Van Salesmen (Small Markets - Groceries - Co-ops)
- Half-Lorry Drivers

Applicants who possess the following are welcomed to apply:

- Knowledge about Kuwait's markets [and roads]
- Valid Kuwaiti Driving License [Heavy Duty for Half Lorry]
- Valid & Transferable Residency in Kuwait

Interested Candidates; Walk-in with your CVs to Safat Tower (E-Mall Complex - Opposite Sultan Centre) Floor 11, Beirut Street, Hawalli. Office Hours: 08:30AM - 04:30PM, Sunday - Thursday. Email your CV to: [olfa@thiqaco.com](mailto:olfa@thiqaco.com) - For Queries Call: 22675491

## Airline

American Airlines	22087425
	22087426
Kuwait Airways	171
Jazeera Airways	22924455
Jet Airways	22414400
FlyDubai	22423888
Qatar Airways	22425747
KLM	22418064/5/6
Royal Jordanian	22425635
British Airways	22430224
Air France	22921555
Emirates	22438184
Air India	

## REQUIRED

FOR A LEADING CATERING COMPANY IN KUWAIT:

### HSE / HACCP CO-ORDINATOR

The incumbent should be a Bachelor degree in food science, biology, nutrition or a related field and should have minimum 5 years experience in any food line as quality control/quality assurance.

(Candidates having transferable residence only apply)

Email CV's: [vacancy.hrdkwt@gmail.com](mailto:vacancy.hrdkwt@gmail.com)  
 Contact Mobile: 99261378

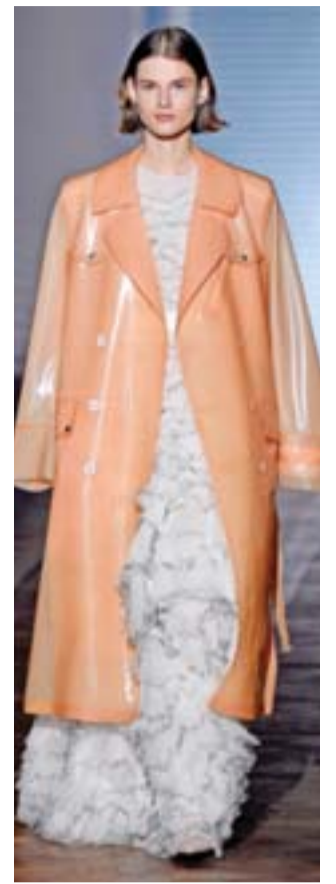
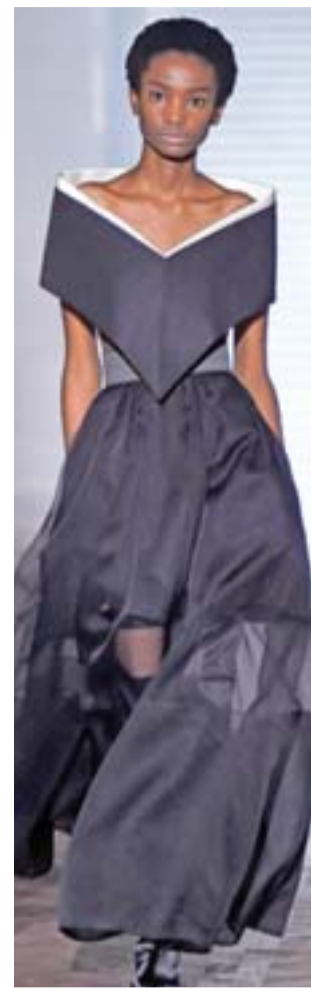
## Directorate General of Civil Aviation Home Page ([www.kuwait-airport.com.kw](http://www.kuwait-airport.com.kw))

### Flight Schedule

### DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Thursday 25/1/2018				Departure Flights on Thursday 25/1/2018			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
JAI	572	Mumbai	00:05	AIC	976	Goa/Chennai	00:05
JZR	267	Beirut	00:30	JZR	528	Asyut	00:15
KAC	504	Beirut	00:30	JAI	573	Mumbai	00:30
JZR	539	Cairo	00:50	FDB	072	Dubai	00:35
KAC	102	London	00:50	PIA	240	Sialkot	00:40
PGT	858	Istanbul	00:55	MSC	412	Asyut	01:00
THY	772	Istanbul	00:55	JAI	571	Mumbai	01:05
RJA	642	Amman	01:05	JZR	502	Luxor	01:30
WAN	416	Beirut	01:05	KAC	142	Doha	01:45
SAI	441	Lahore	01:30	KAC	677	Dubai	01:50
UAE	853	Dubai	01:45	KAC	417	Manila	02:00
DLH	625	Bahrain	01:45	THY	773	Istanbul	02:30
THY	764	Istanbul	01:50	PGT	859	Istanbul	02:30
AXB	395	Kozhikode	02:00	SAI	442	Lahore	02:30
ETH	620	AddisAbaba	02:15	DLH	625	Frankfurt	02:45
JZR	555	Alexandria	02:15	AXB	396	Kozhikode	02:55
QTR	1086	Doha	02:20	KAC	351	Kochi	03:05
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30	ETH	621	AddisAbaba	03:05
KLM	446	Bahrain	02:30	UAE	854	Dubai	03:40
OMA	643	Muscat	02:55	QTR	1087	Doha	03:40
KKK	1268	Istanbul	02:55	KLM	446	Amsterdam	03:55
MSR	606	Luxor	03:05	KKK	1269	Istanbul	03:55
ETD	305	AbuDhabi	03:10	OMA	644	Muscat	03:55
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	THY	765	Istanbul	04:00
QTR	1076	Doha	03:50	MSR	607	Luxor	04:05
LMU	510	Cairo	04:00	ETD	306	AbuDhabi	04:05
KAC	382	Delhi	04:15	MSR	613	Cairo	04:15
KAC	544	Cairo	04:25	LMU	511	Cairo	05:00
KAC	418	Manila	04:25	QTR	1077	Doha	05:30
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:35	FDB	070	Dubai	05:45
FDB	069	Dubai	04:55	KAC	303	Mumbai	06:05
JZR	609	Hyderabad	05:10	JZR	560	Sohag	06:25
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:20	DHX	172	Bahrain	06:50
JZR	143	Doha	05:25	THY	771	Istanbul	06:50
THY	770	Istanbul	05:25	JZR	164	Dubai	06:55
KAC	358	Kochi	05:40	RJA	643	Amman	07:05
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:40	GFA	212	Bahrain	07:15
KAC	344	Chennai	05:50	KAC	167	Paris	07:35
KAC	302	Mumbai	06:10	JZR	902	Beirut	07:50
KAC	362	Colombo	06:25	KAC	501	Bangkok	08:00
KAC	678	Dubai	06:30	KAC	413	Bangkok	08:10
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:30	KAC	791	Madinah	08:35
WAN	342	Sohag	06:35	FDB	054	Dubai	08:35
JZR	529	Asyut	06:50	KAC	787	Jeddah	08:40
KAC	206	Islamabad	06:50	BAW	156	London	08:55
BAW	157	London	07:10	KAC	613	Bahrain	08:55
KAC	204	Lahore	07:10	KAC	133	Doha	09:00
QTR	8511	Doha	07:35	WAN	117	NewYork	09:00
FDB	053	Dubai	07:35	QTR	8512	Doha	09:05
KAC	354	Bengaluru	07:35	JZR	534	Cairo	09:10
JZR	503	Luxor	07:45	KAC	561	Amman	09:40
WAN	332	Alexandria	08:00	KAC	741	Dammam	09:45
KAC	384	Delhi	08:00	KAC	101	London	09:45
UAE	855	Dubai	08:35	KAC	126	Sharjah	09:45
IRA	667	Esfahan	09:00	KAC	671	Dubai	09:45
ETD	301	AbuDhabi	09:05	KAC	515	Tehran	10:00
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:05	UAE	856	Dubai	10:00
QTR	1070	Doha	09:10	IRA	668	Mashhad	10:00
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	KAC	541	Cairo	10:00
FDK	803	Damascus	10:00	ETD	302	AbuDhabi	10:10
SVA	512	Riyadh	10:00	KAC	773	Riyadh	10:10
IRA	673	Ahwaz	10:10	KAC	617	Doha	10:15
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	QTR	1071	Doha	10:20
SYR	341	Damascus	11:00	KAC	155	Istanbul	10:25
WAN	114	Bahrain	11:00	FDB	056	Dubai	10:35
MSC	403	Asyut	11:15	JZR	778	Jeddah	10:40
QTR	1074	Doha	11:20	RSB	7867	Riyadh	11:00
JZR	165	Dubai	11:30	SVA	513	Riyadh	11:00
NIA	161	Cairo	11:35	FDK	804	Damascus	11:00
WAN	134	Doha	11:45	IRA	672	Ahwaz	11:10
MEA	404	Beirut	11:55	GFA	214	Bahrain	11:25
KAC	614	Bahrain	12:10	JZR	776	Jeddah	12:00
FEQ	933	Sohag	12:40	SYR	342	Damascus	12:00
JZ	R561	Sohag	12:45	MSC	404	Asyut	12:15
FD	B075	Dubai	12:45	VIZ	202	IQA	12:30
UAE	871	Dubai	12:50	QTR	1075	Doha	12:30
KAC	742	Dammam	12:50	NIA	362	Alexandria	12:35
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00				
AXB	393	Kozhikode	13:15				
KAC	792	Madinah	13:20				





# Brits Galliano and Waight Keller

WOW Paris haute couture



British designers kicked up a storm yesterday at Paris haute couture week with highly-praised shows from Givenchy's Clare Waight Keller and John Galliano at Maison Margiela. Waight Keller made a flawless haute couture debut late Tuesday with critics swooning over her moonlit sonata in black and white. And Galliano, who showed his first Margiela men's collection last week since his fall from grace after a drunken anti-Semitic rant in a Paris bar in 2011, gave his fans something to shout about on Wednesday morning.

Fashion critic Emma Hope Allwood of Dazed and Confused magazine said his eye-poppingly futurist new look, using shot fabric to catch the flashbulbs, was a triumph. "Actually almost crying at how good Margiela was," she tweeted. "What a privilege to witness!" The former Dior supremo showed his clothes under ultra violet lights to better display their shimmering fluorescence, with silk and satin combined with Mylar. These were dresses designed to literally light up the red carpet, with Galliano saying the idea is that they will be "transformed by the flash of a camera to create a new glamour."

London Evening Standard critic Emma McCarthy said the "effect, which could only be seen via the audience's iPhone screens, and was not visible to the naked eye on the catwalk, could

be perceived as a comment on the illusion of social media and the alternative reality a snap-happy society can present to the world." Galliano knows all about being caught in the glare of the spotlight. Once fashion's favorite extrovert, he has largely withdrawn from view since his disgrace, embarking on an extended public penance. The designer commissioned American artist Jessi Reaves to make the backdrop for his set, with many guests also sitting on his banks of deconstructed furniture—a nod to Galliano and Margiela's genius for recutting classics.



#### Ecstatic reaction

Waight Keller, who quit Chloe in March, had an equally ecstatic reaction to her debut at Givenchy. The 47-year-old had never before tackled a haute couture collection—the handmade pinnacle of the fashion pyramid. But hers was both a daring and crowd-pleasing first bow, with a run of highly romantic dresses, mostly in black and white, on a set which evoked a moonlit garden. The New York Times' Vanessa Friedman called the show "dreamy". "It was really good... a study in sophistication," she tweeted, proclaiming one shimmering layered silvery creation as "definitely an Oscars dress".

The designer's big innovation, however, was bringing men to the haute couture catwalk for the first time at Givenchy. Of the big labels, only Dolce & Gabbana has ever previously presented men's haute couture. The rocky romanticism of Waight Keller's male creations was a clear grab for a high-end market that is dominated by the bespoke tailors of Milan and London's Saville Row. Waight Keller, who made her name by turning Pringle of Scotland from a rather staid knitwear maker into a fashion brand, had a lot to live up to.

#### Armani's 'bloomers'

Outgoing Italian creator Riccardo Tisci had transformed the brand long associated with Audrey Hepburn and Jackie Kennedy both financially and stylistically in his 12 years at the helm. His edgy, gothic look brought a long line of stars to the label like Beyonce, Madonna and Kanye West and his wife Kim Kardashian. Although he let the haute couture end drop in recent years, his T-shirts and a series of "It" bags were big sellers.

Reactions to the Giorgio Armani Prive show,

which brought French stars Marion Cotillard, Isabelle Huppert and German actress Diane Kruger to the front row, were decidedly more mixed, however. The veteran designer's "evening shorts" and crystal leggings got short shift from some critics, as did another creation which Friedman described as "paillette-covered bloomers". The haute couture shows—which are unique to the French capital—are the creme de la creme of fashion with sometimes thousands of hours going into the handmade dresses that can be afforded only by the richest women on the planet.

#### Alexis Mabille's old-school glamour

The red carpet said it all: French designer Alexis Mabille turned on the glamour for a display of classic couture gowns. The styles were firmly set to the 1950s - the years following the austerity of World War II that produced long exuberant lengths of fabric, hyper-femininity and hourglass silhouettes.

A floor-length satin gown in coral sported a giant floppy bow at the waist, while one in dark cobalt saw an abbreviated take on a fifties jacket as a bustier and was paired with full length evening gloves. Mabille didn't forget to have fun. A series of balloon gowns - with curved hems gathered around inside - were the strongest pieces in the show. Each consecutive skirt sported an even bigger explosion of fabric, until the show reached a dramatic crescendo in a circular bottle green gown that spread out from the bust. — AP/AFP



Models present creations for Givenchy during the 2018 spring/summer Haute Couture collection fashion show in Paris. — AFP photos

Models present creations by Margiela during the men's Fashion Week for the Fall/Winter 2018/2019 collection.





Models present creations by Alexis Mabille during the 2018 spring/summer Haute Couture collection fashion show.



Models present creations for Giorgio Armani Prive during the 2018 spring/summer Haute Couture collection fashion show.



# Indian police detain dozens protesting against controversial movie

Right-wing Hindu groups in India stepped up protests yesterday against the release of a controversial Bollywood film, as several states boosted police patrols a day after the Supreme Court refused to allow bans on the movie. Groups critical of the film, set to be released today, have accused its director, Sanjay Leela Bhansali, of distorting history by portraying a Muslim ruler as the "lover" of the Hindu Queen Padmavati of the Rajput warrior clan. The filmmakers deny the accusation.

Violence over the film, "Padmaavat", reached the outskirts of India's capital just as New Delhi began to receive southeast Asian leaders for a major summit yesterday, to be followed the next day by a parade and celebrations of India's Republic Day. Security for the parade showcasing India's military might, which is to be attended by ten leaders from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, has been tightened more than in previous years.

Television broadcast images of gangs of young men, their faces concealed by swathes of cloth, throwing stones in the streets of Gurgaon, 30 km (19 miles) from New Delhi, while the hollowed-out shell of a bus smouldered nearby. The protesters

carried sticks and caused minor injuries to 14 people, said B.S. Sandhu, a senior police official, adding that police had detained 15 protesters. "We will not tolerate any violence in the name of protests against a movie," Sandhu added. "Sporadic rioting did take place but no one will be allowed to protest now."

Indian films that touch upon the historical relationships of Hindus, India's majority religion, and Muslim leaders are often controversial. In the financial capital of Mumbai, police have boosted security at all theatres screening the film, and detained more than 100 members of protest groups, such as the conservative Sri Rajput Karni Sena, as a precaution, a senior police official said. Police are also closely monitoring social media, he added. Police had to open fire to disperse crowds on Tuesday night as protests against the film turned increasingly violent, with vandalism around multiplexes in the western state of Gujarat and dozens of motorcycles being set on fire.

Police have arrested 20 men involved, said Kalpesh Patel, a police officer in the state's key industrial city of Ahmedabad. The protests are expected to continue around the country. "We have decided not to play the movie in any of our-

properties in Gujarat and Rajasthan," Deepak Asher, director of Inox multiplexes, India's second largest theatre chain, told Reuters, referring to the two states hit by the worst protests.

"Our primary concern is the security of our employees and audiences. I think this is a decision that almost every theatre owner in these two states has taken," he added. In the central state of Chhattisgarh, dozens of members of the Rajput community staged protests and burned an effigy of Bhansali on Tuesday, Rakesh Singh Bais of the community group Sarwa Kshatriya Mahasabha told Reuters. Police in northwestern Rajasthan have enforced tight security for protests planned by the Karni Sena and other Rajput groups, its police chief, O.P. Galhotra, said.

"We have been talking to the leaders of the Karni Sena and they don't want to end their protest," Galhotra added. "We have decided to allow them to hold small protests, and have made adequate arrangements to maintain law and order." Anyone trying to depict history as fiction will have to pay a price for their mistake, said Rajvansh Singh, an official of the Karni Sena in the city of Chittorgarh in Rajasthan, who called himself the custodian of respect for Rajput women.



"We will not allow the movie to be released," he said. "Queen Padmini is like our goddess, no one will be allowed to insult our goddess and our Hindu pride." — Reuters

Indian Bollywood actress Deepika Padukone, lead of the film "Padmaavat", arrives at the Hindu Siddhivinayak Temple ahead of the film's release in Mumbai yesterday. — AFP



This file photo shows Atlanta Symphony Orchestra Music Director Robert Spano speaking during the 34th Annual Georgia Music Hall of Fame Awards Concert and Show in Atlanta. — AFP

## Spano to leave Atlanta orchestra after key two decades

Conductor Robert Spano, who made the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra a major force as he championed contemporary composers, said Tuesday he would step down after two decades. One of the longest-serving music directors in US classical music, where turnover is expected and encouraged, Spano said he would end his tenure in June 2021 at the close of his 20th season. "Twenty years is a good benchmark to balance the long-term commitment I have made to the ASO with the necessity of looking towards its future as well as my own," the 56-year-old said in a statement.

"I believe that together, many shared goals and dreams have been achieved," he said. Spano helped build the orchestra based in the unofficial capital of the US South into a major player, leading 49 world premieres so far under his tenure as he welcomed living composers. The orchestra won Grammys for recordings that featured the works of rising US composers Jennifer Higdon and Christopher Theofanidis as well as Argentina's Osvaldo Golijov, whose opera "Ainadamar" won awards in two categories in 2007. Fulfilling a key role in the current economic climate for orchestras, Spano also led a funding campaign that raised \$27 million. — AFP

## British pop musician John to quit touring, Daily Mirror says

British pop musician Elton John is to quit touring after nearly 50 years, the Daily Mirror newspaper reported. The 70-year-old star is calling time on the road after one last world tour, the newspaper said. The newspaper said the singer would make an announcement soon. A spokeswoman could not be reached for comment on the report. With a penchant for fancy costumes and an ear for piano rockers and ballads that made music history, John has dominated the pop industry for five decades.



Once a hard-partying tearaway with a voracious appetite for cocaine and alcohol, John has achieved a long-lasting fame among British acts matched only by the Beatles, the Rolling Stones and David Bowie. Raised in a modest family, he started playing the piano when he was just three. A magazine advert in 1967 put him in touch with English lyricist Bernie Taupin and together they wrote some of the best-loved songs of all time - transforming shy Reg Dwight of suburban north London into global star Elton John. Mixing ballads like "Candle in the Wind", "Your Song" and "Goodbye Yellow Brick Road" with pounding rockers "Crocodile Rock" and "Bennie and the Jets" proved to be a winning formula: he has sold more than 300 million records. — Reuters



This file photo shows (from left) Guitarist Gary Holt, bassist/singer Tom Araya and guitarist Kerry King of Slayer performing at The Joint inside the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas, Nevada. — AFP

## Macabre metal masters Slayer call it quits

Slayer, whose lugubrious, occult-infused music helped create the genre of thrash metal, on Tuesday announced that the group was retiring after a final tour. The metal band, whose founding member and key songwriter Jeff Hanneman died in 2013, said it was retiring after nearly 37 years of making "the most brutal, breathtakingly aggressive, all-hell's-a-breaking-loose music ever created." "The age of Slayer, one of the greatest thrash/metal/punk bands of this or any age, is coming to an end," the group immodestly wrote on Instagram. The band said it would start its farewell tour on May 10 in San Diego, playing across the United States and Canada before a final date on June 20 in Austin, Texas.

Emerging in Los Angeles in the early 1980s, Slayer wrote ferocious metal songs driven by minor keys, intense bursts of speed and gloomy guitar riffs. Yet Slayer distinguished itself for the extent to which it embraced the dark side, with lyrics that evoked Satanism and stages decked out with upside-down crucifixes under blood-red lights. Slayer frequently raised controversy and faced allegations of Nazi sympathies,

which the band denied, for its song "Angel of Death" about human experiments in a concentration camp. It also came under fire for its 2006 song "Jihad," which related the September 11 attacks from the viewpoint of the Al-Qaeda assailants and quoted plot leader Mohammed Atta.

Slayer released its 12th and apparently final album in 2015, "Repentless." The album was its first without guitarist Hanneman, who died from a flesh-eating bacteria after he was bitten by a spider while taking a bath. The group more recently raised eyebrows when its frontman, Chilean-born Tom Araya, posted a picture of President Donald Trump, although he said the gesture was a provocation rather than a statement of support. Slayer is considered one of the four founding bands of thrash metal, the subgenre marked by dark aggression. The others are Anthrax-which will join Slayer on the final tour-as well as Megadeth and Metallica, which has been by far the most commercially successful. — AFP



Pallbearers carry the coffin of Cranberries singer Dolores O'Riordan during her funeral at Saint Ailbe's Church, Ballybricken, Ireland yesterday. — AP



File photo shows Cranberries singer Dolores O'Riordan.

## Cranberries singer Dolores O'Riordan laid to rest in home town

Cranberries lead singer Dolores O'Riordan was laid to rest at a private funeral in her home town Monday, remembered as someone who rescued people from "the darkness of depression". O'Riordan, 46, whose distinctive and powerful Irish voice helped fuel The Cranberries' rapid rise in the early 1990s, was found dead in a London hotel last week during a recording trip ahead of a planned tour. No cause of death has yet been established. Her mother, three children and bandmates Noel Hogan, Mike Hogan and Fergal Lawler attended the service at Saint Ailbe's Church in the small rural County Limerick town of Ballybricken in the south-west of Ireland.

"No words are adequate to describe Dolores or to accurately state the influence for good she has been over the years," Canon Liam McNamara, a family friend who first met O'Riordan when she was a teenager, told the

mourners. "The numbers she rescued from the darkness of depression are impossible to count." Candles lit the streets of Ballybricken late on Monday, as her coffin was brought to the church where McNamara said she once sang and played keyboard in the local choir.

The mass began with a recording of Ave Maria sung by O'Riordan and Italian opera star Luciano Pavarotti. A guitar and a platinum disc award - symbols from a musical career that saw The Cranberries sell over 40 million records, second only to U2 among Irish acts - were brought to the altar. O'Riordan, whose hits with The Cranberries such as "Linger" and "Zombie" catapulted her to fame as a shy 22-year-old, was the "voice of her generation," Irish Prime Minister Leo Varadkar said last week. — Reuters

## CHLOE GRACE MORETZ LIFTS LID ON GAY CONVERSION THERAPY

It sounds like it ought to be a relic of 17th-century puritanism, but gay conversion therapy is alive and well across the modern United States. From Seattle to southern Florida, schools offering to help youngsters "pray the gay away" have resisted attempts at prohibition, forcing youngsters to disavow their homosexuality. Opposed by authorities from the American Psychological Association to former presi-

dent Barack Obama, these centers offer counseling, support groups and, in extreme cases, drugs, hypnosis and even surgery.

It is a practice which has gone under the radar to some extent, but a new movie on the issue starring Chloe Grace Moretz has been shocking audiences and delighting critics at the Sundance Film Festival. "The (Trump) administration actually completely believes in conversion therapy," Moretz told AFP on the red carpet for Monday's world premiere of "The Miseducation of Cameron Post" at the annual event in Park City, Utah. "(Vice President) Mike Pence tried to get it state-funded when he was senator, so it is a very real problem."

Moretz puts in what some reviewers are calling a career-best performance as the titular character-a teenage girl who is caught having a sexual encounter with the prom queen in the mid-1990s. "You know, 45 out of our 50 states in this country have it to be legal to practice gay conversion therapy," Moretz added. "And actually two weeks ago New Hampshire voted against banning it in their state." In the movie, Cameron is forced into a therapy center by her conservative aunt and uncle, her legal guardians since her parents perished in a car crash. — AFP



Chloe Grace Moretz speaks onstage during the 2018 Spotlight Initiative Awards Gala Dinner at Kia Supper Suite in Park City, Utah. — AFP



Lifestyle | Music & Movies

# French resistance rises to 'tulip' gift from Jeff Koons

A year after the terror attacks that struck Paris in November 2015, Jeff Koons said he would give the city a monumental sculpture meant to honour the victims-but critics of the project are saying 'no thanks'. About two dozen artists, gallery owners and officials wrote an open letter Monday urging the city of Paris not to install the 12-metre-tall "Bouquet of Tulips" outside the Museum of Modern Art and adjacent Palais de Tokyo, a contemporary art center.

The project—a giant hand holding multicolored flowers—is meant to mimic the Statue of Liberty grasping its torch, but was denounced as a "product placement", according to the text, whose signatories include the filmmaker Olivier

Assayas and former culture minister Frederic Mitterrand. "A brilliant and inventive creator in the 1980s, Jeff Koons has since become the emblem of industrial art which is spectacular and speculative," the letter states.

But if the goal is to honor the victims of the deadliest terror attack ever on French soil, the text says, "shouldn't there be a call for submissions, as is usually the case, with an opportunity given to French artists?" It also says the site for the work is nowhere near the Stade de France nor the Bataclan concert hall and nearby bars and restaurants where jihadist attackers killed a total of 130 people.

Private donors financed the sculpture's three-million-euro price tag, but taxpayers are on the hook for work

required to reinforce the ground supporting the bronze, stainless steel and aluminum work, the text says. Koons, who is known for toying with objects from popular culture, said it was designed as an offering in memory of the victims and as a symbol of optimism, in an effort to help Parisians overcome the tragedy that struck the city. Other signatories of the letter include the artists Christian Boltanski and Jean-Luc Moulene, and Emilie Cariou, a lawmaker in President Emmanuel Macron's LREM party and vice president of parliament's finances commission. — AFP



Staff install the portrait of Felix Auerbach, a German physicist from 1906, by Norwegian artist Edward Munch as the Van Gogh Museum's director Axel Ruger (right) looks on at the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam. — AFP

## Van Gogh Museum unveils rare picture by peer Munch

Amsterdam's Van Gogh Museum unveiled a rare new purchase Tuesday, painted by Vincent's contemporary Edward Munch, the only portrait by the Norwegian artist on display in The Netherlands. The "Portrait of Felix Auerbach", created by Munch in 1906 was bought for an undisclosed amount from a private collection, Van Gogh Museum director Axel Rueger told journalists. "It's the only portrait by Munch in a Dutch collection," a beaming Rueger said as the painting was being hung at the museum—exactly 74 years after Munch's death.

It's also the first time the picture goes on display at the popular museum, which drew a record 2.26 million visitors last year, making it one of the most-visited attractions in the country, Rueger said. Munch was commissioned in 1906 to paint the likeness of the famous German physicist Auerbach while the scientist was working as a professor at the University of Jena in central Germany. He was paid 500 marks for the job. It depicts a self-assured Auerbach, with a steady gaze and holding a cigar, on a vibrant red background and is considered to

be one of the best portraits by Munch in the early 20th century, Van Gogh Museum curator Maite van Dijk said.

Munch, best known for his seminal painting "The Scream", drew much of inspiration from Van Gogh, whose works he saw around 1890, although it was unlikely that the two ever met, the Van Gogh Museum added. "Just like Van Gogh, he (Munch) strived towards modernizing art and both developed a colorful and expressive way of the universal emotions found in human existence," it said. The Van Gogh Museum in 2015 hosted an exhibition called "Munch: Van Gogh" in which the parallels between the artists were highlighted. Although the painting of Felix Auerbach is the only personal portrait by Munch on display in the Netherlands, it is one of two Munch canvasses in the country. The other Munch is called "Two Girls under an Apple Tree in Bloom" and can be seen at Rotterdam's Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen. — AFP

## 'Wonder Woman' stumbles, 'Get Out' surprises at Oscar nominations

"Wonder Woman" failed to conquer Oscar voters on Tuesday despite riding to one of the biggest box office hits of 2017 on a wave of female empowerment, making it one of the biggest snubs for Hollywood's highest honors. The Warner Bros movie, featuring Gal Gadot as the sword-wielding Wonder Woman, was the first stand-alone female superhero film since 2005 and earned some \$825 million globally, making its filmmaker Patty Jenkins, 46, the highest-grossing female director in Hollywood.

But at Tuesday's Oscar nominations, Jenkins was left off the director's race and the film was snubbed in the best picture category, despite nods for other movies about women and made by women. Instead, it was Guillermo del Toro's surreal fantasy romance "The Shape of Water" that led the Oscar nominations with 13 nods. Speaking to Reuters, del Toro said that despite the omission of "Wonder Woman" at the Oscars, the impact of the film was "undeniable."



Gal Gadot attends the 29th Annual Producers Guild Awards at The Beverly Hilton Hotel on January 20, 2018 in Beverly Hills, California. — AFP

"Not only did ('Wonder Woman') break this archaic notion that this grand superhero-sized myth was done for 'the boys,' but it delivered it at a level of excellency that is a high watermark," the filmmaker said. The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences has traditionally disdained big action and superhero movies in favor of smaller art-house fare, like last year's Oscar champion "Moonlight" and this year's dark comedy "Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri," which landed seven nods. Since 1990, only the 2003 fantasy epic "Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King" snapped that trend to win the top Oscar honor. Sci-fi movie "Avatar," still the biggest box office movie of all time, received a best picture nomination in 2010 but lost out to "The Hurt Locker."

### Success for 'get out'

This year's surprises include four nominations - including best picture, and best actor for Daniel Kaluuya - for Jordan Peele's "Get Out," in which an African-American man finds himself trapped at his white girlfriend's house with her strange family. The \$5 million horror movie from Universal Pictures became a box office success with more than \$250 million globally and became a talking point around modern day race relations in America. "I think that there's a piece of the black experience that is communicated in the film and through Daniel's performance that people of color recognize and haven't seen and that people not of color needed to see

as well," Peele told Reuters.

Veteran actor Christopher Plummer, 88, was also a surprise contender in the supporting actor race for Sony Pictures' Getty kidnapping film "All the Money in the World." Plummer boarded the movie a month before its release, replacing actor Kevin Spacey because of sexual misconduct allegations. Plummer stepped in after Spacey was accused of sexual misconduct by multiple men. Spacey issued an apology for the first reported incident, involving actor Anthony Rapp.

"Everything has happened so quickly of late that I am still a trilled stunned but excited by it all," Plummer said in a written statement of his nomination. James Franco was excluded from the best actor race for "The Disaster Artist" after facing accusations of sexual misconduct earlier this month following his Golden Globe win.

Franco said the accusations were "not accurate." He lost out on Sunday at the Screen Actors Guild awards to Gary Oldman for "Darkest Hour." Other snubs included Steven Spielberg in the directing race for press freedom movie "The Post," and its star Tom Hanks. "Mudbound" was left out of best picture and its filmmaker, Dee Rees, was also excluded from the directing race, but she landed a nod for adapted screenplay. German film "In The Fade," which won the Golden Globe for best foreign language film and received praise for its lead star Diane Kruger, was left out of the Oscar foreign language race. — Reuters

## Oscars nominations: All the fun facts

The nominations for the 90th Oscars were announced Tuesday, with "The Shape of Water," "Dunkirk" and "Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri" leading the pack. But the statistical quirks that the annual event throws up can be as intriguing as tracking which movies get the most nods. Here are some fun facts and figures from this year's list of nominees:

### Female filmmakers recognized

The 7,000-plus voters of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences managed to remember this year that women make movies too. Greta Gerwig, recognized for "Lady Bird," is only the fifth female best director nominee, and the first since Kathryn Bigelow won for "The Hurt Locker" in 2010. Rachel Morrison, the director of photography on "Mudbound," is the first woman to receive a nomination for cinematography.

### Long live Queen Meryl

Meryl Streep increases her lead as the most nominated performer in history with her 21st nod for Steven Spielberg's "The Post." Her three wins were for "Kramer vs. Kramer" (1979), "Sophie's Choice" (1982) and "The Iron Lady" (2011).

### All hail the maestro

John Williams adds to his record number of music scoring nominations with his 46th for "Star Wars: The Last Jedi." His overall total of 51 nominations—including five for original song—is the most for any living person, and second only to Walt Disney at 59.

### Kobe Bryant: Oscars MVP?

Basketballer Kobe Bryant, an 18-time NBA all-star, is an Oscar nominee

thanks to his collaboration with artist Glen Keane and composer John Williams for the short "Dear Basketball." "What?? This is beyond the realm of imagination," Bryant, 39, tweeted following the announcement.

But not everyone will be delighted with the nod. In the wake of the Harvey Weinstein scandal, it will be a reminder that the Los Angeles Lakers legend was arrested over the suspected rape of a 19-year-old hotel worker in Colorado in 2003. Bryant admitted to a sexual encounter, but insisted it was consensual. The criminal case was dropped when the accuser refused to testify, but Bryant faced a civil suit. As part of an out-of-court settlement, he publicly apologized to his accuser, but admitted no guilt.

### Snubs and surprises

Among this year's big snubs were Golden Globes nominees Armie Hammer ("Call Me by Your Name") and Hong Chau ("Downsizing"), as well as "Wonder Woman," which didn't get a single nomination. "Mudbound" and "The Big Sick" were conspicuously absent from the best picture category, though they received other nominations. Steven Spielberg ("The Post") and Martin McDonagh ("Three Billboards") were both left out of the best director category, despite helming two of the most acclaimed movies of the year.

On the other side of the coin, Denzel Washington picked up a surprise 8th nomination for acting, expanding his own record as the most-nominated black actor in Oscars history. He has won twice, for "Glory" and "Training Day." Washington also has a nomination for best picture for "Fences," which he directed and co-produced. — AFP

## Love the Oscars, Love OSN

OSN reaffirmed its position as the leading entertainment network in the MENA region with a strong set of Oscar nominated titles available for its customers to enjoy. Film fans can watch some of the biggest nominees such as Dunkirk, Get Out, The Shape of Water and Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri ahead of the final award ceremony. Families that love the very best in animation can check out Beauty and the Beast and The Boss Baby on OSN Movies First HD. Discover these titles and more with OSN's dedicated collection of Academy Award winning and nominated titles, available on OSN On Demand and OSN Play from February 1, 2018; with even more on OSN Movies HD from February 16 to March 4.

OSN has full coverage of the live awards ceremony, from the red-carpet arrivals to the big event itself, exclusively in the region on March 5 on OSN Movies HD. Enjoy the ultimate celebration of stories with the full Academy Awards experience, exclusively on OSN. Visit OSN.com for more information. Join the conversation on social media using #LiveTheOscars, and stay up-to-date with all OSN announcements on Twitter @OSNnewsME, and on the OSN Media Hub www.osn.com/en-ae/media.

Top Academy award-nominated titles available exclusively on OSN





# Lifestyle

THURSDAY, JANUARY 25, 2018



Surfer Tamayo Perry rides the barrel during a late afternoon free surf session at the legendary Banzai Pipeline on the North shore of Oahu, Hawaii.— AFP

## Big, bold and bright: London muralist fetes immigration

Spray can in hand perched halfway up a ladder, Neequaye Dreph Dsane applied the final touches of color to his latest mural enlivening an otherwise drab side street in east London. The once-dingy area is now a hipster hangout and home to the second in a series of new portraits by the British-Ghanaian artist, known as Dreph. His mission: to paint a positive picture—literally—of immigrants in Britain, in an era when he feels they are increasingly maligned by gentrification, Brexit and the rise of nationalism. The muralist, who rose to prominence last year with a striking street portrait series celebrating black female empowerment, wants to use his rising profile to showcase these “community champions”.

“With Brexit and seeing the effects of gentrification that’s happening across the city, I’ve been inspired to tell the human stories of the people who are the soul of some of the communities that make London such a culturally rich, cosmopolitan city,” he told AFP between bursts of spray paint. “I don’t think we hear enough about the people who have come from different parts of the world, and just done some absolutely amazing stuff for their communities, which is essential for this country.”

### ‘Andy Warhol of Marrakech’

Dreph’s latest mural depicts Hassan Hajjaj, a British-Moroccan artist who divides his time between the two countries and has had an office-showroom-shop in Shoreditch since 2005. Hajjaj mines various contemporary cultures in his works—which include photos, video, sculpture and design—earning him the moniker the “Andy Warhol of Marrakech.” He exhibited at London’s Somerset House galleries late last year. Dreph, 43, was inspired to paint his friend Hajjaj because “he has managed to fuse his native Marrakech with things that are popular to the West.”

“That’s what his work is about and... exactly what I’m trying to do with this series.” In the mural—nearly three meters high and over six meters wide (10 by 20 feet)—Hajjaj poses intensely, his greying beard intricately captured with speckles of white spray paint, framed by an eye-catching purple background. “I still feel a bit strange seeing myself that big,” he said, staring up at the wall. “I feel very proud to be a part of Dreph’s body of work... He’s trying to present people of colour, people from a different background coming here. “We don’t have that many people present, people like us in London in music,



Street muralist, British-Ghanaian artist, Neequaye Dreph Dsane stands beside his artwork, a portrait of British-Moroccan artist, Hassan Hajjaj in a street in east London.

fashion, art, food,” Hajjaj added.

### ‘All organic’

Dreph, a father of one and former graffiti artist and school art teacher, has produced his work on streets around the world. In London, he gets informal agreement to convert walls into canvases, often just knocking on people’s doors to ask permission. His “You Are Enough” portraits project, completed last year, went viral across platforms like Instagram and Twitter and was covered by British media. Dreph said he conceived the 10-mural series to champion oft-overlooked everyday black women, from lawyers to writers to campaigners.

He did not stage any formal publicity and was surprised by the widespread attention. “It was all organic,” he added. “And that’s something that I hold dear... The integrity is absolutely paramount to what I do.” In his follow-up series, the artist plans to produce another 10 portraits around the British capital on the theme of immigration. He aims to paint his subjects where they live or work, in an effort to celebrate the local and confront issues around gentrification stoked by “You Are Enough”. “People are actually seeing the artwork as another sign of gentrification,” he said, admitting initial surprise at the reaction. “This series is a response to that... My work is about presenting alternative narratives.”

### Signature style

Dreph completed the first piece in the new project last year: a 6.7-metre-high mural towering over central Brixton, a fast-gentrifying south London neighborhood long home to British-Caribbean and British-African communities. It features local legend Michael Johns, a facilities manager who emigrated from Grenada in the 1970s and was awarded the keys to Brixton Market in 2017 in honor of his years of service.

The mural showcases Dreph’s signature style: larger-than-life subjects emblazoned in bright, bold colors, exuding pride and optimism. He paints from his own photographs and credits his vibrant and joyful style to something in his subconscious—and background. “My portraiture is born out of years and years of doing graffiti... I’ve translated it into what I’m doing now,” Dreph said. — AFP

“People are actually seeing the artwork as another sign of gentrification”

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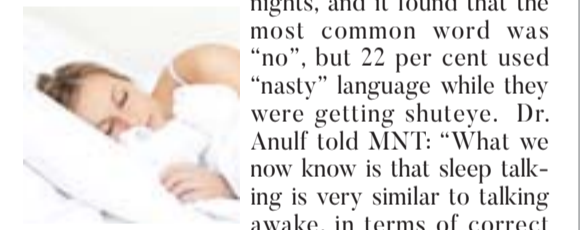
An artwork of British-Moroccan artist, Hassan Hajjaj, created by British-Ghanaian street muralist, Neequaye Dreph Dsane is pictured in a street in east London.— AFP photos

### Bizarre News

#### Sleep talking causes negative and vulgar language

Sleep talking is likely to cause offence, according to new research. The condition where you shout out words while you sleep is more common among children and males, but a new study by Dr. Isabelle Arnulf has revealed some of the things people are likely to say. The investigation into sleeping habits saw 232 adults recorded over the course of a few

nights, and it found that the most common word was “no”, but 22 per cent used “nasty” language while they were getting shuteye. Dr. Arnulf told MNT: “What we now know is that sleep talking is very similar to talking awake, in terms of correct grammar, with subordinate sentences, and silence for others to answer, as in awake turn of speech. “The differences are qualitative: nocturnal language is negative, tense, more vulgar, and addressed to somebody, not to oneself. “It suggests that the brain uses the same networks as awake, and that sleep talking translates the concomitant dreaming activity, which is tense, too.”



#### Police officers charged by elephants

Police officers in Sri Lanka were charged by elephants while staking out a suspected cannabis farm. The dramatic situation led the officers to an automatic rifle, as they ran for their lives, and the police are now having to search for a T56 automatic assault rifle in the Lunugamvehera nature reserve. The police said in a statement: “The constables dropped their weapons and fled to save their lives when the elephants charged.”

According to official figures, around 50 people are killed in wild elephant attacks in Sri Lanka each year. On the flip side, around 200 elephants are killed each year by farmers, who say that wild animals destroy their crops.



#### Air hostess warns passengers about drinking coffee on planes

A flight attendant has warned passengers about drinking coffee while on planes. The American Airlines airhostess called Betty revealed that the water used in coffee is the same used in the plane toilets, and has warned people to avoid having hot drinks while flying. She told Vice: “Don’t drink the coffee on airplanes. “It’s the same potable [safe to drink] water that goes through the bathroom system. “We recently had a test for E.coli in our water and it didn’t pass, and then maintenance came on and hit a couple buttons and it passed. “So, avoid any hot water or tea. Bottled and ice is fine, of course.” Betty isn’t the only person to reveal this news after EasyJet told the Mail Online that the water stored on a plane is used for both hot drinks and flushing the toilet.

A spokesperson said: “There is absolutely no chance of any cross contamination due to the system’s plumbing design. “This is common place amongst most aircraft manufacturers and airlines. Fresh water is loaded onto the aircraft daily.” In 2016, a professional airline employee wrote on Reddit: “The coffee is absolutely disgusting because no one washes the container that goes out every morning.”

