



## 3 Amir receives letter from Qatar Amir Sheikh Tamim



## 24 Syria's Assad to meet North Korean leader



## 28 Zverev reaches first Slam quarter-final



### رمضان

Remadan

IMSAK	03:04
FAJR	03:14
DHUHR	11:47
ASR	15:21
MAGHRIB	18:45
ISHA	20:16

# Philippines leader apologizes to Kuwait for 'harsh' words

### Ban lifted; Tensions cool after Kuwait, Philippines seal deal

## Crown Prince chairs National Security Council meeting

**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah yesterday chaired a National Security Council meeting at Seif Palace. The meeting was attended by Deputy Commander of National Guard Sheikh Meshaal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. Other attendees include: First Deputy Premier and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Nayef Falah Al-Hajraf, National Security Apparatus Chief Sheikh Thamer Ali Sabah Al-Salem



**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah chaired a National Security Council meeting yesterday. — KUNA

Al-Sabah. In the meeting, His Highness the Crown Prince discussed the regional and international developments - underlining the need for effective coordination and cooperation among state bodies to enhance the security and stability of Kuwait. — KUNA

**SEOUL:** Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte apologized to Kuwait yesterday for his "harsh" words at the height of a months-long diplomatic row over the treatment of domestic workers. The spat began in February when a murdered Filipina maid was found in her employer's freezer in the Gulf state, prompting Duterte to lash out at the "inhuman" treatment of migrant workers and ban workers from travelling to Kuwait.

"For the first time I would say that I was harsh in my language - maybe because that was a result of an emotional outburst. But I'd like to apologize now," Duterte said, addressing Kuwait directly in a speech before expatriate Filipinos living in South Korea. "I'm sorry for the language that I was using but I'm very satisfied with... how you responded to the problems of my country." Authorities in Manila say around 262,000 Filipinos worked in Kuwait before February, with many employed as household maids.

They are among over two million Filipinos employed in the region, whose remittances are a lifeline to the Philippine economy. At the height of the diplomatic flap, Duterte alleged Arab employers routinely rape Filipina workers, force them to work 21 hours a day and feed them scraps. "Is there something wrong with your culture? Is there something wrong with your values?" the Philippine leader said then. Kuwaiti authorities expelled Manila's envoy in April over footage showing



**MANILA:** Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte gestures as he gives his departure speech at the Manila International airport. — AFP

embassy staff helping Filipino workers flee allegedly abusive bosses in Kuwait. Tensions cooled last month after the two nations sealed an agreement on workplace safety guarantees for Filipinos working in

Continued on Page 24

## Lessons of Ramadan

Ramadan Kareem

By Teresa Leshner

One of the most prominent outcomes of fasting the month of Ramadan, especially in the summer heat, is the development and perfection of patience. Nobody can fast without having a degree of patience, which is mentioned in the Quran as one of the qualities of someone who will go to Paradise. For example, "I (God) have rewarded them this Day [with Paradise] for what they have endured patiently; they are indeed the ones that are truly triumphant!" (23:11)

As successfully completing fasting in Ramadan requires patience, so does entrance into Paradise. In fact, Paradise requires two kinds of patience: one is proactive and the other reactive. The proactive type is striving to adopt a way of life sanctioned by God. It means making the effort to learn what God wants from us and then applying it in our lives. The Quran, which is God's final message to mankind, tells us exactly what God expects from us, and Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) demonstrated practically its teachings, making it easier to understand. As it is a lifelong process of study coupled with conformance to God's teachings and to the example of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), it will take determination and patience.

But the reward is worth the effort, according to the Quran: "The ones who fulfill the covenant with God and do not break its solemn pledge to Him, who keep joined all the relations and obligations that God has commanded to be joined and stand in awe of their Lord, and fear an evil reckoning, who endure with patience seeking the countenance of their Lord, who establish the prayer and spend charitably from what We have provided them, secretly and openly, and who avert what is evil with what is good... the angels will say, 'Peace unto you for that you persevered in patience! Now how excellent is the final Home!'" (13:20-24)

Those who repent, believe, do not bear false witness, pass by vile talk with honor, and heed the verses of God... "those are the ones who will be rewarded with the highest place in heaven, because of their patient constancy." (25:75) "Those who believe in the unseen, establish prayer and spend out of what We have provided for them, and who believe in what has been revealed to you [Muhammad] and what was revealed before you, and of the Hereafter they are certain - those are upon guidance from their Lord and it is those who are the successful" (2:2-5).

The patience required for Paradise needs a level of commitment and effort beyond the everyday patience of the common man. The second kind of patience required for Paradise is reactive, and it is demonstrated by our reaction to things outside of our control, such as illness, injury, loss, calamity and all circumstances related to our physical vulnerability and mortality.

Continued on Page 24



**KUWAIT:** First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah poses for a group photo with Kuwaiti troops. — KUNA

## Defense Minister visits soldiers in Northern Kuwait

**KUWAIT:** First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah on Saturday visited Kuwaiti army units deployed in the north. During his visit, which was marked by a Ramadan

breakfast meal with troops, the minister met with Assistant Commander of the Army Major General Mishal Al-Mutairi and other senior officers. Shortly after, the minister gave a speech on the occasion, conveying the greetings and appreciation of His Highness the Amir and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and HH the Crown Prince and HH the Prime Minister. — KUNA

## Qatar crisis creates 'new Gulf' with no winners, but losers

**DOHA:** The year-old acrimonious dispute between Qatar and its neighbors is forging a "new" Gulf, potentially transforming what was a stable region of the Arab world, experts warn. It has shattered old alliances and rendered the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council practically obsolete, pushing Qatar towards Turkey and Iran. And with no sign of a resolution, it is unclear if any party has benefitted.

"In its impact on the regional unit in the Arab Gulf, the crisis is likely to be as disruptive and as era-defining as Saddam Hussein's invasion and occupation of Kuwait was in 1990," said Kristian Ulrichsen, a fellow at Rice University's Baker Institute. "It is very difficult to see how the Arab Gulf can come back together." The crisis between some of the world's richest countries erupted on June 5, 2017 as Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain and Egypt suddenly cut all ties with Doha, accusing it of supporting terrorism and Iran.

Qatar, a small peninsula nation, found its only land border closed, its state-owned airline barred from using its neighbors' airspace, and Qatari residents expelled from the boycotting countries. Doha was handed a list of 13 demands, including closing broadcaster Al Jazeera, removing Turkish troops from the country, and



**DOHA:** Photo shows portraits of Qatar's Amir Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani on the back of vehicles and text reading in Arabic: "Tamim the glorious" in Doha. — AFP

scaling back its cooperation with Iran, with which it shares the world's largest gas field. Qatar has done none of these. Instead it has responded defiantly by dismissing the charges and courting new diplomatic and trading links.

The cold war in the desert has lingered, although Qatar still supplies the UAE with gas. As new axes emerge, Qatar has increasingly tied itself to Turkey while straining relations between Riyadh and Ankara and extended its reach far beyond the Gulf. Last month, Qatar's Amir Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani thanked Iran for its support during the crisis.

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## Qatar will not 'fuel a war' against Iran

**SINGAPORE:** Qatar will not be dragged into any conflict with Iran, a senior Qatari official said yesterday. Defense minister Khalid Bin Mohammad Al-Attiyah told an international security conference in Singapore that even though the two nations had "a lot of differences", Doha would not "fuel a war" in the region.

"Is it wise to call the US and Israel to go and fight Iran? Iran is next door," he said. "If any third party is trying to push the region or some country in the region to start a war with Iran, this will be very dangerous," he said. His comments sparked speculation that he could have been referring to Saudi Arabia, which has led a year-long blockade against Qatar, accusing the emirate of financing terrorist groups and having close ties with Tehran.

Qatar rejects the charges and says the blockading countries-which also include the UAE, Bahrain and Egypt-are seeking regime change in Doha. Responding to a question on whether Qatar's air bases could be used to launch airstrikes against Iran, Al-Attiyah said the country was "not a fan of war", and called instead for engagement and dialogue. "We should call Iran, put all the files on the table, and discuss to bring peace, (rather) than war," he told the Shangri-La Dialogue.

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## Local

## Photo of the Day



GAZA: A Palestinian protester sets a Kuwaiti flag on barbed wires in a show of appreciation for its support to the Palestinian people, during a demonstration near the border with Israel, east of Jabalia in the central Gaza Strip on June 1, 2018. — AFP

## News in brief

## Assembly to debate new private education bill

**KUWAIT:** Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education for Private and Thematic Education Affairs said Saturday the cabinet will table to the National Assembly a new bill on private education in the coming legislative term. The draft addresses all matters relating to the private education sector and will help improve the quality of private education in the country, Dr Abdulmohsen Al-Howaila said. He made the press remarks after attending the graduation ceremony of grade 12 at Martyr Asrar Al-Qabandi Bilingual School. Dr Howaila affirmed the Ministry's keenness on improving the operating system of private education and modernizing its curricula. — KUNA

## Guinness World Records

**KUWAIT:** The multi-storey parking building annexed to the new courts complex in Jahra was included in the Guinness World Records Book as the largest of its kind in the world, spread over an area of 5,000 sq m. The facility was built by an American company and was checked by the Guinness team on Oct 17, 2017.

## No assets decline

**KUWAIT:** The Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA) yesterday quashed reports on a decline in the assets of Kuwait's Future Generations Fund (FGF), by 11.5 percent, about \$68 billion. The circulated data and figures are mere external and erroneous estimates by uninformed agencies, and do not reflect the real performance of KIA's assets portfolio, the authority added in a statement. They estimated KIA's assets at \$592 billion in 2015, and \$524 billion in 2016, claiming a fall of \$68 billion. The reserves are at their best since KIA was established and "no decrease whatsoever has occurred," KIA stressed. It also slammed attempts targeting the "state's economic policy and the reputation of the FGF (Kuwait's Sovereign Fund) through disseminating false data." KIA's performance is monitored by relevant control agencies, and is annually reviewed by the National Assembly. — KUNA

## Minister opens DVS

**KUWAIT:** Minister of Information Mohammad Al-Jabri opened on Saturday the Descriptive Video Service (DVS) designed to serve the visually impaired people. "The service marks another quantum leap in the chain of successes of Kuwait TV (KTV) by national cadres," he said at a ceremony, hosted by the National Library. "By introducing this service which will help the visually impaired to interact with the TV drama, KTV becomes a trailblazer in the region," said Jabri who doubles as minister of state for youth affairs. "This achievement falls in the framework of an ambitious plan, set by the Ministry of Information, to modernize the KTV channels and suit the tastes of all audience," the minister added.

Meanwhile, Engineer Abdul-Aziz Al-Janahi, advisor to the minister, said the 3D soiree 'Masrah Al-Jarima' is KTV's first performance applying the DVS technique. "The coming stage will see the official introduction of the service to the digital transmission and control systems," he added.

The DVS, also referred to as audio description, video description, or more precisely visual description, consists of a narrator talking through the presentation of what is happening on the screen or stage. It was first offered by the American Council of the Blind (ACB) in early 2009, followed by the BBC in August 2009. — KUNA

## Sawaber complex completely expropriated

By A Saleh

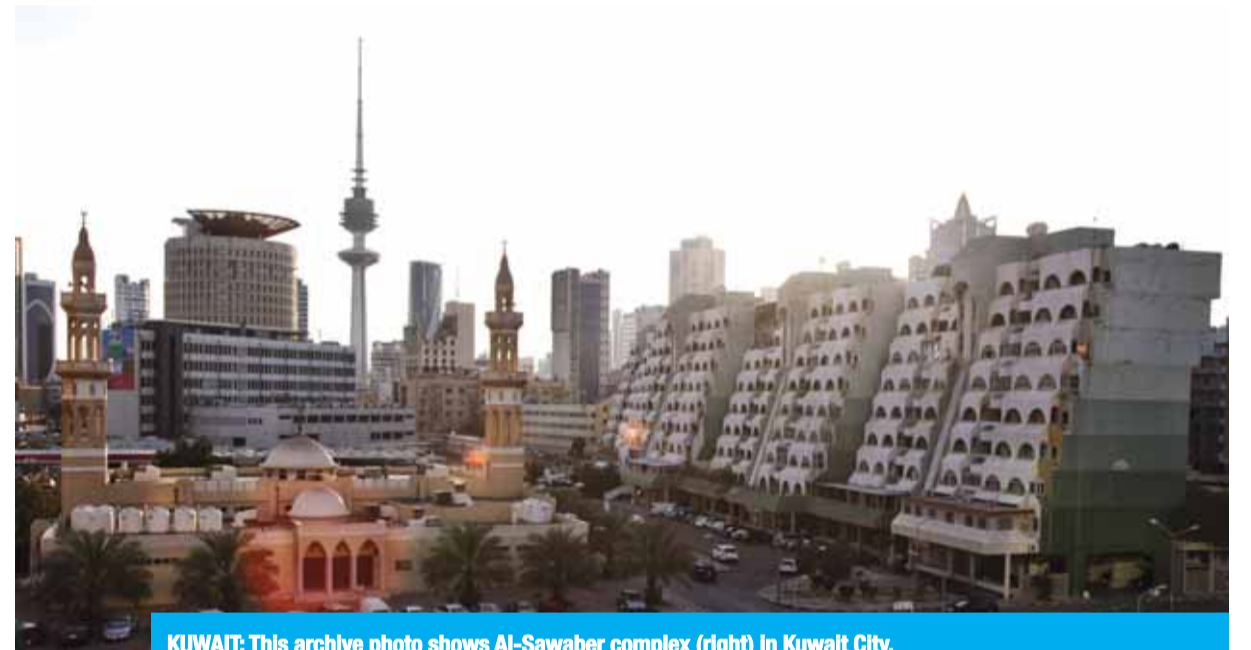
**KUWAIT:** The finance ministry's assistant undersecretary for expropriation for public interest Fahd Al-Shola said the entire Sawaber complex has been expropriated, even from citizens refusing to sell their units. Shola added that all needed administrative, financial and legal measures had been completed for all units except for one whose owner delayed issuing his ownership deed. He also noted that the amount to be paid to the owners of the 528 apartments in the complex is KD 110 million.

## Oil sector

The percentage of citizens amongst oil sector employees jumped to 84.8 percent by the end of 2017, before declining to 83.3 percent by the beginning of this fiscal year, said informed sources, noting that only 19,530 citizens worked the sector by the end of 2017 compared to 21,509 in the previous year. Civil Service Commission (CSC) statistics show that the total number of state employees as per official data is 352,256, while the total number registered in CSC's email system for the first time is 70,586 and those registered as seeking job opportunities number 657.

## Solar power

The Kuwait Authority for Partnership Projects (KAPP) plans to reoffer the Abdaliya solar power plant for bidding after finishing all needed preparations, said informed sources, noting that the step was taken after the Ministry of Electricity and Water (MEW) requested using the BV solar board technology instead of the old ISCC one. The source added that it had been scientifically proved that the



KUWAIT: This archive photo shows Al-Sawaber complex (right) in Kuwait City.

new technology generates more electricity. Meanwhile, the Central Tenders Committee (CTC) announced that MEW offered a tender to build and maintain two 1,600-mm freshwater pipelines between Mina Abdullah and West Funaitees complex, in addition to a low sodium line between Mina Abdullah and Al-Zour complex for bidding. CTC added that 15 already qualified companies will be allowed to bid. Meanwhile, the MEW development plan showed that the ministry is currently executing 40 projects, on top of which is one to change Southern Zour plant gas turbines into dual system to increase capacity by 500 megawatts.

## Business environment

MoCI has prioritized issuing seven laws of great importance to the World Bank's plans to develop the business

environment in Kuwait, said informed sources. The sources explained that the laws include insolvency, data exchange, voluntary restructuring of debts, family businesses, collective funding and the new insurance and auditors' laws.

## MP sued

CEO of the Vietnam refinery Turki Al-Ajmi hired lawyer Riyadh Al-Sane to sue MP Abdulwahab Al-Babtain, who was one of the lawmakers who grilled the oil minister, for including his name in the grilling motion he filed. Ajmi stressed that Babtain had hurled vicious and dangerous accusations at him as if he was a gangster, especially when he described him as 'King of Vietnam' and accused him of dealing with outlaws, planting drugs in the vehicle of his Japanese predecessor and expelling Kuwaiti officials.

## Sailors tried to smuggle 41 kg drugs

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

**KUWAIT:** Coastguards foiled an attempt to smuggle some drugs through the sea, said security sources, noting that the force was tipped off concerning three sailors who were planning to smuggle the drugs into Kuwait on their boat. On raiding the boat, coastguards arrested the three suspects with 41 kilograms of drugs.

## Security plan

The Interior Ministry's relations and security media department announced that a special security plan has been set to secure all mosques and places of worship during the last 10 days of Ramadan. The department added that the plan includes the Grand Mosque and various other mosques in different governorates and stressed that measures include security inside, outside and around mosques, in addition to fixed and mobile traffic checkpoints.



## Kuwait lawmakers warn Social Affairs and Oil ministers

By B Izzak

**KUWAIT:** MP Mubarak Al-Hajraf yesterday warned Minister of Social Affairs and Labor Hind Al-Sabeeh over her determination to go ahead with a decision to merge a body overseeing Kuwaitis employed in the private sector with the Public Manpower Authority which mainly regulates expat workers. Hajraf accused the minister of ignoring the National Assembly by not paying any attention to a recommendation by the Assembly to delay implementing the merger until the health and labor committee had studied the issue.

Last week, MPs strongly criticized the decision saying that it is ill-advised to merge the responsibility over 90,000 Kuwaiti employees with over two million expatriates working in the private sector. Several MPs even warned the minister that they will take action if she went ahead and implemented the decision. Hajraf said that the minister's statements that she will implement the merger is a challenge to the National Assembly and warned her against challenging the lawmakers.

Sabeeh has already been grilled by MPs at least four times. In a similar development, MP Omar Al-Tabtabai yesterday warned Oil Minister Bakhheet Al-Rasheedi against referring to retirement any oil executive whose name was mentioned in a grilling a few weeks ago. Tabtabai said the minister should not take any action on those executives until after an Assembly investigation committee completes its probe.

Tabtabai and MP Abdulwahab Al-Babtain grilled the Oil Minister over alleged mismanagement, graft and squandering of public funds. Rasheedi survived a no-confidence vote. During the grilling, the lawmakers charged a number of top oil executives of profiting from their posts and of violations. They demanded action against those executives. Later, the National Assembly formed an investigation committee to probe the allegations.

Local

# Amir receives letter from Qatar's Sheikh Tamim on regional developments

## Sheikh Sabah congratulates Egyptian President for start of 2nd term

**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah hosted yesterday Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and Qatari Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed Bin Abdul-Rahman Al Thani who handed His Highness the Amir a letter from Qatar's Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani on bilateral relations and recent regional developments. The meetings were attended by Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Al-Jarah Al-Sabah.

Earlier yesterday, His Highness the Amir met with His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah at Seif Palace. His Highness also received National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince met with Ghanem at Seif Palace.

In other news, His Highness the Amir congratulated Egyptian President AbdelFatah Al-Sisi on Saturday on the occasion of being sworn in for a second term before the parliament. His Highness the Amir, in a cable to Sisi, wished the Egyptian President success in his leadership of the country to achieve development and prosperity.

He hoped deep-rooted relations with Egypt would be further strengthened. His Highness the Crown Prince congratulated Al-Sisi for his second term in office. His Highness the Prime Minister sent a similar cable. — KUNA



**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah reads a letter from Qatar's Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, delivered to him by Qatari Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed Bin Abdul-Rahman Al Thani. —KUNA photos



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

## Palestinian FM visits Kuwait with message of thanks

**RAMALLAH:** Palestine's Foreign Affairs and Expatriates Minister Riyadh Al-Maliki said he will visit Kuwait today carrying a message of "thanks and appreciation" from President Mahmoud Abbas to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

In a press statement yesterday, Maliki expressed thanks and appreciation for the role of Kuwait in supporting the Palestinian people. On behalf of the Palestinian people and the families of the martyrs, Maliki thanked His Highness the



Riyad Al-Maliki

Amir, government and people of Kuwait for their historic and honorable positions in support of the rights of Palestinian people and their aspirations for freedom and independence.

During his visit, Maliki will hold deep talks in Kuwait on the expected steps in the United Nations, especially after the United States vetoed a draft resolution calling for the protection of Palestinians. The United States on Friday vetoed a draft resolution calling for the protection of Palestinians in the occupied territories. The draft resolution won the approval of 10 out of 15 members. — KUNA

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## KIB sponsors 2018 IIA Int'l Conference

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait International Bank (KIB) sponsored the 2018 Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA) International Conference under the theme 'Connecting the World Through Innovation'. Held at the Dubai International Convention and Exhibition Centre (DICEC), the conference was held under the auspices of Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, and witnessed an impressive turnout of over 3,000 internal audit professionals and experts.

On this occasion, General Internal Auditor at KIB, Mohamed Samir Abdel Ghany, said: "Our sponsorship of this conference stems from the strong belief and continued support of our Chairman, Sheikh Mohammed Jarrah Al-Sabah,

and Dr Haider Hassan Al-Jumaa, Board Member and Chairman of the Audit Committee. For this reason, we continue to support the internal audit profession both locally and internationally, thereby staying up-to-date with the latest developments, international standards, and latest technology impacting the field. Our commitment to doing so also falls in line with the Central Bank of Kuwait's goal of strengthening the role of internal audit in the local banking sector."

Abdel Ghany also added that the conference featured over 70 key topics presented to internal audit professionals and experts, such as: corporate governance, corruption, fraud, latest developments in the ever-changing field of internal audit, as well as technological innovation and artificial intelligence changing the internal audit function.

On behalf of KIB, Abdul Ghany received a special tribute from the president and CEO of IIA, Richard Chambers. The Bank was honored in recognition of its continued support of this conference and its active participation in promoting the value of internal audit at all professional levels.



## Local



# Jumeirah Hotel holds Stay Different ghabqa for media, diamond sponsors

Luxurious property surprises guests with girgian celebration



**KUWAIT:** Embodying its brand promise of Stay Different TM, Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel and Spa hosted a ghabqa evening for the media community. Chief Editors, journalists, photographers, television and radio representatives were present including social media influencers not to forget this year's esteemed Diamond sponsors.

The evening started with a warm welcoming speech by General Manager Savino Leone. He said: "Our annual media night has grown to become one of the most exciting and popular networking events of the year. We gather under one roof the influential voices from all the communication channels. We celebrate together the spirit of Ramadan and we express our sincere thanks to each and every media member for carrying our messages to our guests and the wider community thus, supporting us to reach the level of success we have achieved today."

Savino also thanked their Diamond Sponsors, Cadillac Alghanim, Al Bawader Real Estate LLC, Mqamash exhibi-

tion and Saray Perfumes for partnering with the luxurious resort "to ensure our guests live a special Ramadan experience with us".

Hosted in the beautifully decorated Garden Cafe outdoor tent, guests were charmed by the refined ambiance of the evening as they enjoyed a deliciously prepared buffet by the hotel's award-winning chefs. Flavored shisha was also served on the covered terrace offering scenic views of the gardens.

To add up to the evening, little children dressed up with their finest traditional clothes gleefully singing joyous songs, made a surprising entrance to present guests with gift boxes marking the traditional festive heritage of girgian, which was to the delight of everyone.

The luxurious resort's sponsors for this year, took part as well in this evening. General Manager Mohamed Eltalkhawi said: "On behalf of Cadillac Alghanim, we would like to wish all of our customers a blessed Ramadan. As we



are in the month of giving, we will be providing the best deals on 2018 Cadillac models."

Rami Tabbara, Senior Vice President of Damac said: "We are delighted to be sponsoring the Ramadan tent at Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel and Spa. It is the perfect location to interact with our Kuwait customers who can browse our award-winning portfolio of luxury properties in a relaxing and festive environment."

Khawla Darwish, Owner of Mqamash Exhibition said: "The main role of our exhibition is to support our local entrepreneurs and small businesses and ensure they are present on the market. We want to offer them the opportunity to promote their unique products and services throughout this holy month."

Saray Perfumes represented by their CEO, Maissa Hamdan, said: "We take pride in our collaboration with Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel and Spa throughout the year and during Ramadan as this is a blessed month where

we ensure our boukhour, perfumes and oils complement this occasion".

Garden Cafe's tent was adorned with flowers especially for the occasion. Alissar Flowers' CEO, Alissar Mzayek, was keen to add touches of luxury and elegance to the overall setting. She expressed: "We craft stories and experiences with flowers that bring people closer together and this evening at one of Kuwait's most luxurious resorts, we experienced the warmth of a true Ramadan tradition".

As Ramadan nights are still on-going, the luxuriously decorated Badriah Ballroom opens its doors every evening for iftar to offer a lavish spread of famous Arabic and international specialties. It is also open for ghabqa offering an a la carte selection of Ramadan favorites.

Meanwhile, Garden Cafe tent offers unforgettable private gatherings for ghabqas and iftar nights for friends and families with an excellent selection of shisha, sumptuous Ramadan specialties and a live entertaining program.



## Al-Tijaria celebrates girgian in Symphony Style, Al-Tijaria Tower



As part of the company's aim for preservation of the original Kuwaiti Traditions and within the framework of its social responsibility under the name, 'We Care', Symphony Style Mall and Al-Tijaria Tower celebrated their girgian in a special way.

On this occasion, the Commercial Real Estate Company had sent a special invitation to the orphanage and other children along with their families to come celebrate the joy of girgian, where a special girgian band took place walking around the mall singing the traditional girgian songs and distributing them to the kids.

Rawan Adnan, Department Manager of Marketing and Communication said: "Through this holy month, The Commercial Real Estate Company aims to create happiness and Joyfulness in the hearts of the orphans and children to provide entertainment for people with special cases and help them integrate into the society." In conclusion, Rawan Adnan thanked all the Visitors for coming and being part of this joyful event.



Local



Kuwait Times

Ramadan Kareem



Ramadan: High season for TV production

By Nawara Fattahova

Kuwait Times celebrates Ramadan in Kuwait with 30 days of the Icons of Ramadan. We highlight our favorite activities, events, symbols and foods that are popular during this holy month, along with Kuwait's Ramadan culture, history and traditions.

The holy month of Ramadan is the high season for TV production including soap operas, shows, commercials and other series. Producers compete to present their best productions during this month, as they know it has the highest viewership in the whole year, so every year, the number of soap operas increases.

And with a plethora of satellite channels, people are confused what to watch. Some people don't watch any soap operas the whole year long, but only during Ramadan. Some people watch certain soap operas according to what their guests are watching, as during this month people are always invited for iftar. Also, good soap operas attract more commercials. Even the timing of the show matters. The highest rate of viewership is during iftar and for the next two hours, as well as two or three hours before iftar. So producers insist to have their shows during these timings.

The biggest productions among all



Arab countries are Egyptian and Kuwaiti soap operas. Other countries have limited productions, but are popular in the Arab world, such as Syria. Other Arab countries may have one or two local soap operas that are not broadcast in other countries. Kuwait has produced 11 soap operas only for Ramadan, apart from various TV competitions, comedy shows, cartoons, talk shows, cooking competitions and others. Email us at local@kuwaittimes.com with your favorite symbols of Ramadan and Ramadan photos.

History of Kuwait



A car passes through one of Kuwait Wall's gates in the 1950s. The picture of the vehicle driving past two camel-riding Bedouins after passing through the gate draws a symbolic image to the entrance of automobiles to Kuwait City and replacing traditional means of transportation. (Source: A collection of commemorative printed images by the Ministry of Information. Prepared by Mahmoud Zakaria Abu Alella, heritage researcher at the Ministry of Information)

ABK staff visit children in local hospitals



KUWAIT: In an effort to demonstrate its commitment to the community during the holy month of Ramadan, Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) staff in collaboration with Kuwait Association for the Care of Children in Hospital (KACCH) recently visited Ibn Sina and Farwaniya Hospitals to share the joys of Ramadan and girgian with the children. ABK staff distributed girgian bags and engaged the children through fun activities including hand painting, coloring books, and a surprise visit from caricature's, offering some support to young patients during their stay in hospital. Throughout the holy month of Ramadan, ABK have supported the community through similar initiatives.



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The American University of Kuwait received its Institutional Accreditation from the Private Universities Council (PUC), Ministry of Higher Education in the State of Kuwait, and has a Memorandum of Understanding and Cooperation with Dartmouth College (Hanover, New Hampshire - USA).

# International

MONDAY, JUNE 4, 2018



As election looms, popularity of Modi wanes in rural India

Page 9

## New Nicaragua violence kills six, including American man

Page 8



GAZA: An explosion is seen in Gaza City after an airstrike by Israeli forces late on Saturday. — AFP

# Israel, Gaza militants exchange fire

## Escalation shatters fragile ceasefire reached days ago

**GAZA CITY:** Israeli aircraft pounded over a dozen militant targets in Gaza, the army said yesterday, after Palestinian projectile fire shattered a ceasefire reached just days ago after the worst flare-up since a 2014 war. The latest escalation came hours after thousands of Palestinians attended the funeral of a young female volunteer medic killed by Israeli fire on Gaza's border. In a first wave of air strikes, Israeli "fighter jets targeted 10 terror sites in three military compounds belonging to the Hamas terror organization in the Gaza Strip," the army said in a statement early yesterday.

"Among the targets were two Hamas munitions manufacturing and storage sites and a military compound," the army said. The strikes came in retaliation for rockets fired at Israel, as well as "various terror activities approved and orchestrated by the Hamas terror organization over the weekend," the army said. A few hours later aircraft shot at "five terror targets at a military compound belonging to the Hamas terror organization's naval force in the northern Gaza Strip," the army said in a separate statement. There were no reports of casualties in Gaza.

On Saturday evening, militants in the Palestinian enclave fired two projectiles at southern Israel, where

air raid sirens sent residents to bomb shelters. The Iron Dome aerial defence system intercepted one projectile, while the other was believed to have fallen short of its target and landed within Gaza, according to the army. Early yesterday, four more projectiles were separately launched at Israel. Three were intercepted, the army said, with the fourth apparently hitting an open field.

### Mourners call for revenge

No group in Gaza claimed responsibility for the projectile attacks, which came shortly after the Saturday funeral of Razan Al-Najjar, 21, a volunteer with the Gaza health ministry, who was fatally shot in the chest near Khan Younis on Friday. Ambulances and medical crews attended the funeral, where Najjar's father held the white blood-stained medics' jacket she wore when she was shot, as mourners called for revenge. Gazans have

since March 30 staged border protests demanding the return of Palestinians to land they fled or were expelled from during the 1948 war surrounding Israel's creation, now inside the Jewish state. The demonstrations have been accompanied by smaller clashes as youths hurl stones at Israeli soldiers and attempt to breach the border fence, at times laying explosive devices on the fence or throwing grenades.

The demonstrations and violence peaked on May 14 when at least 61 Palestinians were killed in clashes as tens of thousands of Gazans protested the US transfer of its embassy in Israel to the disputed city of Jerusalem the same day. Yesterday, Gaza health ministry spokesman Ashraf Al-Qudra announced the death of Mohammad Hamada, 39, in April. Boutoutaou also said 14. Hamada's death brings the toll of Gazans killed by Israeli fire since the end of March to 124.

Low-level demonstrations have continued since. Palestinians in the besieged coastal enclave have also used kites carrying burning cans to set ablaze Israeli fields, torching large patches of farmland near Gaza. Following the funeral, several Gazans were wounded in clashes east of Khan Younis, the health ministry said.

The weekend launches were the first since Israel said it had struck some 65 militant sites in Gaza earlier this week in retaliation for a barrage of approximately 100 rockets and missiles fired from the territory on Tuesday and Wednesday. Palestinian Islamist groups in Gaza, including the strip's rulers Hamas, said a ceasefire deal was reached after the escalation, although there was no confirmation from Israel.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Wednesday accused Iran of "encouraging" Hamas and other militant Gaza groups of the violence. Yesterday, Netanyahu said his upcoming talks with key European leaders would focus "on continuing to block Iran's nuclear program" and "blocking Iran's plans for expansion and aggression throughout the Middle East, especially in Syria". Netanyahu will head to Europe today for meetings in Berlin, Paris and London. —AFP



## Netanyahu heads to Europe for meetings

the same day. Yesterday, Gaza health ministry spokesman Ashraf Al-Qudra announced the death of Mohammad Hamada, 39, in April. Boutoutaou also said 14. Hamada's death brings the toll of Gazans killed by Israeli fire since the end of March to 124.

## Iraq court sentences Frenchwoman to life for IS membership

**BAGHDAD:** An Iraqi court yesterday jailed a French woman for 20 years for belonging to the Islamic State group, as her lawyers accused authorities in Paris of "interference" to prevent her returning to France. Melina Boughedir, a mother of four, was sentenced last February to seven months in prison for "illegal" entry into the country, and was set to be deported back to France. But another court ordered the re-trial of the 27-year-old French citizen under Iraq's anti-terror law.

Yesterday she was found guilty of belonging to IS and handed a life sentence - which in Iraq is equivalent to 20 years. "I am innocent," Boughedir told the judge in French. "My husband duped me and then threatened to leave with the children" unless she followed him to Iraq, where he planned on joining IS, she said. "I am opposed to the ideology of the Islamic group and condemn the actions of my husband," she added.

Her Iraqi lawyer, Nasureddin Madlul Abd, urged the court to acquit Boughedir, describing her spouse as a "jailkeeper not a husband" who had "forced" her to join him in Iraq. Her French defense team - William Bourdon, Martin Pradel and Vincent Brengarth - said they were "relieved" she had been spared the death penalty, but vowed to appeal the verdict. Boughedir, who wore a black dress and a black headscarf, arrived in the courtroom carrying her youngest daughter in her arms. Her three other children are now back in France.

Hers is the latest in a series of verdicts doled out to foreigners who flocked to join IS in its self-declared "caliphate" after the militant group seized the northern third of Iraq and swathes of Syria in 2014. On May 22, an Iraqi court sentenced Belgian jihadist Tarik Jadaoun,

also known as Abu Hamza Al-Beljiki, to death by hanging - although he pleaded not guilty to a range of terror charges. Jadaoun had earned the moniker "the new Abaaoud", after his compatriot Abdelhamid Abaaoud, one of the organizers of Nov 2015 attacks in Paris.

### 'Unacceptable interference'

Even before she was sentenced, Boughedir's case sparked anger from her defense team, who had accused French authorities of interfering in the case. On Thursday, French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian told French news channel LCI that Boughedir was a "Daesh (IS) terrorist who fought against Iraq" and said she should be tried on Iraqi soil. Her French lawyers sent a letter of protest to Le Drian, seen by AFP, in which they denounced "pressure on the Iraqi judicial system" and "unacceptable interference".

Bourdon yesterday condemned the verdict, saying it had been influenced by "extrajudicial reasons". During the hearing, which lasted about one hour, the judge asked Boughedir - who was arrested in the summer of 2017 in Mosul - to explain why and under what circumstances she had arrived in Iraq. He then declared that "the proof that has been gathered is enough to condemn the criminal" to a life sentence.

Bourdon said Le Drian wanted his client to be tried in Iraq to "ensure that she won't be heading back home to France any time soon", as part of efforts to prevent the return of militants. Boughedir's family and her defense team want her to face a court in France, Bourdon said. After being sentenced in February to seven months in prison for "illegal" entry, she was set to be deported back to France. But upon re-examining her file, an Iraqi court said she had "knowingly" followed her husband to Iraq to join IS.

### Second Frenchwoman sentenced

Boughedir's husband is believed to have been killed during a vast operation by US-led coalition-backed Iraqi forces to regain control of Mosul, Iraq's second city and the jihadists' former stronghold. Yesterday, she



BAGHDAD: This photo taken on Feb 19, 2018 shows Frenchwoman Melina Boughedir, carrying her son, arriving in court in the Iraqi capital. —AFP

told the court that the man she had been married to for five years had disappeared one day, walking out and saying he was going out "to look for water". Since then, she said, she had received no information about his fate or his whereabouts.

Boughedir is the second French citizen sentenced to life in prison by an Iraqi court for belonging to IS, after Djamilia Boutoutaou, 29, in April. Boutoutaou also said she had been tricked by her husband. Thousands of foreign fighters from across the world flocked to the black banner of the militants after the group seized swathes of Iraq and Syria in 2014. Multiple offensives have since reduced their "caliphate" to a sliver of desert territory in the east of war-torn Syria. Iraqi courts have sentenced to death more than 300 people, including dozens of foreigners, for belonging to IS, judicial sources have said. Dozens of French citizens suspected of having joined IS ranks are believed to be in detention in Iraq and Syria, including several minors. — AFP

## 35 migrants dead after boat sinks off Tunisia coast

**TUNIS:** The bodies of 35 migrants have been recovered off Tunisia's southern coast, the country's defense ministry said yesterday, revising upwards an earlier government death toll. As of 1:00 pm (1200 GMT), "35 bodies were recovered and 68 migrants rescued," said Rachid Bouhoula, a spokesman for the ministry. The interior ministry reported a distress call on Saturday night at 10:45 pm from "a fishing boat about to sink" with migrants on board.

Tunisians and seven foreigners were among the survivors, including nationals from Ivory Coast, Mali, Morocco and Cameroon, said the defense ministry spokesman. "The coastguard and the navy continue their search with the support of a military plane," the interior ministry said in a statement. "Units of the Sfax Marine Guard and the Navy went to the boat which was five nautical miles from Kerkennah island and 16 nautical miles from the city of Sfax," the ministry added.

Tunisians and migrants regularly try to cross the Mediterranean to seek a better future in Europe, but departures peaked last September. According to non-governmental organizations, the uptick reflected frustration among young people hard hit by unemployment. In October, a collision between a migrant boat and a Tunisian military ship left at least 44 dead, in what Prime Minister Youssef Chahed called a "national disaster". — AFP

## International

# Britain mourns on London Bridge attack anniversary

## New review of counter-terrorism legislation to be launched

LONDON: Britain held a national minute of silence yesterday, one year on from the London Bridge terror attack that killed eight people and injured dozens more. Flowers were laid, candles were lit and a religious service was held at Southwark Cathedral - the spot where three men in a van crashed after careening into crowds, before launching a stabbing spree at nearby Borough Market. "Today we remember those who died and the many more who were injured, and also pay tribute to the bravery of our emergency services and those who intervened or came to the aid of others," said Prime Minister Theresa May.

She branded the June 3 attack "a cowardly attempt to strike at the heart of our freedoms by deliberately targeting people enjoying their Saturday night with friends and family" and noted that seven of the victims were foreign nationals. "This is a reflection of our great cosmopolitan capital, whose energy and values brings together people from across the world, and a tragic reminder that the threat from terrorism transcends borders and impacts us all," she said.

Yesterday morning, Home Secretary Sajid Javid announced that a new review of counter-terrorism legislation in Britain would be launched today - including a provision to recruit up to 2,000 extra security officers in Britain's intelligence services. "One of the other

announcements I'll be making tomorrow is that MI5 will be sharing much more of its information with other organizations," he said on the BBC's Andrew Marr show. "Not just with counter-terrorism police but neighborhood police, with local government... to make sure that there is a much higher chance of finding some of these extremists and disrupting plots a lot earlier on."

Later yesterday, the words #LondonUnited was projected onto the bridge following a minute of silence scheduled at 4:30 pm (1530GMT). Candles were lit by relatives of the victims during the ceremony before an olive tree - known as the Tree of Healing - was planted in the cathedral grounds using compost from floral tributes left on the bridge in the aftermath of the murders.

### Preparations

Among those visiting the cathedral for the service on the south bank of the Thames, that included a procession to the bridge, was Frenchwoman Christine Delcros, 46. She was seriously injured in the vehicle-ramming attack whilst her partner Xavier Thomas, 45, was killed, with his body later recovered from the River Thames. "On the psychological level, the wounds are invisible, but they are the most serious," she told AFP in an interview this week. "I remain traumatized by the



LONDON: Members of various faiths gather with placards on London Bridge prior to a commemoration service on the first anniversary of the London Bridge terror attack yesterday. —AFP

loss of the love of my life, in circumstances beyond my comprehension."

On Saturday preparations for the ceremony were underway with cleaners working on the bridge - now fitted with anti-vehicle crash barriers to prevent cars and vans from mounting the pavement. On Friday PC

Wayne Marques, who took on the three attackers solo with his baton and was stabbed in the head, revealed he was planning to return to work next month after a year of rehabilitation. "I'm just basically trying to get as much of me back as possible," he said in a video released by the British Transport Police. —AFP



## National minute of silence held

## Kidnappers, cattle rustlers spread fear in Nigeria

KANO, Nigeria: A spate of kidnappings for ransom in the Birnin Gwari district of northern Nigeria's Kaduna state has left residents afraid to even leave their homes. "When a person travels, his family, friends and neighbors gather to pray for his safety because of the kidnappers," said local resident Kabiru Mohammed. "It's celebrations once he returns because kidnapping on the highway has become the norm. It's a nightmare that should only exist in fairytales," he told AFP by telephone. Mohammed and his neighbors have good reason to be anxious.

Kidnappings have reached unprecedented levels in the last two months. In early May, about 100 people were abducted in just two days on a road near the border with Zamfara state. Haruna Musa, who also lives in Birnin Gwari, said the situation has forced people in at least six villages in the area to abandon their homes.

Last week, an armed gang raided the village of Maganda and kidnapped three wives of a businessman. Many locals now don't sleep at night. Instead, they patrol their communities. "I also join in the night patrols to encourage others," said Mustapha Idris, the chief imam of Maganda. But the creation of civilian militia has

itself had deadly consequences. On May 6, at least 71 people were killed in Gwaska village during clashes with armed bandits.

### Grisly warnings

Birnin Gwari is not alone in being affected. In Zamfara, there have been similar problems from kidnapping and cattle rustling gangs. "The mere sound of a motorcycle engine outside your house at night robs you of sleep because it could be a sign that the dreaded bandits have come," said Nuhu Dansadai. Dansadai said his village, also called Dansadai, and others nearby have been repeatedly raided. Aliyu Kawaye, who lives in the town of Anka, said the abductors seize cash and force families to sell their farm produce to raise the ransom payment. According to the state government, more than 10,000 cattle have been stolen in the last seven years. "What is more worrisome is the deliberate attack on farmers who dare to go to their farms," said Dansadai. "The bandits amputate their hands from the wrists, put the severed palms in the farmers' pockets and send them back to the village as a warning to others."

### Lucrative venture

The kidnapping gangs and cattle thieves, who roam on motorcycles on the hunt for victims, are known to operate in northern Kaduna and Zamfara. Both regions have been largely spared by the Boko Haram insurgency, another of Nigeria's pressing security problems along with a land conflict between nomads and farmers. The kidnappers' heavily guarded camps dot the Rugu forest, which straddles Kaduna, Zamfara and the north-



A picture taken on May 8, 2018 shows a man herding his cattle by a signboard which welcomes visitors to the state of Zamfara. —AFP

ern states of Kano, Sokoto, Kebbi and Niger.

Abductees whose families don't pay ransoms are killed and their bodies dumped, according to security sources. Kidnapping for ransom used to be a phenomenon isolated to oil-rich southern Nigeria. But it has spread further north and become lucrative because of economic hardship. It has also attracted young ethnic Fulani herders who have lost their herds in unrest with farmers over grazing and watering rights. Young Fulani herders now make up most of the marauding gangs in northern Nigeria and other West African countries, said Saleh Bayeri, of the Gan Allah Fulani Development Association. —AFP

## Echoes of 1968 unrest in Senegal student protests

DAKAR: The student demonstrations that have rocked Senegal in recent weeks recall the short-lived but intense unrest which sprung out of the country's universities half a century ago, almost bringing down the government back in May 1968. The spark this time was a fatality during a university protest on May 15 over the late payment of student grants. Second-year student Mohamed Fallou Sene, 25, was killed as police quelled a protest at Gaston Berger University in the northern city of Saint-Louis.

His death sparked further protests near Cheikh Anta Diop University in the capital Dakar, while police also broke up demonstrations in the southern city of Ziguinchor. As the unrest grew a higher education union began a strike in solidarity with the students before President Macky Sall called for an inquiry. Sall, who is expected to stand for re-election next February, also announced in the aftermath of the protests that student grants will be raised.

However students at Sene's university were still on strike on Friday, demanding "justice" and for political heads to roll. Back in 1968, the protests also began over the issue of grants and also led to the death of a student. The demonstrations 50 years ago briefly threatened the administration of then president Leopold Sedar Senghor as students took to the streets, clashing with police and setting up barricades.

At a time when young people were protesting across the world, over issues such as the Vietnam War and apartheid, students in Dakar accused Senghor, who took office in 1960 on independence from France, of being a "valet of imperialism". After the student strike began on May 27, 1968, police moved in. One student died and several more were hurt, official records show. But, far from growing out of the youth protests in France, the United States and elsewhere, "these events were sparked by political, economic and social crises within Senegal," says historian and former minister Abdoulaye Bathily.

Workers then declared a strike on May 30 and for a time "the government was tottering," says historian Omar Gueye, as Senghor condemned what he saw as malign fallout from the student protests in Europe. Foreign students were repatriated and Dakar University closed as unrest worsened - though the president could call on support of the army and influential Muslim religious leaders as well as French troops stationed at strategic points of the capital.

"Peasants came with rifles and arrows to defend Senghor and the country," recalled academic Ibrahima Wone. Within three days the protest ebbed away, foreign students returned and exams went ahead in December. Short-lived though Senegal's May 1968 unrest was, "it contributed to the development of democracy," says Mbaye Diack, who ran the national student union at the time. —AFP



DAKAR: In this photo taken on May 16, 2018, students clash with Senegalese police during a protest outside the gates of Cheikh Anta Diop University. —AFP

## UN calls for calm as dozens injured in Mali protest

BAMAKO: The UN has called for calm in Mali after dozens of people were hurt during banned opposition protests in Bamako, sparking calls for the prime minister to resign two months ahead of a presidential election. The opposition said some 30 people were hospitalized - including prominent opposition figure Etienne Fabaka Sissoko who was left "in a coma" - after security forces fired "live ammunition" at protesters on Saturday. The government rejected the claims outright.

"It is absolutely false to say that shots were fired using live ammunition," a source close to the security ministry told AFP. Earlier yesterday, the ministry said the security forces were bound by three words - "professionalism, courtesy and firmness" and that the police had acted to maintain public order. It denounced the protesters for having injured a policeman in the head. A "transparency" rally outside the party headquarters of President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita attracted several hundred people.

Police fired tear gas and beat demonstrators with batons, according to an AFP reporter at the scene. Clashes also took place in other locations. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, who visited Mali last week, called late Saturday for "calm and restraint by all parties". "(He) calls on the Malian government to ensure the protection of fundamental human rights and freedom of expression to peaceful demonstrations, including in the context of the ongoing state of emergency," a UN statement said.

Mali is one of the so-called "G5 Sahel" states - along with Burkina Faso, Chad, Mauritania and Niger - which have launched joint operations against militant groups. Most protests are banned as the nation has lived under a near-constant state of emergency since an attack on a hotel in Bamako in November 2015 left 20 people dead.

### Terrorize the opposition

"In a dozen places, unarmed protesters were attacked with tear gas and clubs," the office of opposition presidential candidate Soumaila Cisse said in a



BAMAKO: Civilians gesture and shout slogans as they protest against the lack of transparency of the presidential election's campaign on Saturday. —AFP

statement. "The headquarters of the ADP (Alliance for Democracy and Progress) was attacked by police special forces, who threw grenades. The prime minister's security services fired live ammunition at protesters gathered" in front of the building, the statement charged. "Three opposition leaders were violently beaten on the head with clubs and batons," it added. "The intention of the government was clear: to terrorize the opposition and all democratic forces." The statement also called for "the resignation of the prime minister".

The demonstrations come ahead of July 29 elections in which Mali President Keita, 73, will face more than a dozen challengers. The opposition has called for equal access to public radio and television for campaigning. "The UN secretary-general regrets the government-imposed ban on the demonstrations by opposition parties," the UN said. "(He) urges political actors and the civil society to favor dialogue in order to maintain an environment conducive to the holding of credible and transparent elections." Opposition leaders have called for new demonstrations next Friday. —AFP

## Salvini in Sicily to push new hard line on migration

POZZALLO, Italy: Italy's new hardline interior minister Matteo Salvini arrived yesterday in Sicily, one of the country's main refugee landing points, to push the anti-immigration platform that propelled him to power. The head of the far-right League is on the road seeking to rally support for his party's candidates in municipal elections later this month, as part of a broader effort to boost the traditionally secessionist party's profile in the country's poorer south.

But immigration is Salvini's primary bugbear and the newly minted deputy prime minister in Italy's populist coalition government added a stop in migration hotspot Pozzallo. The port town in Sicily's south is on the front line as one of the main landing points for refugees fleeing war, persecution and famine across North Africa and the Middle East. A controversial agreement between Italy's former center left government and authorities and militias in Libya has triggered a fall in overall arrivals of some 75 percent since the summer of 2017.

But so far this year Italian authorities have still registered more than 13,500 arrivals. The most recent came late Friday, just hours after Salvini took his oath of office, with some 158 people, including nine children, landing in Pozzallo after being rescued by a humanitarian boat in an operation coordinated by the Italian coast guard. Salvini had said after being sworn in that he would ask his ministry's experts "how to reduce the number of arriving migrants and increase the number of expulsions". "The good times for illegals is over - get ready to pack your bags," he said Saturday at a rally in Italy's north. "Countries need to start doing their job and no more smugglers should be docking in Italian ports," he said in a swipe at the NGOs organizing rescues at sea, which he has regularly accused of complicity with people traffickers. He added during a stop in Catania that the new government would "not take a hard line on immigration but one of common sense." Salvini's fellow deputy prime minister, leader of the anti-establishment Five Star movement Luigi Di Maio, has also called rescue NGOs "lax on the sea" although his rhetoric on immigration is more measured than that of the League. —AFP

## International

# New Nicaragua violence kills six, including American man

## Ortega digs in deeper, defies anti-government protests

**MASAYA, Nicaragua:** Nicaraguan protesters fired homemade mortars to fend off a police crackdown Saturday in new unrest that left at least six people dead, including a US citizen, as the opposition renewed calls for President Daniel Ortega's resignation. But Ortega, the man who has dominated the Central American country's politics for the past four decades, only appeared to dig in deeper, defying seven weeks of anti-government protests that have left more than 100 people dead and are turning increasingly violent.

In the city of Masaya, once a bastion of support for Ortega's leftist Sandinista movement, residents put up barricades to keep out riot police and protect themselves from what they said were police and paramilitary snipers positioned around a central neighborhood. Five people were killed in the city, including a 15-year-old boy, according to the Nicaraguan Association for the Protection of Human Rights (ANPDH). "The blood spilled in Masaya has made it a day of mourning and pain for those citizens who simply wanted to exercise their right to protest," the head of the rights group, Alvaro Leiva, told AFP. "We are facing a situation of profound crisis in terms of human rights violations." A police intelligence officer was also among the victims, he said.

Separately, US Ambassador Laura Dogu said an American citizen had been killed overnight in the capital, Managua. The ANPDH identified him as Sixto Henry Viera, 48, and said he was reportedly killed by a pro-government mob. The police meanwhile reported looting, fires and riots in at least six cities, including Managua and Masaya, blaming "rightwing groups" - though in at least some of the cities, residents said the

security forces themselves were responsible for the destruction.

### Urban battleground

Masaya, a city of just over 100,000 people, resonated with gun and mortar fire as residents vowed to fight back the security forces they blame for killing innocent protesters, as well as government supporters they say have been looting and pillaging. Holed up in a police station and other strategic spots, police returned fire with tear gas and, allegedly, live ammunition. Jonhatan

Jose, 47, said his neighbor was shot and killed. "They are attacking the Nicaraguan people. They put a bullet in my neighbor's chest this morning," he told AFP. "It was a sniper... You can tell by the size of the hole - big... He must have been about 23 years old, with a son who was three or four."

One focal point in the unrest was a burned-out artisans' market. The govern-

ment said residents had torched it, and that security forces were sent into the city at the request of small business owners who lost everything. Residents called that a lie; they said riot police burned the building themselves in an attempt to justify the crackdown, which led to 31 arrests. The street battles shut down any semblance of normal life in the city.

As hundreds of youths gathered at the barricades brandishing homemade mortars, machetes, rocks and slingshots, other residents sheltered in their homes in terror. At her family-owned grocery store, 49-year-old Vanesa - who declined to give her last name, fearing for her safety - choked up as she described hiding out with her three children and grandson. "I'm hopeless, heart-



### Masaya residents vow to fight back security forces



**MASAYA:** A demonstrator fires a home-made mortar against riot police during protests in the Monimbo neighborhood on Saturday. — AFP

broken, I don't have words to describe it," she said. "The situation is horrible. Horrible, horrible, horrible."

### Long fight

Protesters have a single demand, said Azhalea Solis, an opposition leader: "Get rid of Ortega's government immediately." But the 72-year-old president looks ready for a long fight. On Wednesday, a Mother's Day march in support of mothers who have lost children in the violence was met with gunfire that left at least 16

people dead. Former Ortega ally Henry Ruiz - who was a commander in the Sandinista guerrilla army when it overthrew the dictator Anastasio Somoza in 1979, bringing Ortega to power - warned the country to brace for more. "There is abundant evidence that Ortega will dig in militarily to fight back and strengthen his hand for negotiations," he said in an opinion column. Ortega, who was voted out of office in 1990 and returned to power in 2007, is now serving a third term that is due to end in 2022. — AFP

## US Army launches war games on NATO east flank

**VILNIUS:** Some 18,000 troops from 19 mostly NATO countries began annual US-led military exercises in Poland and the Baltic states on Sunday to boost combat readiness on the alliance's eastern flank as it faces an increasingly assertive Russia. The eighth Saber Strike maneuvers, which run until June 15, come after it was revealed Poland is considering a proposal to welcome a permanent deployment of US troops to the country.

A Polish defense ministry "information document" emerged this week showing that Warsaw could spend between \$1.5 to \$2 billion to help cover the cost of stationing a US tank unit in Poland. The proposal triggered immediate criticism from Moscow, with the Kremlin insisting that any such deployment "will not benefit in any way the security and stability on the continent". The US has ramped up its presence on NATO's eastern flank and notably Poland since Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea from Ukraine.

The United States leads a multi-national NATO battle group in Poland. Germany, Britain and Canada command three others in nearby Baltic states Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, where Saber Strike maneuvers are planned. "They (NATO battalions) will be specifically tested during Saber Strike, it demonstrates the alliance commitment to one another," US Brigadier General Richard Coffman told officials at Sunday ceremonies in the Lithuanian capital Vilnius launching the exercises. The exercises demonstrate "the enhanced flexibility of ground and air forces to rapidly respond to a crisis. This allows for the right presence where we need it," he said, adding that "we are fully capable to conduct combined and joined operations."

### Cementing ties

Speaking in Warsaw on Monday, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said he expected leaders at a July NATO summit in Brussels to "make decisions on reinforcement, readiness and military mobility" of forces in Europe, particularly with regard to the four battle groups deployed since 2016. The US army also set up a new European headquarters in Poland in May 2017 to command some 6,000 of its troops deployed in NATO and Pentagon operations in the region.

The move was one of the largest deployments of US forces in Europe since the Cold War and was meant to reassure NATO's easternmost allies spooked by Russia's frequent military exercises near their borders and the Crimea annexation. Further cementing strong defense ties with Washington, Poland signed a \$4.75-billion contract in March to purchase a US-made Patriot anti-missile system, in its largest-ever weapons deal.

Moscow complained about the prospect of the deployment of Patriot systems in Poland and Romania, which it says violates a 1987 arms treaty and could be tailored to shoot missiles at Russia. In February, Lithuania accused Russia of permanently deploying nuclear-capable Iskander ballistic missiles to its Kaliningrad exclave. This year's Saber Strike maneuvers will be partly held in this sensitive region. —AFP

## Slovenians vote in early polls with rightwinger in front

**LJUBLJANA:** Slovenians voted yesterday in an early election which was set to see Janez Jansa's anti-immigration party emerge as victor after four years of center-left rule. The last poll published by the Dnevnik newspaper had Jansa's Slovenian Democrats (SDS) on just over 25 percent, well clear of its nearest rivals the Social Democrats, who were on 12 percent. Early turnout was slightly up on four years ago at 17.3 percent from 15.4 percent just after 0900 GMT and an apathetic showing was expected to bolster Jansa's chances.

However, with more than 40 percent of those surveyed saying they either had not decided or would not reveal their preference, all bets were off in the eurozone country of two million. Jansa's combative personality, strident anti-immigration rhetoric and alliance with Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban dominated the closing stages of the campaign. In the final TV debate on Thursday, Jansa effectively traded barbs with comedian-turned-politician Marjan Sarec.

Sarec's "anti-system" LMS party is on 11.9 percent in Dnevnik's poll, a weaker showing than earlier in the campaign but one which could yet leave him well placed to play kingmaker if borne out. The SMC party of outgoing Prime Minister Miro Cerar - whose shock resignation in March prompted Sunday's poll - was on just 9.3 percent. Cerar threw in the towel after months of public-sector strikes and

internal wrangling within his coalition, with the last straw coming when a supreme court verdict on a flagship infrastructure project went against the government. Some 1.7 million Slovenians are eligible to vote for 90 members of parliament. Polling stations were to close at 7 pm (1700 GMT), with the first results expected yesterday evening.

### Fear of migrants

Even if Jansa's SDS party comes out ahead, he may still find it difficult to put together a majority in parliament. The parties in the outgoing coalition - the Social Democrats, the SMC and the pensioners' party DESUS - have all ruled out collaborating with the SDS. Sarec also recently told AFP that "spreading fear (of migrants) and getting the prime minister of a neighboring country (Orban) involved in our elections has crossed all red lines and I and our members do not see ourselves in such a constellation". Last month Orban said an SDS victory "would ensure the survival of the Slovenian people". According to Slovenian media reports, Jansa's media campaign has also been boosted by investments totalling some two million euros (\$2.3 million) from Hungarian media companies in a TV station and newspaper co-owned by SDS. Sarec and other opponents say this may be a violation of campaign finance laws but SDS insist the investments are above board.

### Instability ahead?

Jansa's political career stretches back to the country's struggle for independence from Yugoslavia and has already seen its fair share of drama. In 2013 he was forced to step down from a second term as prime minister over a corruption scandal and competed in the 2014 elections from jail - the verdict was later overturned. Like rightwing leaders elsewhere he has adopted a combative presence on Twitter



**SENTILJ, Slovenia:** Janez Jansa, former Slovenian Prime Minister and President of Slovenian Democratic Party (SDS), flanked by his wife Urska Bacovnik, casts his ballot at a polling station in this small village near Velenje yesterday. — AFP

and has used it to defend his alliance with Orban. "Thanks to its (migration) policy, Hungary is a safe country while Belgium, due to its wrong policy, isn't," read a recent tweet from Jansa, who first served as prime minister from 2004-08. Almost 500,000 migrants crossed Slovenia in late 2015 and early 2016 along the so-called Balkan route. During the campaign, Jansa effectively evoked memories of the crisis to his advantage despite the fact that all but a handful of the migrants continued to northern Europe. For the first time in over a decade, elections will take place against a backdrop of strong economic growth rather than financial crisis or recession. —AFP

## Hawaii evacuees leave homes as lava threatens on Big Island

**PAHOA, Hawaii:** National Guard troops, police and firefighters ushered the last group of evacuees from homes on the eastern tip of Hawaii's Big Island early on Saturday, hours before lava from the Kilauea volcano cut off road access to the area, officials said. A stream of lava as wide as three football fields flowed over a highway near a junction at Kapoho, a seaside community of rebuilt after a destructive eruption of Kilauea in 1960. The lava flow left Kapoho and the adjacent development of Vacationland cut off from the rest of the island by road, according to the Hawaii County Civil Defense agency.

Also, lava destroyed a freshwater lake, boiling away all of the water in it, the Hawaiian Volcano Observatory reported late Saturday, local time. "Lava entered Green Lake within Kapoho Crater, producing a large steam plume ... A Hawaiian County Fire Department overflight reported that the lava filled the lake and apparently evaporated all the water," the report said. Authorities since Wednesday had been urging residents of the area to leave before lava spewing from a volcanic fissure at the eastern foot of Kilauea reached the area.

The final phase of the evacuation was carried out late on Friday and early Saturday by fire and police department personnel, with help from the Hawaii National Guard and public works teams, county civil defense spokeswoman Janet Snyder told Reuters by email. An estimated 500 people live in the Kapoho area, but Snyder said it was not immediately clear how many residents, if any, chose to stay behind. Another 2,000 people have already been evacuated from Leilani Estates, an area further west where dozens of homes have been devoured or cut off by rivers



**HAWAII Volcano Observatory geologist documents the fissure 8 flow on Hawaii's Big Island on June 1, 2018. — AFP**

of lava streaming over the landscape since May 3. For those whose homes have been unscathed, the prolonged strain of uncertainty has grown increasingly difficult.

### Living on edge

"We're waiting for Pele to make the decision," said Steve Kirkpatrick, a retired mailman and 14-year resident of Leilani Estates, referring to the volcano goddess of Hawaiian myth. His home was still intact but in harm's way. "You go for three weeks and you think everything is fine, and then you can still lose your house," Kirkpatrick told Reuters as he and his wife, Kathy, ventured back to their community to help friends move out. "As the lava expands, so has the anxiety," she said, the low, jet-like sound of lava spouting from the ground audible in the distance.

Lava was not the only challenge posed by the eruption. Toxic sulfur dioxide gas emissions have created an additional hazard. So too have airborne volcanic glass fibers, called "Pele's hair," wispy strands produced by lava fountains and carried aloft by the wind. One resident, Nancy Avery, said the glass strands hurt like paper cuts, slicing into her fingers and feet, toes exposed because she wore only sandals. She tried to pick up a strand but, "It just kind of melted into my skin and cut me. It's so sharp, it feels like the glass is still in there." —Reuters

## Venezuela frees more anti-Maduro activists

**CARACAS:** Venezuela was freeing a second group of jailed opponents of President Nicolas Maduro on Saturday after admonishing them for alleged violent crimes against the socialist government. The releases followed Maduro's re-election at a poll last month that was condemned by Western nations as a farce cementing an autocracy in the South American OPEC member. Casting them as a peace gesture, the government said 40 activists were being released on Saturday, after 39 were freed on Friday.

Many had participated in protests against Maduro in 2014 and 2017 that turned violent killing around 170 people. Campaigners say the government inflated the list of releases by adding the names of some people who had already been freed and others who are not political prisoners. Local rights group Penal Forum said only 39 activists were among the total freed over the two days. The best-known among Saturday's releases were politicians Wilmer Azaque and Gilber Caro, plus Raul Baduel, the son of a dissident former general, opposition sources said. "I am so happy, so grateful to God, that this day has come because after more than a year my family reunites," Azaque's wife Kelly told Reuters. "The battle goes on for all the other separated families, for Venezuela, for a better future." Foes of Maduro say the releases, while welcome, are insufficient given another roughly 300 people are in jail on what the opposition says are trumped up charges intended to stifle dissent.

Some of those released on Saturday were paraded stony-faced at the colonial-era Yellow House that is home to the Foreign Ministry in Caracas. "We require from you a commitment to abandoning political violence, hatred and intolerance forever," senior official Delcy Rodriguez told them in video broadcast on state TV. —Reuters



International

# As election looms, popularity of Modi wanes in rural India

## BJP loses Kairana by-election in Uttar Pradesh state

**KAIRANA, India:** Indian farmers voted overwhelmingly for Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the 2014 general election that swept him to power. He cannot count on them doing so again, as a crash in commodity prices and surging fuel costs stoke anger in the countryside. Four years ago, Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) swept Uttar Pradesh, India's most populous state, winning 73 of 80 seats, as the rural poor - swayed by promises of higher crop prices - deserted the rival Congress party.

Now, facing criticism for not improving living standards in the countryside, where 70 percent of India's 1.3 billion people live, analysts and farm economists said Modi would find it hard to repeat the feat in a general election due by May 2019. While it is risky to predict election outcomes in India, where religion and caste remain important issues - not to mention the influence of fickle regional parties - interviews with some of the state's millions of farmers suggest rural angst could cost the government dearly.

"No doubt, there was a wave for Modi in 2014, but farmers are disenchanted with him now," said sugarcane grower Uday Vir Singh, 53, plunking down on a wicker chair and smoking his hookah. "Modi promised to double farmers' income but our earning has halved because of his apathy and anti-farmer policies."

Nearly half a dozen farmers sitting with Singh on a hand-woven rope cot, and many of others in Kairana - which elected a joint opposition candidate from a small regional party in a key by-election this week - accused Modi and the Uttar Pradesh administration, also run by the BJP, of failing to live up to their promises and overlooking the concerns of villagers. "Modi is a very good salesman but we are not going to fall prey to his glib talk again," said 55-year-old Narendra Kalhande,

who grows cane on his 2.5 acre farm. Farm Minister Radha Mohan Singh defended the government's record, citing initiatives on irrigation, crop insurance and electronic trading platforms for farmers to sell produce. "For farmers, Prime Minister Modi's 48 months have been much better than the Congress's rule of 48 years," Singh told Reuters, referring to the

farmers, who typically own less than 2 hectares of land. In the past year, Modi's popularity has fallen by 12 percentage points among farmers, according to a "Mood of the Nation" survey published last week by the Lokniti, part of the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS), a research institute.

Next year's election would be fought on farmers' issues, said Yogendra Yadav, a leading academic-turned-politician. Farmer organizations in some states began a 10-strike on Friday, in which they have said they will stop selling produce to protest a steep drop in the prices of an array of farm goods. Farm Minister Singh said his government had yet to hear from farm leaders but was ready to listen.



### Farmers' issues to dominate polls in 2019

main opposition party that dominated Indian politics for most of the years since independence from British colonial rule in 1947.

#### Crisis in countryside

Higher inflation and sluggish growth helped Modi trounce Congress, which had long counted the rural poor as its core constituency, in the 2014 election. Small farmers had been hit by rising living costs but benefited little from rising food prices because of the web of middlemen in India's agricultural markets. Since then the economy has picked up, recording its quickest pace of expansion in nearly two years in the first three months of 2018, helped by higher growth in the farm sector.

But lower food prices, weaker farm wages and modest crop procurement rates - the result of a shift in focus from the subsidies favored by Congress to investment under the pro-business BJP - have hurt most of India's 263 million

#### Commodities crash

Prices of pulses, a key crop for Indian farmers, have fallen 25-30 percent below state-set support prices, as higher imports and bumper local crops bumped up supplies. While the government announces support prices for more than 20 crops each year to set a benchmark, state agencies actually buy only rice and wheat at the support level.

Vegetable prices, especially onions, cabbage and tomatoes have fallen 25 percent from last year, largely because of the lack of refrigerated trucks that could take the perishables to the consuming big cities. Milk prices have also dived by more than 25 percent in the past year as a global glut has brought exports to a near halt. Farmers in Charkhi Dabri, three hours' drive west of the capital New Delhi, recently dumped tomatoes onto the road in protest after buyers offered a quarter of a rupee per kilogram for a crop that costs at least 6 rupees (\$0.09) a kg to produce.

Jai Bhagwan, 54, borrowed 12,000 rupees to grow onions on a plot of about half acre in Jhajjar, an area otherwise famed for pottery. When his crop was ready, Jai Bhagwan could



**SINGAPORE:** Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi unveils a plaque marking the immersion site of the ashes of Indian Independence icon Mahatma Gandhi at Clifford Pier. In 1948, after his murder, the ashes of Gandhi's body were sent to different parts of India and the rest of the planet including Singapore. —AFP

get only 1,200 rupees. "I could not even recover my labour cost," said Jai Bhagwan, who was in New Delhi recently to participate in a farmers' meet. Prakash Singh, also from Jhajjar, spent 6,000 rupees to grow green chilli, but the crop fetched him barely 200 rupees. "I'm in debt up to my eyeballs. But I can't sit idle, so I'll have to borrow more to grow something else," Singh said.

Ashok Gulati, a farm economist who advised India's last government, said there were three policy options to support farmers:

Building state buffer stocks to soak up excess supply, acting to boost exports or building capacity for processing farm commodities into end products such as milled, dehusked pulses or vegetable oils.

Most of those measures would require long-term structural changes, however, and analysts predict in the run-up to the election Modi is likely to announce more populist, short-term fixes such as higher guaranteed prices for crops and farm loan waivers. —Reuters

## 'Pregnancy rotas' add to Japan women's woes

**TOKYO:** Sayako had been trying to conceive a second child for two years when her boss at a Japanese daycare center suggested she stop because she had missed her "turn". Sayako, who spoke to AFP using a pseudonym, learned her boss had an unwritten policy that experts say is not uncommon in Japan: an informal "pregnancy rota" for employees. "Why don't you take a break, you already have one," her boss said, despite knowing Sayako was so keen to get pregnant that she was seeing a fertility specialist. "I was so shocked and stunned that I couldn't answer," the 35-year-old told AFP.

Sayako's boss told her that an older newlywed at her workplace now had priority when it came to having children. She quit the job and moved to another daycare center, recently giving birth to her second child. If she had stayed, "I think I'd have said 'I'm sorry'" instead of celebrating the birth of the baby. The issue of "pregnancy rotas" hit the headlines earlier this year when a man wrote about his wife's experience getting pregnant "out of turn".

In a letter to the Mainichi Shimbun newspaper, he said he and his wife had apologized to her boss at a nursery. "How dare you break the rules without asking?" the boss had said, the husband recounted. The letter sparked a debate about the practice, which experts say is particularly prevalent in sectors that struggle to find

and retain employees, like the daycare industry. It represents an intersection of two of Japan's most pressing social issues: a shrinking population and the struggle women face balancing a career and family.

#### 'A normal practice'

A declining birth rate has created labor shortages, but workplaces often demand long hours and overtime - a difficult prospect for female employees in a society that often still expects women to take the lead on housework and childcare. This leaves many women feeling forced to quit their jobs to have children or forego a family to stay employed and get promoted. "When you have an underlying idea that the ideal is a full-time housewife, people think women can just quit (if they get pregnant)," said Kanako Amano, a researcher at the NLI Research Institute. "They think that if you want to cling to your job, then you should wait your turn."

"Pregnancy rotas" have become "a normal practice at workplaces that mostly employ young female workers," she told AFP. Some women "don't realize it is unfair, and instead feel apologetic" for taking maternity leave. Employers argue that the labor shortage makes it impossible to manage a business if employees take maternity leave whenever it suits their family. But the result is a situation that only exacerbates Japan's shrinking population, Amano said. "The essence of the 'pregnancy order system' - making couples wait turns - has lowered Japan's birthrate," she argues.

Legal experts say that forcing employees to conceive on a rota is against the law, but it has become almost "inevitable" at workplaces like nurseries and hospitals, said Naoki Sakasai, a senior official at the



**TOKYO:** This picture taken April 23, 2018 shows Sayako, who spoke to AFP using a pseudonym, holding her baby during an interview. — AFP

Tokyo-based Research Institute of Early Childhood Care and Education. "It is on workers' minds, whether it is written or not." And while some employers frame the policy as "fair", women told AFP the system had the effect of pressuring newlyweds or older women to "hurry up" and get pregnant.

#### Discrimination

The issue is only one of many challenges for women in the workplace in Japan, which ranks bottom of the G7 countries on female representation in politics and business. Amano said working mothers

had few role models in managerial posts and women often found themselves discriminated against after having children. Mayu, who also spoke to AFP using a pseudonym, said "many things disappointed" her after she returned to her job as a nurse after maternity leave. "When I asked the boss to send me to a professional program as a step towards a future promotion, her reaction was: 'You took maternity leave and worked shorter hours. How many more favors do you want?'" "I have been told the same thing by three bosses over the past five years," she said. —AFP

## With Cambodia's free press under fire, 'China model' makes inroads

**PHNOM PENH:** As Cambodia's once-robust press freedom comes under attack, Chinese-linked outlets have found new footing ahead of July elections, pushing the country's media toward an authoritarian model - and bolstering strongman Hun Sen's tight grip on power. Critical coverage is increasingly drowned out by gushing pro-government tirades and pro-Beijing content as China extends its influence beyond business into Cambodia's press.

At the forefront of this shift is government-friendly website Fresh News. The owner Lim Chea Vutha, in a crisp suit and flashy ring, welcomes Beijing's support with open arms, namely in the form of sponsored trips to China. "As a Cambodian citizen, I declare that I support China, I support Chinese investment in Cambodia," the 38-year-old told AFP in the company's modern newsroom, as dozens of young reporters huddled over computers nearby.

Several of his employees have been treated to reporting trips on Beijing's dime, he said, and he travelled there in early June. In February, he launched a Mandarin-language version of the site, which brims with

articles hailing the Cambodian government's achievements and Chinese state media coverage. His sentiment reflects the nation's love affair with its Communist neighbor, which floated \$1.4 billion in approved foreign direct investment in 2017 as part of its massive "One Belt, One Road" infrastructure plan - double the previous year and outpacing all other countries.

Chinese loans have relieved Prime Minister Hun Sen of reliance on the Western aid that pushed Cambodia's democratization after the Khmer Rouge's brutal reign in the late 1970s. That has given Hun Sen, who has been in office for 33 years, room to choke independent media he was once under pressure to permit, smoothing the path to election victory on July 29.

#### China model

The unravelling has paralleled a crack-down on the opposition party, which was dissolved in November, prompting Western countries to pull funding for the vote. The combative Cambodia Daily closed in September under the weight of a massive tax bill believed to be politically motivated, while the US-backed Radio Free Asia was shuttered and two of its reporters arrested two months later. That left only the Phnom Penh Post, which spiralled into mayhem after a Malaysian investor - whose PR firm once worked for the government - bought the newspaper in April.

What remains are almost solely government-cosy outlets, many owned by Hun Sen's cronies and relatives. Though



**PHNOM PENH:** This picture taken on May 21, 2018 shows Cambodian online news outlet 'Fresh News' founder and CEO Lim Chea Vutha (left) talking with a staff member in their newsroom. — AFP

far from Beijing's sophisticated control of information, Cambodia's media landscape is starting to echo China's, according to Reporters Without Borders, which defines the model as media used to promote government aims and development. "It's going to be journalism with Chinese characteristics," said Cedric Alviani, head of East Asia for RSF.

A Western diplomat in Cambodia said government officials have in some cases openly praised the way Chinese media

operate. It is a shocking turn for a country once heralded as a beacon of press freedom in a region dogged by censorship. Chinese influence also comes in the form of investment into state-run Cambodia media. NiceTV debuted last year as a venture between the China-based NICE Culture Investment Group and the government, delivering news broadcasts and entertainment in the local language Khmer from a studio inside the Cambodian interior ministry. —AFP

## Nearly half of Afghan children out of school

**KABUL:** Nearly half all children in Afghanistan are out of school due to conflict, poverty, child marriage and discrimination against girls, the number rising for the first time since 2002, humanitarian organizations said in a report yesterday. Spreading violence has forced many schools to close, undermining fragile gains in education for girls in a country where millions have never set foot in a classroom.

Some 3.7 million children between the ages of seven and 17, or 44 percent, are out of school, 2.7 million of them girls, Education Minister Mirwais Balkhi told a seminar, explaining a study conducted by UNICEF, USAID and the independent Samuel Hall think-tank. The Taleban, seeking to oust the US-backed government and return the country to strict Islamic rule after their 2001 ouster, are adamantly opposed to education for girls and threats from Islamic State have forced the closure of dozens of schools.

Without mentioning the Taleban or Islamic State, Balkhi said there were "many reasons" for children not going to school. "Education of children is the most important development in all human communities," he said. "It is the most important tool in fighting war, poverty and unemployment." In the worst affected provinces, up to 85 percent of girls are not going to school, the aid groups said. They did not give specific time periods or comparisons.

In April this year, militants set ablaze two schools and widespread violence had led to closure of hundreds of private schools. "Business as usual is not an option for Afghanistan if we are to fulfill the right to education for every child," said Adele Khodr of UNICEF in the report. —Reuters

## Indonesia police raid university over plot to attack assemblies

**JAKARTA:** Indonesian anti-terrorism police have detained a former student and are questioning two others after a raid on a university campus in Pekanbaru, on Sumatra island, where crude bombs and other explosive material were seized, police said. The former student is thought to have been planning attacks on the Indonesian parliament in Jakarta and the local assembly in Pekanbaru, the capital of Riau province, national police spokesman Setyo Wasisto told a news conference yesterday.

An earlier police statement had said all three men had been named suspects, but Wasisto said that applied to only one and two were being questioned as witnesses. Wasisto said the suspect had links to members of the Islamic State-inspired Jemaah Ansharut Daulah (JAD), an umbrella organization on a US State Department terrorist list that is reckoned to have drawn hundreds of Indonesian sympathizers.

During Saturday's raid on a faculty at Riau University, police found a pipe bomb, a homemade grenade, as well as the homemade explosive triacetone triperoxide (TATP), known as the "Mother of Satan", Wasisto said. They also seized an air rifle and sets of bows and arrows, as well as other material such as fertilizer that could be used to make bombs, he said. —Reuters

## Analysis

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## Software and stealth: How carmakers hike spare parts prices

Carmakers including Renault, Jaguar Land Rover and Peugeot have boosted revenues by over \$1 billion in the past decade by using sophisticated pricing software, according to sales presentations prepared by the software vendor, Accenture, and other documents filed in a court case. The software works, Accenture told prospective clients, by identifying which spare parts in a manufacturer's range customers would be content to pay more for, how much to raise prices by and which prices should not be hiked.

The latter would include, for example, radiators and body parts that may feature in French automotive insurer group SRA's basket of parts that measures them for inflation, according to a court filing by the software creator, Laurent Boutboul. Documents relating to the case were obtained by French news site Mediapart and shared with Reuters and EIC, a network of European investigative news outlets. The client presentations and court complaints seen by Reuters cover the period 2009 to 2015. Jaguar Land Rover (JLR) acknowledged still using the Partneo software but Reuters was unable to determine which other car makers, if any, currently use it.

Accenture denied its software was unfair to motorists and said its focus was on increasing clients' efficiency. "Solutions of this type, which enable companies to assess and manage their products, are commonplace across industries. They help companies analyse spare part visibility and availability," it said in a statement. Boutboul is claiming 33 million euros from Accenture over what he says is damage to his reputation because Accenture broke European competition rules.

He says it did this by using non-public information taken from Renault to help configure the pricing systems it set up for PSA and potentially other manufacturers. His lawsuit did not specify the exact information. Boutboul's lawyer said Boutboul could not comment on the details of an ongoing legal action. Accenture said it rejected his claims. Renault, Jaguar Land Rover (JLR) and Peugeot said their pricing strategies for spare parts were legal, did not take advantage of car owners and were focused on efficiency and ensuring availability for motorists.

Peugeot said in a statement its replacement parts strategy "consists in offering ranges of spare parts that meet the needs of all customers, regardless of their budget, at the highest level of reliability and safety." Renault said it "strives to provide its customers with a wide variety of quality spare parts, the price of which is calculated based on parameters that Renault considers fair and equitable". JLR said it used Partneo to "deliver consistency in pricing across our spare parts range to ensure that we are appropriately priced against our competition".

France's competition regulator said it had examined the software and did not see a reason to open a full anti-trust investigation, without explaining its thinking. Renault said it was unaware of any of its non-public pricing information being shared with other carmakers. PSA said it rejected Boutboul's accusations, but did not answer detailed questions about how its software was configured. Accenture said its pricing software, called Partneo "does not share confidential or sensitive data between clients".

### 'Perceived value methodology'

In the past two decades, pricing software has become widely used. Aaron Roth, Associate Professor of Computer and Information Science at the University of Pennsylvania, said using software to try and identify the highest prices people were willing to pay was merely an extension of long-established practice among manufacturers and retailers. "Already, prices for products are set trying to maximize profits," he said. In a 2013 presentation to BMW, Accenture claimed its software had, on average, allowed clients to increase parts prices by 15 percent.

But the recommended increases varied widely from product to product. Accenture recommended in presentations seen by Reuters to six clients, including PSA, Honda and Volvo, that prices of many replacement parts should be doubled. An October 2013 presentation to carmaker Volvo said that the software had led to "yearly gains achieved" at seven car and truck makers of a combined \$415 million a year. Volvo said it did not use Partneo but declined to comment on the presentation. PSA declined to comment on whether or how much it increased prices. Honda did not respond to a request for comment.

Accenture said in its presentations that Partneo relies on a "perceived value pricing methodology". While manufacturers often seek a specific margin on parts, the software attempts to identify those parts for which consumers would be happy to pay above the typical mark-up. It selected these based on a product appearing to a car buyer to be more valuable or expensive to produce, client presentations show. Accenture noted in a 2009 presentation to France's PSA that customer perceptions of the intrinsic value of a part are often based on factors like size, weight, and material of an item like a shiny brand badge or a cog. In one presentation to Mitsubishi, it suggested the Japanese carmaker lift the price of a silver model badge from 14.42 euros to 87.49 euros, an increase of 507 percent. Mitsubishi declined to comment on whether it used the software or increased its prices. —Reuters



## Small glimmer of hope in Catalan crisis with new PM

Socialist Pedro Sanchez's arrival to power in Spain has brought a glimmer of hope that icy ties will thaw between Madrid and Catalan separatists, who are wary of the new leader but happy that veteran conservative Mariano Rajoy has gone. It was Catalan separatist lawmakers along with Basque nationalists - who swung the balance in favor of a no-confidence vote brought Friday against Rajoy due to corruption woes afflicting his party. As opposition leader, 46-year-old economist Sanchez was deeply critical of Catalonia's secession bid last October. He backed Rajoy's imposition of direct rule on the region after separatist leaders declared Catalan independence.

But he softened his tone as Catalan separatist lawmakers in the national parliament backed his no-confidence motion. He has said he wants to "build bridges" with the new regional separatist government. The fall of the conservatives in Madrid, along with the start of a new executive in Catalonia, could allow "the situation to improve," says Joan Botella, politics professor at the Autonomous University of Barcelona. Sanchez's speech in parliament was not particularly ambitious where the wealthy divided region is concerned, he says.

But he could profit from divisions within the separatist camp. The more moderate want to ditch the unilateral route to independence after several separatist leaders were jailed over their role in the secession bid. Meanwhile radicals like deposed president Carles Puigdemont, who is currently in Germany in self-exile, are in favour of keeping the conflict alive. Sanchez's swearing-in on Saturday coincided with that of new Catalan president Quim Torra's executive, which automatically triggers the end of direct rule. "The pro-independence movement is declining, there are internal divisions and with the new government Puigdemont is going to be less important," says Botella. "So maybe Sanchez will be lucky."

### Lesser evil

Things have not gone off to a good start. Torra, a hard-line separatist, criticized for writing tweets or articles deemed offensive to Spaniards, was described by Sanchez as a "racist" and "supremacist." Sanchez even dubbed Torra the Jean-Marie Le Pen of Spanish politics, referring to the controversial former far-right leader in France.

"The worst insults came from him and people from his (Socialist) party," said a regional presidency source, who wished to remain anonymous. "We don't have a good opinion at all, but Rajoy was clearly worse. At least he's of fresh disposition, and can defuse the situation and allow

some detente." Since Rajoy came to power in 2011, ties between Madrid and Barcelona have consistently worsened. The tensions escalated still further in the autumn with police violence during a banned independence refer-



### Catalan separatists wary of new leader

endum on October 1, a subsequent failed proclamation of a republic and the imposition of direct rule.

Even if Sanchez supported Rajoy in his response to the Catalan crisis, generally speaking the Socialists have been more attuned to Catalan claims than the conservative Popular Party (PP). Since 2013, they have called for a fed-

eral reform of Spain to give semi-autonomous regions more power and Sanchez has even defined Catalonia as a "nation." "Even if the PSOE (Socialist party) has tried hard to look like the Popular Party... in Catalonia we know there are differences," Joan Tarda, a lawmaker with the separatist ERC party, said this week in the national parliament.

### Little room for maneuver

Adding to this, the main supporter of the Socialists in the no-confidence vote was far-left Podemos, which defends the right to hold an independence referendum in Catalonia. "There could be a change, maybe not substantial but more like an offer for dialogue, the will to reopen channels to a negotiated solution to the conflict," says Berta Barbet, editor of political analysis website Politikon. But any concessions to Catalan separatists could be rejected by members of Sanchez's own party, the PP and especially Ciudadanos, the centre-right party that is on the rise in opinion polls for its aggressive anti-independence stance. "There will be very strong opposition," acknowledges Barbet. "But if there is a moment when the PSOE could make a different offer to de-escalate the conflict, it's now, because part of Spanish society has realized how important it is to resolve the Catalan issue." — AFP



**MADRID:** This combination of pictures shows Spain's outgoing premier Mariano Rajoy taking the oath of office with a Bible and a crucifix on October 31, 2016 and Spain's new Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez being sworn in on June 2, 2018 without the two religious symbols—the first to do so. Spain's Socialist chief Pedro Sanchez was sworn in as prime minister, a day after ousting Mariano Rajoy in a historic no-confidence vote sparked by fury over corruption woes afflicting the conservative leader's party. —AFP

## With promises, ports, ships, India asserts its role in SE Asia

Almost lost in the din of the upcoming US-North Korea summit and fresh tension between Washington and Beijing last week, India cemented its diplomatic and security ties across Southeast Asia in a clear challenge to China. It's not clear just how far New Delhi will take these relationships, given years of promise, and a general election due in 11 months that could be a distraction for Prime Minister Narendra Modi. And if India is already rattling China, it won't want to spark open confrontation.

But Modi took several concrete foreign policy and security steps in Southeast Asia in recent days. He signed an agreement with Indonesia to develop a port in the city of Sabang that would overlook the western entrance to the Strait of Malacca, one of the world's busiest waterways, and agreed a pact with Singapore on logistical support for naval ships, submarines and military aircraft during visits. Modi also flew to Kuala Lumpur for a late-scheduled call on Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, who won last month's general election, effectively cementing ties with three of the most influential Southeast Asian nations.

On Friday, Modi told the Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore, Asia's premier defense forum, that India would work with the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) to promote a rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific region. "We will work with them, individually or in formats of three or more, for a stable and peaceful region,"

he said in the keynote speech at the forum. Several delegates, including US Defense Secretary Jim Mattis, voiced support. At the end of the forum on Sunday, Singapore Defense Minister Ng Eng Hen said: "I am sure many countries are delighted that India has indicated its firm commitment to the region."

### China cool

The term "Indo-Pacific" has grown in usage across diplomatic and security circles in the United States, Australia, India and Japan in recent years, shorthand for a broader and democratic-led region in place of "Asia-Pacific", which some people have said places China too firmly at the centre.

In a nod to India's growing regional stature, the US military's Pacific Command in Hawaii formally changed its name to the US Indo-Pacific Command in a ceremony on Wednesday. Despite an outward show of friendship between China and India, and Modi's comments about the strong relations between them, Beijing gave a distinctly cool response to his strategy.

The state-owned Global Times warned in an editorial last week: "If India really seeks military access to the strategic island of Sabang, it might wrongfully entrap itself into a strategic competition with China and eventually burn its own fingers." Senior Colonel Zhao Xiaozhou, research fellow at the Institute of War Studies Academy of Military Sciences of the People's Liberation Army, told reporters on the sidelines of the Shangri-La Dialogue that Modi "made some dedicated comments on what he thought of the Indo-Pacific concept". He did not elaborate but the Global Times quoted him as saying: "The Indo-Pacific strategy, and the quasi-alliance between the US, Japan, India and Australia will not last long."

### Wider footprint

Indian foreign ministry officials said there was a strong

element of self-interest in New Delhi's efforts to secure open access to the Malacca Strait, since it carries about 60 percent of its foreign trade. But India's intended footprint looks to be wider. Late last month, three Indian warships staged exercises with the Vietnamese navy for the first time in the South China Sea, which is claimed almost wholly by China. Vietnamese submariners are trained in India, while the two sides have significantly increased intelligence sharing and are exploring advanced weapons sales.

To the west, India signed an agreement for access to the port of Duqm on Oman's southern coast, during a visit by Modi earlier this year. Under the agreement, media reports said, the Indian navy will be able to use the port for logistics and support, allowing it to sustain long-term operations in the western Indian Ocean. In January, India finalized a logistics exchange arrangement with France under which it can use French military facilities in the Indian Ocean. Analysts said a more assertive India would answer concerns in Southeast Asia about expanding Chinese influence in the region and a fear that the United States was disengaging.

The United States' trade spat with China and a perceived U-turn in its foreign policy as it pursues peace with North Korea had shaken many assumptions in the region, they said. "There is some pressure (in ASEAN) for diversification of security relationships, taking insurances," said C Raja Mohan, director of the Institute of South Asian Studies at the National University of Singapore. "An active India then actually fits into this situation." But although Modi has started strongly, it was not clear how well his strategy would be sustained, he added. "Implementation has always been a major challenge for India. (Modi is) struggling to improve the capacity of Delhi to do things outside borders. There's been some advance but that is a structural challenge that will remain." — Reuters

## Business

MONDAY, JUNE 4, 2018

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DUBAI: In this file photo taken on June 12, 2017 a Qatar Airways plane lands at the Hamad International Airport in the Qatari capital. —AFP

# Qatar economy weathers blockade storms

## Some sectors continue to pay the price a year after the crisis

**DUBAI:** Qatar has weathered the economic impacts of a stifling Saudi-led blockade, maintaining healthy growth, but some sectors continue to pay the price a year after the crisis erupted. On June 5, 2017, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain—all partners of Qatar in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) — along with Egypt, severed ties with Qatar.

Accusing Doha of supporting radical Islamist groups, they imposed a land, sea and air blockade. Gas-rich Qatar tapped into its massive wealth to absorb the early shocks to its financial system, and secure alternative food supplies, maritime routes and ports, reports said. The blockading nations, already under economic hardship from low oil prices, have also suffered losses from the ongoing standoff, analysts argue.

Economic integration programs among the six-nation GCC, which were progressing at a snail's pace, have suffered the most and the future of the regional alliance has been thrown into doubt. "The latest data from Qatar reiterate that the worst of the hit to the economy from its diplomatic crisis with Saudi Arabia and its allies has now passed," said Capital Economics in a report in May.

Doha injected tens of billions of dollars to offset a drop in banking deposits at the start of the crisis and succeeded

in bringing the banking sector back to normal operations. Growth performance remains resilient. The direct economic and financial impact of the diplomatic rift between Qatar and some countries in the region has been manageable," the International Monetary Fund said in a report on Wednesday.

### Crisis 'opportunity'

Despite the drop in oil revenues, Qatar achieved a growth rate of 2.1 percent in 2017, almost unchanged from the previous year, and is forecast to rise to 2.6 percent this year, according to the IMF. "Qatar's economy has suffered on several fronts as new logistics links proved to be more expensive in the short term," Andreas Krieg, a professor at King's College London, told AFP. "However, Qatar has been able to transform this crisis into an opportunity."

Economic diversification has made a huge leap, such as the opening of Hamad Port to bypass Jebel Ali in Dubai. The

multi-billion-dollar mega projects connected to the 2022 football World Cup have continued unabated, said Krieg. In addition, Doha's gas and crude oil exports have not been disrupted, providing a revenue lifeline.

Despite the rift, Qatari gas continues to flow into the UAE through the Dolphin pipeline. Since the blockade began, Qatar—home of Al-Udeid, the largest US base in the region—has agreed a raft of military purchases worth tens of billions of dollars with the United States and Europe. "Qatar made a large drawdown of its reserves and investment assets when the blockade began," said Middle East commentator Neil Partrick.

Although it sustained losses in tourism revenue, it has enjoyed "economic success" assisted by Iran, Turkey and Oman, Partrick said. The blockade's negative impacts on Qatar were in real estate, tourism and Qatar Airways, which is expected to announce large losses because of longer routes. According to Capital Economics, in the first

six months of the blockade, visitors to Qatar dropped by 20 percent, flights into Doha by 25 percent, and Qatar Airways flights by 20 percent. It estimated loss in tourism revenue during the same period at \$600 million, and real estate prices fell by 10 percent. Mandagolathur Raghu, head of research at the Kuwait Financial Centre, said his company estimates Qatar Airways has lost around \$3 billion in revenues.

### Regional hit

The blockading nations also suffered from the diplomatic crisis, though to a lesser degree. "I think that the economic impact of the blockade on the entire region should not be underestimated. The loss due to the disruption of free trade is in the tens of billions of dollars for all countries," Krieg said. Dubai in particular has suffered billions of dollars in losses due to Qatari companies no longer being able to work there, he said.

Lost Qatari investments in the UAE real estate sector are worth hundreds of millions, while both Saudi Arabia and the UAE have taken a blow worth billions after cutting food exports to Qatar. Capital markets suffered as a whole and GCC economic programmes will be delayed further. "Projects that require GCC-wide coordination could be shelved or timelines indefinitely postponed," Raghu said. —AFP



### Growth performance remains resilient

## Zain launches first integrated 5G network in Kuwait

**KUWAIT:** Zain, the largest telecommunications company in Kuwait, has launched the first integrated 5G technology on its network, which will provide high-speed communications with high efficiency. Fifth-generation technology represents a quantum leap in the operational efficiency of its network which will make it one of the first companies in Kuwait and the region to adopt this solution to meet the ever-growing digital needs of its individual and enterprise customers.

Zain extends an invitation to its customers to experience 5G technology during the month and enjoy the high speeds that will be available in several prominent locations, an early initiative for its customers to benefit from the great mobile experience of 5G services. Zain will continue developing and expanding the 5G network gradually across Kuwait until the devices are available, expected during the course of 2019.

Zain Kuwait's Chief Technology Officer Nawaf Al Gharabally said: "Telecom services are one of the most important sectors in accelerating economic growth and promoting trade. Obviously, existing mobile networks will not be able to satisfy the future needs of the telecommunications sector. 5G technologies will contribute to the digital transformation and prosperity of Kuwait, supporting the leadership's future vision for the country and its people."

### 'Digital lifestyle'

Al Gharabally continued, "The launch of this new technology will help Zain to unleash its full potential in the digital community, enhance ICT cooperation on multiple fronts and stimulate the company's efforts to become the

leading provider of digital lifestyle". He explained that the practical applications offered by these new technologies will expand the scope of the company's services in the enterprise sector and B2B companies, who benefit enormously from high speeds, as well as enhancing the customer experience, and the creation of new business. This move will take the company's customer base to next-generation technology in data transfer and Internet usage.

The coverage will start in some areas in succession, with the plan covering the most important places and vital areas in the country soon.

"The fifth-generation services will provide a comprehensive change in the use of the Internet and will help introduce and deliver unique products and services in the business, smart cities, and Internet sectors. The technology solutions will also meet the growing demand for data services," said Al Gharabally.

The technology will provide real value to digital information, as the world telecom community will count on the tremendous potential that will be provided by the fifth generation technology, and the capabilities it will offer to lead the digital conversion, IoT, high-volume data, especially since the design of the fifth generation technology will improve the rapid growth of smart phones, data services and video services over the Internet, and the fifth generation will provide customers with high quality Internet services to allow them to enjoy movies and programs, as well as live and online gaming, online shopping and more.

Advanced vehicle technologies will contribute to the introduction of new safety and traffic efficiency systems



Nawaf Al Gharabally



that will include self-driving vehicles. Future generations of vehicles will need advanced wireless communication capabilities through the fifth generation to connect with each other, with local traffic center systems and vehicle manufacturers.

The fifth-generation technology will enable industries to adopt new models of technologies that can help reduce costs, enhance efficiency and improve public health. At the same time, the fifth generation can provide many commercial services to consumers to track and monitor data wirelessly. Zain has been one of the first companies interested in acquiring the latest technological applications. It confirms the great interest it attaches to the convenience of the customer in providing its services and its keenness to provide the best products to suit the different needs of its customers to be accessible to all.

## India urges global plane makers to 'Make in India'

**MUMBAI:** India wants to encourage aircraft makers to manufacture in the country, starting with components and moving eventually to complete aircraft, Aviation Minister Suresh Prabhu said yesterday. In a series of messages on Twitter, Prabhu appealed to Airbus and Boeing Co to participate in the push as part of the government's flagship "Make In India" campaign, highlighting the growth potential of the booming market, which has been adding passengers and cutting fares. India's booming aviation market and economy needs more than 1,000 passenger planes and "many more" cargo planes, Prabhu, who last week visited an Airbus facility in Toulouse in France, wrote in the Twitter post. Airbus said last year it expected Indian carriers to order 1,750 aircraft over 20 years. Boeing predicted up to 2,100 planes would be sold in the same period.

In other news American Airlines warned airline passengers may eventually face higher ticket prices if oil prices remain high, prompting carriers to remove seats from the market. Oil prices have risen around 50 percent compared to the levels seen last year and that is putting pressure on airline profits. "If it becomes clear this is the new normal you would see over time less capacity and growth in the industry and therefore higher prices, but I don't think that's going to happen in the near term," CEO Doug Parker told reporters on the sidelines of the annual IATA meeting of airline executives in Sydney. —Reuters

## Business

## NBK Weekly Market Report

# Global trade war looms as Italy crisis takes back seat

**KUWAIT:** Trade war was the dominating theme last week as the Italian political crisis took a back seat after the populist government was formed. The US had given temporary exemptions for the EU, Canada and Mexico, which expired at the end of last week. Afterwards, the US imposed tariffs of 25% on steel and 10% on aluminum. This elevates the stake considerably in global trade tensions and will be unquestionably followed by measures being publicized by these three important trading partners of the US. Canada has already confirmed that USD 12.8bn worth of tariffs on US steel, aluminum and other imports will take effect on July 1st. Moreover, Mexico has promised action and EU Commission President vowed imminent response.

However, the impact in the currencies market has been marginal so far. It stems from the initial reaction that there is a strong consensus that this may not result in any large scale trade war. The likely reason for such a lack of volatility in the FX market is that the US may not respond to actions imposed by other trading partners.

Other nations that were hit by the initial placement of these tariffs in April did retaliate with no action followed from the US, so there is some logic in this assumption for now. Still, the risks of a more damaging escalation in trade conflict is now higher than before and that may potentially extend the period of recent positive performance in safe haven currencies. The recent surge in the two and ten year dated Treasury yields took a U-turn and have fallen in five of the last six sessions, reversing an uptrend that has been in place for the last couple of months. Demand for safe haven assets such as US government bonds, CHF and JPY are on the rise.

## A robust labor report

The American economy added 223K jobs last month and the unemployment rate edged to an 18-year low to 3.8%. The data indicates that the US labor market continues to tighten further and may cause inflation to increase even more as labor supply diminishes. As for wages, the average pay rose 0.3% after edging up by 0.1% in April. That lifted the annual increase in average hourly earnings to 2.7% from 2.6% in April. All of the above three indicators beat forecasts and this gives room for the FOMC to hike a further two times this year.

In the private sector, the US economy is experiencing more difficulty in attaining new employees in an era of record number of open positions. It seems that the labor market tightness and an unemployment rate that is considerably low is part of the story. Moreover, the below trend numbers for the past two months may have been impacted by worries of trade wars with America's trade partners and a shortage of qualified workers. In details, the private segment added 178K jobs in May, below the expected forecast of 190K and the number for April was revised downward from 204K to just 163K.

As for the US dollar, the buck began its weekly session on a strong footing and appreciated to the highest level since November 2017. The Dollar received support from risk aversion and a weaker EUR/USD. However, the greenback's upward momentum failed to uphold as the Italian crisis faded out of the picture and the euro recovered due to positive economic data. At the last trading day of the week, the USD dollar index gained ground after the strong labor report data. The DXY closed slightly higher by 0.22% over the past week.

## Merkel offers Macron concessions on eurozone reforms

**BERLIN:** German Chancellor Angela Merkel delivered a long-awaited answer to French President Emmanuel Macron's call for ambitious European Union reforms yesterday, offering olive branches on investment and help for debt-mired eurozone member states. More than a year after Macron took office with the stated mission to bolster the EU and make it more responsive to its citizens, Merkel's counter-offer comes at a time of heightened concern about the future of the bloc due to political turmoil in Italy and Spain and transatlantic tensions. Merkel told the Frankfurter Allgemeine

## US GDP eases slightly

The second preliminary estimate of Q1 2018 GDP was slightly revised lower by 0.1% to 2.2%. The latest growth figure is substantially lower than the final three months of 2017, when the economy expanded at a 2.9% annual pace. The two main factors for the moderate downward reassessment were a sharp slowdown in consumer spending from 4% in Q4 2017 to 1% in Q1 2018 and the value of newly added inventories was slashed to \$20.2 billion from an original \$33.1 billion. Moreover, exports increased slower at 4.2% vs the first estimate of 4.8%, while imports remained unchanged.

Nevertheless, the outlook for the US economy remains resilient, when other economies like the EU, UK and to some extent China are experiencing a slowdown in economic momentum. The broader indicators suggest the US economy remains on a firm footing so far in 2018, and the recent figures haven't negatively altered the FED's monetary strategy of increasing interest rates and slowly shrinking the money supply in the economy. Several economists still anticipate that the \$1.5 trillion income tax cut package, which came into effect in January, will spur faster economic growth this year and lift annual GDP growth close to the Trump administration's 3% target.

## US Core PCE maintains the 1.8% Level

The Federal Reserve's preferred measure on price growth rose 0.2% on a monthly basis in April. In annual terms, the core personal consumption expenditures index, rose 1.8%, holding steady from a downwardly revised 1.8% in March (previously 1.9%), according to the US Department of Commerce. As for the headline PCE, the index also remained unchanged at 2% on an annual basis. Overall, inflation in the US has been improving on several fronts from CPI to wages and on the PCE index too. This indicates inflation momentum is not one off, is also becoming more consistent and broad-based. The probability of an interest rate hike from the FED on June the 13th currently stands around 85%. Treasury yields ticked higher after the data reached the market. The yield on the two-year Treasury regarded as most sensitive to Fed policy expectations, was up 1.2 basis points to 2.4234%.

## Consumer confidence improves in America

US consumer sentiment recovered in May after a modest decline in the previous figure. The confidence level came in as expected at 128 from 125.6 recorded in April. Looking at the inner components, consumers' valuation of current conditions increased to a 17-year high, while their prospects for future conditions rose less robustly. May's robust data is correlated to a healthy labor market and higher after-tax paychecks. Nonetheless, US citizens face headwinds such as elevated gasoline costs and mortgage rates in a period of political uncertainty regarding trade tensions. In addition, wages are somewhat modest even as the unemployment rate is at the lowest level since late 2000. The overall picture suggests that the level of economic growth in Q2 may have improved from Q1 as consumers' assessment of current conditions improved.

## UK & EUROPE

Months of political uncertainty in Italy and last week's negative movements in the country's markets came to a halt as the populist coalition government was sworn into power on Friday. The Five Star Movement and the League face difficult constraints

Sonntagszeitung ahead of a crunch EU summit this month that Germany as the eurozone's top economy would support an investment budget whose total would be "at the lower end of the double-digit billions of euros range". She said the "rainy day fund", as it has been dubbed, would serve to help even out economic imbalances between richer and poorer European countries "which need to catch up in the areas of science, technology and innovation".

"We need quicker economic convergence between the member states," she said. "To do that we have to strengthen investment capability with the help of additional structural policies," she said, adding that the fund would be phased in gradually and then evaluated in terms of its effectiveness. Although Merkel's budget target falls short of the range proposed by Macron, it represents a concession of sorts to his view that excessive austerity has undermined faith in the bloc.



from Italy's fragile public finances to the EU rules that Rome must abide by. It's only fair that the two parties have their shot at governing, but it's hard to see how they can deliver on their promises to decrease taxes and increase welfare spending without being in conflict with the EU. Moreover, risks for the single currency would intensify if evidence began to emerge that public opinion in Italy was materially shifting against maintaining membership in the EU. Although, the European Commission's latest indicator revealed that 59% of Italians surveyed were in favor of the single currency compared to nearly 30% against and 11% unsure. In conclusion, Italy's political and economic difficulties are still in play, but they may very well be a contained problem and less of a global risk than they were at the start of the week.

## Inflation roars in the single economy

On an annual basis, consumer price growth in the euro-zone inflated to 1.9% last month from 1.2% in April. Eliminating volatile energy and unprocessed food prices, inflation rose to 1.3% from 1.1%. Another core inflation measure, which excludes alcohol and tobacco, came in at 1.1% from 0.7% seen in April. Moreover, there was a significant rise in headline inflation across the big four. German price growth soared from 1.4% to 2.2%. French inflation was elevated from 1.8% to 2.3%. Spanish prices jumped from 1.1% to 2.1%. Lastly, in Italy, inflation rose from 0.6% to 1.1%. The above data indicates inflation in the single economy was mostly broad based.

The robust upward momentum in prices was mainly due to energy prices, which shot up by a significant 6.1% in May compared to 2.6% the month before. The headline inflation rate is now back at the ECB's target of below, but close to 2%. On the other hand, some of the surge in prices could only prove temporary, as it is energy correlated.

Therefore, in the absence of further oil price increases, the effect of higher energy-related inflation could drop out in the near future. After years of trying to attain the inflation target, it could not have come at a more difficult time. Political issues throughout Europe (Italy, Spain and Brexit) could reignite market turbulence in the block and derail the Bank's exit strategy. Despite the political concerns, officials at the ECB have long debated that the Bank's mandate is to oversee inflation, not help countries out

of difficulties, suggesting little appetite now to give up plans to normalize policy. The ECB's monetary meeting is set for June 14 when it publishes fresh economic projections, but a decision on whether to wind down the asset buys is more likely to come at the July 26 meeting.

Looking at the euro, the EUR/USD depreciated to a 10 month low on Tuesday as negative sentiments over the Italian political turmoil spilled onto the FX market. The euro fell to a low of 1.1506 versus the Dollar. Afterwards, the single currency recovered its losses thanks to a robust European consumer inflation and receding tension in Italy. The EUR/USD opened the week at 1.1688 and closed on Friday at 1.1658.

## ASIA

### China's manufacturing sector defies economic slowdown

China's manufacturing industry defied market expectations and further entered into growth territory as the PMI rose to an 8-month high in May. The manufacturing PMI data came in at 51.9 from 51.4 recorded in April and was above the median forecast compiled by Reuters of a decline to 51.3. The manufacturing PMI has been hovering around 50 to 52, suggesting a moderate expansion in production activities. Strong supply-demand factors and inflated global commodity prices contributed to the improvement in May's manufacturing PMI reading. Meanwhile, the service industry also didn't disappoint to the downside and rose by 0.1 to 54.9. China continues to defy prospects of a slowdown in spite of the fact that it's clear the government is delivering on the promise of maybe sacrificing a little bit of economic strength for stability. However, uncertainty over trade remains the key risk to growth in the near term. As for the World Bank's projections, China's economic development is projected to moderate to 6.5% in 2018 and 6.3% in 2019-20.

The safe haven Japanese yen was in demand throughout last week as investors rushed into safety assets due to political tensions in Italy and an increasing possibility of a global trade war. The green back declined to a low of 108.10 against the yen on Tuesday and consolidated till Friday. On the last trading day, the US currency recovered its losses saved by the robust labor report. The USD/JPY pair ended the week almost unchanged at 109.53.



**VERSAILLES:** In this file photo taken on March 06, 2017 (From L) Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, French President Francois Hollande and Italian Premier Paolo Gentiloni visit the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles Palace during an informal summit of the heads of continental Europe's biggest economies focusing on the Brexit. —AFP

## EXCHANGE RATES

### BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
<b>Europe</b>		
British Pound	0.398565	0.412465
Czech Koruna	0.005739	0.016039
Danish Krone	0.043612	0.048612
Euro	0.346506	0.360206
Georgian Lari	0.138716	0.138718
Hungarian O.001142	0.001332	0.001332
Norwegian Krone	0.033174	0.038374
Romanian Leu	0.064880	0.081730
Russian ruble	0.004877	0.004877
Slovakia	0.009039	0.019039
Swedish Krona	0.030477	0.035477
Swiss Franc	0.300694	0.311694
<b>Australasia</b>		
Australian Dollar	0.221522	0.233522
New Zealand Dollar	0.205831	0.215331
<b>America</b>		
Canadian Dollar	0.228876	0.237875
US Dollars	0.299000	0.303400
US Dollars Mint	0.299500	0.303400
<b>Asia</b>		
Bangladesh Taka	0.002999	0.003781
Chinese Yuan	0.045824	0.049324
Hong Kong Dollar	0.036869	0.039619
Indian Rupee	0.003853	0.004580
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000017	0.000023
Japanese Yen	0.002702	0.002882
Korean Won	0.000272	0.000267
Malaysian Ringgit	0.072605	0.078605
Nepalese Rupee	0.002734	0.003704
Pakistan Rupee	0.002004	0.002774
Philippine Peso	0.005621	0.005921
Singapore Dollar	0.221330	0.231330
Sri Lanka Rupee	0.001557	0.002137
Taiwan	0.010400	0.010580
Thai Baht	0.009126	0.009676
<b>Arab</b>		
Bahraini Dinar	0.797090	0.805590
<b>Dollarco Exchange Co. Ltd</b>		
<b>Rate for Transfer</b>		
US Dollar	302.740	
Canadian Dollar	234.495	
Sterling Pound	405.585	
Euro	354.565	
Swiss Frank	301.675	
Bahrain Dinar	805.100	
UAE Dirhams	82.825	
Qatari Riyals	84.060	
Saudi Riyals	81.625	
Jordanian Dinar	428.276	
Egyptian Pound	16.939	
Sri Lanka Rupees	1.913	
Indian Rupees	4.515	
Pakistani Rupees	2.616	
Bangladesh Taka	3.624	
Philippines Peso	5.760	
Cyprus pound	18.015	
Japanese Yen	3.760	
Syrian Pound	1.590	
Nepalese Rupees	2.828	
Malaysian Ringgit	76.965	
Chinese Yuan Renminbi	47.595	
Thai Bhat	10.455	
Turkish Lira	65.520	
<b>Selling Rate</b>		
US Dollar	302.740	0.020022
Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000085
Iraqi Dinar	0.000196	0.000256
Jordanian Dinar	0.422896	0.431896
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000156	0.000256
Moroccan Dirhams	0.021231	0.045231
Omani Riyal	0.780955	0.786635
Qatar Riyal	0.078964	0.083904
Saudi Riyal	0.079740	0.081040
Syrian Pound	0.001285	0.001505
Tunisian Dinar	0.113821	0.121821
Turkish Lira	0.060955	0.071255
UAE Dirhams	0.081098	0.082798
Yemeni Riyal	0.000985	0.001065

## CBK launches travel campaign

**KUWAIT:** The Commercial Bank of Kuwait (CBK) recently launched its 'Your Trip, Your Way Tickets, Cash & One Kilo of Gold' campaign, which entitles CBK card holders chances to plan a trip and win flight tickets, cash prizes and gold. In this regard, CBK's assistant manager for individual banking services, Hameed Salman stressed that CBK had always rewarded its

clients in appreciation for selecting it and that this time CBK clients spending KD 10 using their credit cards in Kuwait would get one chance to enter the monthly and the final draws whereas each KD 10 spent abroad entitles the card holder to three chances ( three entries) in the monthly and the final draws. Salman added that the campaign includes four draws to be held on July 8th, August 12th while the third and fourth would be held on September 9th to select 12 winners to win travel vouchers valuing KD 1,750- 2,750 each in addition to additional KD 250 cash in the third and fourth draw. "One lucky winner will get a chance to win one kilo of pure Gold", Salman added.

## Bursa Kuwait adopts FTSE Russell Industry Classification Benchmark

**KUWAIT:** As part of its ongoing commitment to attract and facilitate international investments to Kuwait, Bursa Kuwait will adopt the FTSE Russell Industry Classification Benchmark (ICB) for all equity stocks listed on its markets, starting this month, June 2018.

The FTSE Russell ICB is a comprehensive, globally recognized standard, categorizing companies and securities across four levels of classification. Each company is allocated to the subsector that most closely represents the nature of its business, determined by its primary source of revenue and other publicly available information. Bursa Kuwait CEO Khaled Abdulrazzaq Al Khaled hailed the adoption, saying, "Adopting the FTSE Russell Industry Classification Benchmark ensures that our bourse will adhere to international standards and increase transparency as well as adopt universal benchmarks, allowing the exchange to flourish and expand. Our goal of achieving worldwide status and becoming

a regional leader just became a little closer with this step, an important milestone on our journey and goal of developing a liquid, reliable and sound capital market providing issuers with efficient access to capital, and investors with diverse return opportunities, evolving into a leading regional exchange."

Gary Rynhoud, FTSE Russell's Head of the Middle East and Africa, also welcomed Bursa Kuwait's adoption of the ICB, stating, "Bursa Kuwait's adoption of ICB's globally recognized classification standard will support the local bourse in offering increased transparency, structure, and standards to meet the needs of the global investment industry and support increased international awareness and investment into Kuwait.

"The ICB is a rigorous and transparent rules-based methodology and we are delighted that Bursa Kuwait has chosen ICB to assist it in bringing their services in line with the practices of the global investment community." Since its establishment in 2014, Bursa Kuwait has been committed to raising the international standards of the Kuwaiti market, facilitating the development of a sound, internationally recognized, leading regional exchange. In September 2018, Kuwait will be promoted to Secondary Emerging market status, after undergoing FTSE Russell's Annual Classification Review in September 2017.

Business

KAMCO Monthly Market Report

# Performance of GCC markets muted amid thin trading owing to Ramadan

**KUWAIT:** There was downward pressure on the region's markets led by oil price volatility, international geopolitical issues and FX related volatility. Almost all the GCC markets declined during the month, with the only exception of Bahrain that posted marginal gains. Dubai witnessed the biggest monthly decline of 3.3%, followed by Qatar and Oman.

On the international front, the to and fro related to the US North Korean summit and US China trade relations, with the US moving ahead with tariffs on Chinese goods and limits on Chinese investment in the US also affected market trends. This came in addition to the pressure on the Euro that declined to a 10 month low, following uncertainty related to Italian elections. As a result, the MSCI World index was almost flat at 0.3% for the month, while the Emerging Market index was down by 3.6%.

In the oil market, after touching a 3.5 year high during early May-18, crude prices remained volatile touching multi-week lows after it was reported that Saudi Arabia and Russia may increase oil production to fill up the gap created by a decline in production by Iran and Venezuela. Although analysts pointed to continued positive demand fundamentals in the market, coupled with a decline in OECD inventory that reached the targeted 5-year average, crude prices remained on the edge, as opening up the tap earlier than the original target would once again flood the market with oversupply.

In terms of sector performance, the decline in GCC during the month primarily reflected weakness in the Utilities and Real Estate stocks. A majority of the large-cap real estate stocks were in the red across markets. On the other hand, the resilient banking stocks took a break during May-18 and remained flat m-o-m, but the aggregate banking index was still up more than 15% during YTD-18.

**Boursa Kuwait**

Kuwait's headline indices continued to decline for the second consecutive month in May-18. The decline was broad-based as all the indices declined during the month with the Premier market index sliding the most by 1.8% indicating relatively larger selling in large-cap stocks. The All Share Index declined at a slightly slower pace of 1.3% while the Main Market Index declined by a marginal rate of 0.4%.

Nevertheless, Kuwait continues to record positive performance for YTD-18 as tracked using the Thomson Reuters Kuwait Total Return Index that was up 2.8% since the start of the year. In terms of sector performance, the Technology Index witnessed the steepest decline of 13.8% primarily on the back of a 20.5% decline in shares of Automated Systems Co in addition to a 2.4% decline in shares of Osos Holding. The Industrial Index recorded the second highest monthly decline of 4.3% followed by the Telecom Index and the Consumer Goods Index with declines of 3.7% and 2.9%, respectively.

Most of the large-cap stocks in the Industrial sector witnessed monthly declines that dragged down the overall index. The decline in the Telecom sector came as a result of a decline in all the constituent stocks in the index, which was also the case with the Consumer Goods index. The large-cap Banking index also witnessed marginal decline during the month at -0.7% as gain in shares of CBK (+24.6%) and Boubyan Bank (+3.1%) were more than offset by decline in other Kuwaiti banking stocks. Shares of CBK got a boost after the bank reported a significant improvement in Q1-18 profit (KWD 10.1 Mn in Q1-18 vs. KWD 0.8 Mn in Q1-17) despite a decline in operating income as impairment and provisions were significantly less during Q1-18 as compared to Q1-17. On the other hand, the Oil & Gas was the only index that reported noticeable gains during the month at 5.8% after a majority of the constituent stocks reported positive performance during the month.

Trading activity declined owing to the month of Ramadan. Total monthly volume traded declined by 11% to 1.2 Bn shares as compared to 1.35 Bn shares during the previous month, while monthly value traded declined at a slightly higher pace of 15% to KWD 204.8 Mn as compared to KWD 240.8 Mn during April-18. Shares of NBK (-3.1%) garnered the most interest in terms of value traded recording total trades worth KWD 31.6 Mn followed by KFH (-0.6%) and Zain (-3.8%) at KWD 31.2 Mn and KWD 16.2 Mn, respectively. In terms of monthly volume, KFH topped the

chart with 60.3 Mn traded shares followed by shares of Aayan Leasing and Gulf North Africa Holding recording 53.7 Mn and 52.8 Mn shares traded during the month, respectively. The monthly gainers chart was topped by Al Madar Finance & Investment with its shares gaining almost two times after the company reported profits for Q1-18 as against a loss during Q1-17 in addition to signing a KWD 17 Mn debt settlement.

**Saudi Arabia (Tadawul)**

Saudi Arabia's TASI declined marginally during May-18 by 0.6% and closed above the psychologically important 8,000 points after briefly trading below this level. The index closed at 8,161.1 points after recording gains in three consecutive trading sessions at the end of the month with a cumulative gain of 2.5% and steep surge of 1.9% recorded at the last day of the month. Overall, the index remained range bound during the month but the direction largely followed the trends in oil price.

The monthly sector performance chart clearly showed that large-cap sectors pulled up the market but declines in smaller sectors more than offset those gains. Merely three sectors recorded positive gains during the month that included the Telecom index with the biggest gain of 7.2% followed by Materials and Banks indices with gains of 5.0% and 1.4%, respectively. On the other hand, the Media index was recorded the biggest decline of 19.3% followed by Real Estate Management & Development and Insurance indices with declines of 15.6% and 12.3%, respectively.

Trading activity during the month declined by almost a quarter as compared to the previous month. Total monthly volume traded on the exchange declined by 23.4% to 3.7 Bn shares as compared to 4.8 Bn shares during April-18. Total value traded during the month also declined at a slightly lower pace of 22.3% to reach SAR 83.9 Bn as compared to SAR 108 Bn during the previous month. Dar Al Arkan Real Estate topped the monthly volumes chart with 850.4 Mn shares traded during the month followed by Alinma Bank and Saudi Kayan recording 492.8 Mn and 200.2 Mn traded shares, respectively. In terms of the value of shares traded, SABIC once again topped the list with SAR 13.5 Bn worth of shares changing hands in May-18 followed by Alinma Bank and Dar Al Arkan Real Estate recording trades worth SAR 10.2 Bn and SAR 10.1 Bn, respectively.

The monthly gainers chart was topped by Saudi Real Estate with a return of 45.7% after the company reported higher revenues for Q1-18 although net profit declined by 6.7% y-o-y. Nama Chemicals stood second on the monthly best performers list with a gain of 34.2% followed by Etisalat and Takween Advanced Industries with returns of 16.2% and 15.0%, respectively. The decliners side was topped by Saudi Enaya with a decline of 43.2% followed by Saudi Indian Coop Insurance and Amana with declines of 39.7% and 27.9%, respectively.

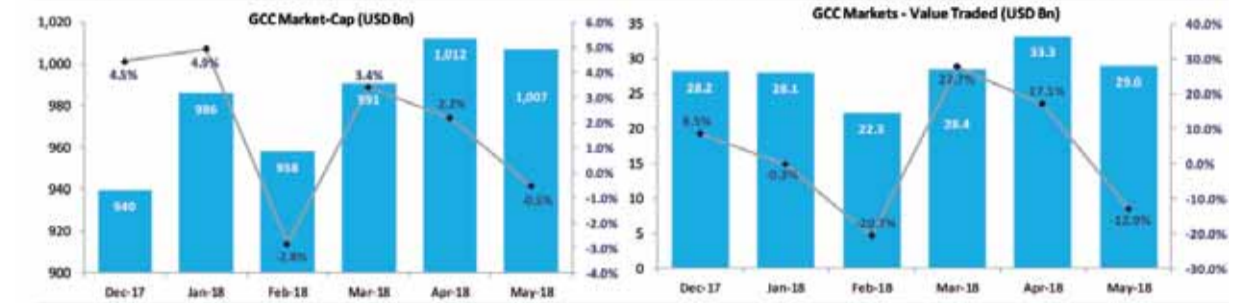
**Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange**

The ADX index declined by 1.4% m-o-m in May-18, after improving by 1.8% in the previous month. The index closed at 4605.04 points and sectoral performance included both gainers and decliners. The Energy sector continued to remain the best performing index in May-18, similar to Apr-18, as oil prices rose during the current month, which led the sectoral index to close 3.5% m-o-m higher. The outperformance of the sector was driven by a 9% increase in the share price of Dana Gas, while a 1.2% increase was witnessed by ADNOC Distribution.

Services companies also gained by 2.8% m-o-m in May-18, driven by Abu Dhabi Aviation and National Corp for Tourism & Hotels, as their share prices moved up by 5.1% and 3.9% respectively. Agthia Group was responsible for the positive performance of the Consumer Staples index, which moved up by 9.1% for the month of May-18. Industrials was the worst performing sectoral index, as it declined by 6.0% m-o-m, led by a 9.9% m-o-m decline in the share price of Gulf Pharma and 4.8% move down from Ras Al Khaimah Ceramic. Telecoms were also down by 5.5% in May-18, as all stocks receded for the month, led by Etisalat (-5.5%), while Ooredoo (-10%) witnessed double digit declines.

Real Estate developer Aldar reported revenues of AED 1.47 Bn in Q1-18, as compared to AED 1.57 Bn in Q1-17. Development segment sales for Q1-18 came in at AED 681 Mn, driven by the sales of existing developments under construction, as the compa-

GCC Equity Markets	Index Closing	MTD Chg%	YTD Chg%	M-Cap (USD Bn)	Monthly Value Traded (USD Mn)	P/E (x) TTM	P/B (x) TTM	Div. Yield
Kuwait - Premier Market Index	4,690.6	(1.8%)	N/A	88.1	677.8	14.5	1.1	3.9%
Kuwait - Main Market Index	4,816.3	(0.4%)	N/A					
Kuwait - All Share Index	4,735.7	(1.3%)	N/A					
Saudi Arabia	8,161.1	(0.6%)	12.9%	522.1	22,373.8	16.4	1.8	3.7%
Abu Dhabi	4,605.0	(1.4%)	4.7%	133.7	809.1	11.8	1.2	5.5%
Dubai	2,964.1	(3.3%)	(12.0%)	97.7	1,906.2	8.0	1.0	5.2%
Qatar	8,880.5	(2.5%)	4.2%	135.0	2,939.7	12.7	1.2	4.5%
Bahrain	1,265.8	0.6%	(4.9%)	20.0	38.6	8.5	0.8	5.9%
Oman	4,606.7	(2.6%)	(9.7%)	10.6	246.3	10.0	0.8	6.3%
<b>Total GCC</b>				<b>1,007.0</b>	<b>28,991.5</b>	<b>13.5</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>4.3%</b>



ny mentioned that over 80% of all projects under development were sold as of 31 March 2018. The company reported a net profit of AED 668 Mn in Q1-18, up 4% from AED 641 Mn in Q1-17. Energy company ADNOC reported Q1-18 revenues of AED 5,158.7 Mn, an increase of 12.6% over Q1-17. The increase was driven by higher fuel prices resulting from increases in oil prices in 2018, and due to a 0.9% increase in total fuel sales volumes. Net profit for Q1-18 was AED 542 million, up 12.1% compared to Q1-17. Dana Gas reported Q1-18 gross revenues of AED 440 Mn, as compared to AED 432 Mn in Q1-17.

**Dubai Financial Market**

After declining by 1.4% in Apr-18, the DFM index continued to decline in the month of May-18, and was the worst performing index in the region. The index declined by 3.3% m-o-m and closed at 2964.1 points, as most sectoral indices barring Consumer Staples, Financial & Investment Services and Insurance closed lower during May-18. Real Estate was the main laggard yet again after receding by 8.3% in May-18, and is one of the worst performing indices YTD (-19.7%).

Emaar Properties plunged by 10.2% m-o-m along with other stocks of the group - Emaar Malls and Emaar development, as they dropped by 7.7% and 4.5% respectively m-o-m in May-18. Consumer Staples which remains the worst performing index on the DFM YTD (-35.5%), was amongst the best performing indices in the month of May-18 (+7.8%), driven singlehandedly by DXB Entertainment, as the stock went up by 8.6% m-o-m. MSCI delisted DXB Entertainments from the emerging markets index to the small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) index. Financial & Investment Services was the best performing index in May-18, as it went up by 8.5% m-o-m. DFM and Dubai Investment were the main drivers for the positive performance, as the stocks jumped by 10.2% and 8.4% respectively m-o-m by the end of the month.

**Qatar Exchange**

After ending Apr-18 as the best performing market, Qatar exchange slipped in to the red for the month of May-18. The QE 20 index receded by 2.5% m-o-m to close at 8,880.51 points in May-18. The Qatar All Share index which maps the broader market, declined by a higher 4.2% m-o-m, as sectoral performance was mostly negative for the month. Market breadth however was skewed towards decliners, as 31 companies lost ground during the month, while 14 companies saw higher levels. The Transportation index was the best performing index during May-18, as it gained by 11.1% m-o-m.

Qatar Navigation was the key driver for the sector's out-performance, as its share prices rose by 12.1% m-o-m. Banks & Financial Services names also gained by 2.2% m-o-m, as larger banks-Qatar National Bank (+5.1%), Qatar Islamic Bank (+7.3%) and Commercial Bank of Qatar (+4.4%) all closed in the green for the month. Real Estate was the worst performing index, falling by 15.7% m-o-m, as Ezdan plunged by over 24% for the month. Telecoms also fell significantly by 14.3% m-o-m as both Ooredoo (-15.3%) and Vodafone (-12.8%) witnessed double digit declines.

In earnings releases, Vodafone Qatar's Q1-18 revenues stood at QAR 532 Mn, representing an increase of 2.8% compared to Q1-17, led by growth in postpaid subscribers and handset sales. Total mobile customers were 1.4 Mn by Q1-18, due to a strong growth in postpaid subscribers (+25% y-o-y), led by the popularity of Vodafone Qatar's FLEX and Enterprise plans. The company's Mobile Telecommunication license has been extended by an additional 40 years to 2068, resulting in an amortization benefit of QAR 80 Mn per quarter. Due to this saving and higher EBITDA, net profit came in at QAR 17 Mn, representing a significant improvement from the loss of QAR 74 Mn from Q1-17.

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## Business

# Al Mulla Exchange opens record four new Branches in one day



**KUWAIT:** Al Mulla Exchange is now more near to customers by opening a record four new branches in a day, taking their total tally to 81. All the newly opened outlets are in prime locations. The branches opened are in Salmiya, Mahaboula and two branches in Jahra. The outlet in Salmiya is in Block 10, next to Sagar Restaurant and the outlet in Mahaboula is in Block 1. The branches in Jahra are located at the Aliya Center, Block 2 and near Al-Massa market, Block 4 respectively.

Speaking at the occasion, R Shankar, the General Manager of Al Mulla Exchange had this to say "We have now taken the total count of Al Mulla Exchange branches to 81. We at Al Mulla Exchange have taken very special care about opening these locations at areas where there is maximum customer reach. Now customers need not go far in search of transferring their money. Not only do we have the most technologically advanced remittance services inside our outlets, we were also the first to



launch the Remittance Application on Android and iPhone quite recently'.

With the opening of the new branches, the total count of branches in each area also has gone up substantially. The total count in Salmiya is now 9 branches, Mahaboula 6 branches and in Jahra 5 branches. Adding to his previous statement, Shankar continued "Our digital platforms in addition to the branches are quite active. We are currently running an exciting marketing promotion with the ultra-luxurious car,

Alfa Romeo as the grand prize. So I will strongly urge all to use Al Mulla Exchange for the maximum benefit for their precious transfers".

Al Mulla Exchange has been leading from the forefront in the highly competitive remittance market. Apart from introducing innovative and effective remittance solutions, customers are attracted to some of the best offerings available including free insurance coverage, bonus loyalty points and extended branch working hours.

## FedEx celebrates seven years of the B-777F USA-UAE flight

**KUWAIT:** FedEx Express, a subsidiary of FedEx Corp. (NYSE: FDX) and the world's largest express transportation company, is celebrating seven years of its Memphis-Dubai direct Boeing 777F flight, which enables customers in the UAE to import from the United States in just two days. FedEx has unrivaled expertise in shipping from and to the USA, and since 2011, the FedEx Boeing 777F freighter flight has provided unparalleled access to boost trade between the US and the Middle East. Over the past decade, trade between the UAE and USA has doubled. Since 2009, the UAE has been the top export market for US goods in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. In 2017, total trade between the two countries was \$24.3 billion, with the US exporting \$20 billion to the UAE.

"The launch of the first scheduled all-cargo direct flight from the United States to Dubai was a milestone for FedEx, and a game-changer for the region," said Jack Muhs, president of FedEx Express Middle East, Indian Subcontinent and Africa. "By enhancing access between the United States and the UAE, we enabled



companies locally, and across the Middle East, to benefit from faster transit times, and stronger trade links."

With its long-range capabilities, the Boeing 777F offers an ideal blend of performance and efficiency. The aircraft represents FedEx efforts to reduce its carbon footprint, burning 18 percent less fuel per pound of payload and with 18 percent fewer emissions compared to the MD-11 it replaced. This is in line with FedEx commitment to connecting the world in responsible and resourceful ways. The company aims to expand the world's ability to connect more efficiently, while minimizing its impact on the environment. FedEx has ambitious goals to reduce its carbon footprint, such as by reducing aircraft emissions from a 2005 baseline by 30 percent by 2020, on an emissions per available-ton-mile basis, and sourcing 30 percent of its jet fuel from alternative fuels by 2030.

## Mazda celebrates 50m vehicles made in Japan

**HIROSHIMA:** Mazda Motor Corporation has announced that cumulative production in Japan reached 50 million units on May 15. The company held a commemorative ceremony yesterday at its Hofu Plant in Yamaguchi prefecture. Representative Director, President and CEO Masamichi Kogai, executive officers and union representatives were in attendance. The 50 million-unit milestone was achieved 86 years and seven months after Mazda produced its first three-wheeled truck in October 1931.

"Mazda began making cars 86 years ago, and now we've reached 50 million units of production in Japan. Even making 1 million cars a year, it would take 50 years to reach this milestone, showing just how long Mazda's history is," said Kogai at the ceremony. "Moving forward, Mazda will continue to build a strong brand through a variety of initiatives. Our plants in Hofu and Hiroshima will continue to evolve and act as parent factories, rapidly deploying their technologies and skills to our overseas plants. I'd like us all to work together to ensure these plants continue to embody the kind of technical prowess that does justice to Japan's proud history of Monotsukuri."

Mazda began its journey as an automaker in 1931, when it started producing three-wheeled trucks in Hiroshima. In 1960 it commenced production of the R360 Coupe micro-mini, marking a bold entry into the passenger car market. Vehicle manufacture started at Hofu Plant in Yamaguchi in 1982, and domestic production duties have since been shared between the Hofu



mazda

and Hiroshima Plants. The production techniques and flexible production systems developed at these plants have helped Mazda to grow its business. Mixed production lines capable of producing different models on a single line enable manufacture of multiple models at low volumes, a breakthrough in the traditional tradeoff between product variety and competitiveness and volume efficiency. In 2016 and 2017, the company took steps to increase its production flexibility for crossover models and create a framework capable of responding quickly to changes in demand. The domestic plants take the lead with Mazda's global car-making; production techniques and technologies established in Japan are then rolled out to overseas facilities.

Mazda aims to sell 1,660,000 cars this fiscal year, the final year of its Structural Reform Stage 2 medium-term business plan, and plans to establish a global production framework capable of manufacturing two million units annually by fiscal year ending March 2024. Mass-production of vehicles featuring next-generation technologies and design is slated to start in 2019, and the company will continue expanding its production framework in an effort to get cars to customers as quickly as possible. Aspiring to create a world in which cars can co-exist sustainably with people, society and the earth, Mazda will continue to enrich people's lives through various touch points, including the manufacture of high-quality cars, and become a brand with which customers feel a strong emotional bond.

and Hiroshima Plants. The production techniques and flexible production systems developed at these plants have helped Mazda to grow its business.

Mixed production lines capable of producing different models on a single line enable

## Burgan Bank supports Al Hamra Real Estate Co's 'Spread the Joy' initiative

**KUWAIT:** Burgan Bank, one of the leading contributors to society in Kuwait, recently participated in the nationwide Ramadan campaign themed 'Spread the Joy' by Al Hamra Real Estate Co that was initiated to create a memorable experience for orphan children. Burgan Bank through its continuous contribution has established itself as a strong advocate that promotes happiness and betterment of vulnerable groups in Kuwait.

Falling in line with Burgan Bank's dynamic Corporate Social Responsibility strategy to deliver positive change across all segments of society, the bank's support demonstrated appreciation for the artistic skills of orphan children during the campaign. Held in collaboration with the Children's Home, an orphanage run by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor, young boys and girls aged 4 - 15 years took part in a drawing competition, images of which were used to design Girgian boxes, displayed at an exhibition held at Al Hamra Luxury Center. A limited number was also sold through social media platforms to raise additional funds for the orphanage. The meaningful initiative that rewards creative talent was well received by the Burgan Bank employees who contributed by purchasing Girgian boxes to enjoy with their families.

Committed to its role as a key player in strengthening the social fabric of the Kuwaiti society, Burgan Bank's long term mission to ensure the overall wellbe-



ing and development of children in need and the wider community. It is worth mentioning that Burgan Bank has been working with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor for over a decade and is instrumental in bringing joy and smiles to many by conducting several events and sponsorships for the elderly, orphans and special needs.

Burgan Bank's support to this initiative falls under its recently launched full-fledged community program entitled 'ENGAGE' - Together to be the change. This program sheds light on important aspects affecting every segment of the society by promoting social welfare through educational, cultural, social and health initiatives. Burgan Bank's approach to 'ENGAGE' begins with a vital principle that as a Kuwaiti financial institution, its conduct and policies should be aligned with the needs and interests of the Kuwaiti society.

## Al Tijari announces winners of Al-Najma prize program draws

**KUWAIT:** Commercial Bank of Kuwait announced the winners of the weekly and monthly draws as follows - Monthly Draw prize KD 20,000 - Minor / Aziza Hashim Abulhasan

Weekly Draw prize KD 5000 - Minor / Hamad Faisal Al Sarraf

The draw was conducted in the presence of Ministry of Commerce and Industry representative Mr. Jassim Al Otaibi. Al-Najma Account was recently revamped by adding several benefits to the prize program through which now the account provides its customers the chance to win the biggest annual cash prize offered by a bank in Kuwait and over the globe as much as 1 million and half Kuwaiti dinar (1,500,000) so that customers' dreams can easily turn to reality.

The bank stated that the account prizes this year is featured by the highest cash prize and diversity of prizes throughout the year clarifying that Al-Najma Account will offer weekly prize of KD 5,000 & monthly prize of KD 20,000 and a semi-annual prize of KD 500,000 for which the draw will be held on 1st July 2018 in addition to the grand prize (the biggest prize in the world) of KD 1,500,000 for which the draw will be held in January 2019.

Al Najma Account can be opened by depositing KD 100, and customer should maintain a minimum amount of KD 500 to be eligible to enter all draws on Al-Najma Account prizes. As for the chances of winning, the more balance a customer maintains in Al Najma Account, the more chances the account holder will get to win, where each KD 25 will give the customer one chance to win, the account also offers additional benefits like the ATM card, a credit card against customer's account and all CBK banking

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## Technology

# The vision for Kuwait in 2035: Ooredoo launches 5G Network

**KUWAIT:** Ooredoo Kuwait announced the launch of 5G Network for its customers starting this week from the key location of its head office at Soor Street in the heart of Kuwait City. The launch comes as the company prepares to release the biggest network of the revolutionary internet of the future across Kuwait in 2018. This comes in tandem with the international Ooredoo Group's plans to launch this technology across its markets, after it launched the new high capacity 5G in Doha through Ooredoo Qatar. In a statement to the press, Ooredoo Kuwait's General Manager and CEO Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdullah Al Thani underscored that the launch embodies the company's core values of caring, connecting, and challenging, and demonstrates its commitment to enriching people's digital lives.

He added, "Over the years, we have worked tirelessly to deliver the best in-class services to our esteemed customers, no matter their needs. Through this, we are exercising our role as a private sector entity in the New Kuwait Vision 2035, and we aspire to deliver comprehensive telecom services with international standards in the Kuwaiti market under one roof." Ooredoo Kuwait's Acting Chief Technology Officer Shaimaa Al-Najdi explained that the company launched 5G in test sites, which delivers a speed of up to 10 Gbps, as Ooredoo gears up to launch the service across select areas around Kuwait before starting nationwide expansion starting from next year.



Al-Najdi added, "Ooredoo Kuwait's Technology Department works to deliver the most innovative technologies and modalities in a highly competitive market, despite the many challenges, because we are aware that Kuwaiti consumers are very quick to adopt the latest international trends. We're happy to launch

5G gigabit internet services in test sites as we prepare to deliver this service to all our esteemed customers."

She noted that using the technology will depend on the users' devices and their readiness to connect to this new network, which comprises of the future of hi-speed internet around the world. She added that a testament to the fact that the world's leading technology innovators are creating flagship smart and IoT devices that are ready for 5G, in preparation of the service's launch across the world. In addition to providing high-speed internet, the new 5G network will broaden the horizons of customers as the world embraces digitalization, serving customers and businesses alike. The trends that benefit from this technology include virtual reality, ultra-high definition multimedia, in addition to supporting the infrastructure of smart cities, wireless sensor networks, Internet of Things (IoT), connected cars, and the automation of several key industries.

Towards the end of last year, Ooredoo announced the completion of a major network upgrade operation in more than 1100 locations across Kuwait, aimed at increasing network capacity by upgrading the current infrastructure. The major project was completed in a record time of 5 months, without compromising the services provided to customers.

Ooredoo announced that the upgrade of its network utilizes the advanced technology trends available in the market to increase performance and capacity,



Mohammed bin Abdullah Al-Thani



Shaimaa Al-Najdi

and therefore deliver the best results to customers. Ooredoo Kuwait used the latest technologies provided by leading telecommunications technology solutions provider. The same technologies and devices were used in all newly built areas and development projects across Kuwait, with more than 120 sites built by the end of last year. Ooredoo has also increased the sites with updated LTE-A bandwidth to better serve the latest and upcoming models of routers and smartphones.

## Huawei features in BrandZ's most valuable global brands

**DUBAI:** Huawei yesterday announced that it has increased its brand value by 22% in the past year and now ranks 48th in the Top 100 Most Valuable Global Brands according to the latest BrandZ report. The annual brand study compiled by WPP and Kantar Millward Brown, notes that Huawei has now featured in the Top 50 global brands for the third consecutive year, as Chinese brands outperform their US counterparts for the first time in the study.

Huawei is one of the world's leading global technology brands today and with its increasing brand influence, it is the fourth consecutive year for Huawei on the BrandZ(tm) Top 100 Most Valuable Global Brands. The company's brand value and ranking have grown steadily year-on-year thanks to the strong performance of smartphones, tablets and the brand's global expansion.

The total brand value of BrandZ Top 100 reached US\$4.4 trillion seeing an increase of 204% over the past twelve years. The total net growth of all listed brands is now close to US\$750 billion with all categories achieving full growth for the first time on record. Technology companies by far lead the global list taking eight out of ten places in the Top 10, with a combined brand value of more than half (56%) of the total brand value of the Top 100 companies.

Chinese brands are undeniably the most eye-catching group in this year's edition of the BrandZ report, now in its thirteenth year. Tencent, Alibaba and Huawei are just some of the leading names among the fourteen Chinese companies whose total brand value increased by 47% year-on-year. China's brands have also seen their growth rate surpass that of their US counterparts



for the first time in the study.

The rising influence of Huawei has not gone unnoticed in other major brand studies. Last week, Forbes revealed its Most Valuable Brands of 2018 list in which Huawei, with a value of \$8.4 billion, ranked 79th in the Top 100 as the sole Chinese brand. Earlier in February this year, Huawei was listed 25th on the Brand Finance Top 500 Global Brand Value of 2018 with a brand value of US\$38.046 billion.

According to IDC, there were 336.1 million units shipped globally in the first quarter of 2018, down 2.4% year-on-year, showing an overall downturn in the global smartphone industry. However, despite an overall decrease in smartphone shipments, the average selling price of smartphones increased year-on-year by 21% to 374 US dollars, as reported by GFK.

As the third largest smartphone supplier in the world, Huawei did not only outperform the market, but

also grew the market share steadily (11.7%). Moreover, the market share of Huawei's high-end models (above \$500 US dollars) increased to more than 10% driven in part by the breakthrough growth in key high-end regions such as Europe and the Middle East. Along with the global launch of the P20 series, Huawei has firmly established itself in the global high-end market and its brand influence has further improved.

According to Ipsos, in 2017, Huawei's global brand awareness and consumer consideration increased to 86% making it the fastest growing brand among global technology companies in the past six years. Brand perception and attributes such as technology leadership, design and trustworthiness have all gradually surged. With its high-quality products and trend-setting technological innovations, Huawei is bucking the international industry trends as it gradually moves towards becoming a global iconic technology brand.

## Google retreats from military AI project

**SAN FRANCISCO:** Google workers got word that the internet titan will retreat from a deal to help the US military use artificial intelligence to analyze drone video following an outcry from staff, according to reports. The collaboration with the US Department of Defense was said to have sparked rebellion inside the California-based company.

An internal petition calling for Google to stay out of "the business of war" garnered thousands of signatures,

and some workers reportedly quit to protest a collaboration with the military. The New York Times and tech news website Gizmodo cited unnamed sources as saying that a Google's cloud team executive announced told employees on Friday that the company would not seek to renew the controversial contract after it expires next year.

The contract was reported to be worth less than \$10 million to Google, but was thought to have potential to lead to more lucrative technology collaborations with the military. Google did not respond to a request for comment. Google has remained mum about Project Maven, which reportedly uses machine learning and engineering talent to distinguish people and objects in

drone videos for the Defense Department.

"We believe that Google should not be in the business of war," the employee petition reads, according to copies posted online. "Therefore, we ask that Project Maven be cancelled, and that Google draft, publicize and enforce a clear policy stating that neither Google nor its contractors will ever build warfare technology."

The Electronic Frontier Foundation, an internet rights group, and the International Committee for Robot Arms Control (ICRAC) were among those who have weighed in with support. "As military commanders come to see the object recognition algorithms as reliable, it will be tempting to attenuate or even remove

human review and oversight for these systems," ICRAC said in an open letter. "We are then just a short step away from authorizing autonomous drones to kill automatically, without human supervision or meaningful human control."

Google has gone on the record saying that its work to improve machines' ability to recognize objects is not for offensive uses. The EFF and others stressed the need for moral and ethical frameworks regarding the use of artificial intelligence in weaponry. "The use of AI in weapons systems is a crucially important topic and one that deserves an international public discussion and likely some international agreements to ensure global safety," the EFF said in a blog post on the topic. —AFP

## Uganda slaps tax on social media users

**KAMPALA:** Ugandan users of Whatsapp, Facebook, Skype and other social media will from July have to pay a daily tax, according to a new law which rights activists said was a bid to stifle free speech. Uganda's parliament passed a law late Wednesday imposing a tax of 200 shillings (\$0.05, 0.04 euro) a day on users of so-called "over the top" services which publish content bypassing traditional distributors.

The new law does not spell out how the tax would be applied and collected in practice. Finance Minister David Bahati said the aim of the legislation was only to raise revenue for public services. However, President Yoweri Museveni wrote to the finance ministry in March urging the introduction of the tax as a way to deal with the consequences of online "gossip".

Journalist and activist Lydia Namubiru said that Museveni sees online communication as a threat to his 32-year rule. "The president... said it was to stop young peo-

ple from gossiping but what's ironic about that statement is that it comes after Bobi Wine became a member of parliament through an online campaign," Namubiru told AFP, referring to a musician turned opposition politician who has proved wildly popular with Uganda's frustrated youth.

"It's actually political speech and online organizing which has real life implications for him and his power. The overarching intention is to stifle free speech, especially now there is evidence that online organization works." Despite the small daily levy, Namubiru said he thinks it will be effective in curtailing social media use, as most Ugandans buy data in small bundles of 500-1,000 shillings.

In April, Uganda's communications regulator instructed internet service providers to suspend unlicensed online news websites, and during the 2016 presidential elections access to social media was shut down. The new law also imposes a new tax of one percent on mobile money transactions. With little access to formal banking services, many Ugandans rely on mobile telephone companies to store and transfer money electronically. "Only five million Ugandans countrywide can access the banking sector leaving the rest to mobile money services," said Winnie Kiiza, the opposition leader in parliament as she opposed the move. —AFP

## Telegram accuses Apple of blocking its updates

**MOSCOW:** Secure messaging app Telegram accused Apple of blocking its updates for users worldwide after Russian authorities imposed a ban on Telegram for refusing to hand over keys to decrypt messages. "Apple has been preventing Telegram from updating its iOS apps globally ever since the Russian authorities ordered Apple to remove Telegram from the App Store," said the founder of the app, Pavel Durov, on his Telegram feed.

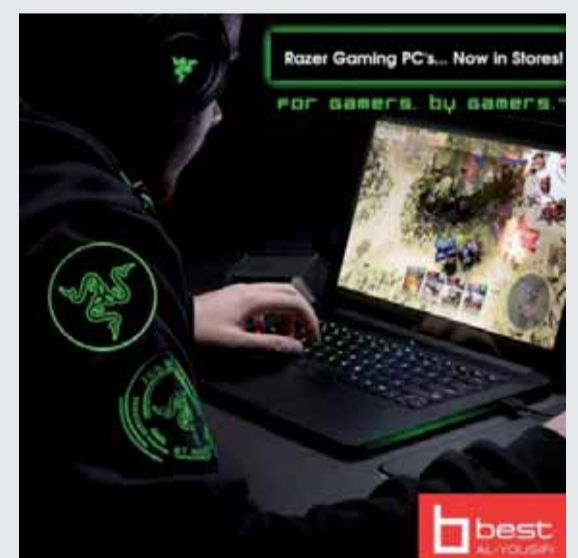
In April, a Moscow court banned the popular free app following a long-running battle between authorities and Telegram, which has a reputation for securely encrypted communications. Telegram refused to provide Russian authorities with a way to read communications over its network as Moscow pushes to increase surveillance of internet activities.

"We believe we did the only possible thing, preserving the right of our users to privacy in a troubled country," said Durov. "Unfortunately, Apple didn't side with us."

Russian authorities have ordered domestic internet service providers to block the app, causing disruption of other services but failing to shut down Telegram in the country. Last Monday, Russia's communications watchdog said it had requested Apple block push notifications for Telegram users in Russia, which would mean users would not receive alerts for new messages and thus render it less useful.

It also requested Apple no longer make the app available for download in Russia. Telegram is still available for download both inside Russia and the rest of the world, but it is a version that has not been updated since the Russian court ruling. Durov said Apple's position means that it has been unable to comply with the new EU data protection and privacy that came into force last week. Telegram lets people exchange messages, stickers, photos and videos in groups of up to 5,000 people. It has attracted more than 200 million users since its launch by Durov and his brother Nikolai in 2013. —AFP

## Best Al-Yousifi Electronics Kuwait launches Razer gaming laptops



**Best Al-Yousifi Electronics**, one of the pioneers in consumer electronics retail business in Kuwait with around 12 Showrooms across Kuwait as well as an online store [www.best.com.kw](http://www.best.com.kw) launched The Razer Gaming Laptops few days back at their Hawally BEST Al-Yousifi Showroom and also on the Online store. The Razer Blade Stealth Laptop is crafted to deliver incredible performance in an impossibly thin form factor. Powered by an Intel(r) Core(tm) i7 processor, the Razer Blade Stealth lets you perform at your best, wherever you choose to be. The range is available in 14 inches and 17 inches monitor sizes and the Brand carry 1 year warranty from Best Al-Yousifi Electronics.

The incredibly thin 14" Razer Blade laptop is the gamer's ultimate travel companion. Experience faster, smoother and more immersive gameplay with NVIDIA(r) GeForce(r) GTX 1060 VR Ready graphics and get powerful performance with a Quad Core 7th Gen Intel(r) Core(tm)i7 processor. Setting a new standard for desktop replacement laptops, the 17" Razer Blade Pro is remarkably thin and amazingly powerful with Quad-Core Intel(r) Core(tm) i7 processor, NVIDIA(r) GeForce(r) GTX 1080 Series graphics, and dual-drive storage.

## Health

# Gene test shows more breast cancer patients can skip chemo

## Breast cancer is the leading cause of cancer death in women worldwide

**TAMPA:** The majority of women with a common form of breast cancer may be able to skip chemotherapy after surgery, based on their score on a genetic test, researchers said yesterday. As many as 65,000 women in the United States alone could be impacted by the study, described as the largest breast cancer trial to date, released at the American Society of Clinical Oncology annual meeting in Chicago. Until now, women have faced a great deal of uncertainty about whether to add chemo to hormone therapy after a diagnosis with hormone-receptor positive, HER-2 negative breast cancer when found at an early stage before it has spread to the lymph nodes.

"With results of this ground-breaking study, we now

can safely avoid chemotherapy in about 70 percent of patients who are diagnosed with the most common form of breast cancer," said co-author Kathy Albain, an oncologist at Loyola Medicine. "For countless women and their doctors, the days of uncertainty are over." A 21-gene test called Oncotype Dx that has been around since 2004 has helped guide some decisions, post-surgery. A high recurrence score, above 25, means chemo is advised to ward off a recurrence while a low score, below 10, means it is not.

The current study involved more than 10,000 women and focused on those whose scores were in the middle range, from 11 to 25. Patients, aged 18 to 75, were randomly assigned to receive chemotherapy followed by hormonal

therapy or hormone therapy alone. Then, researchers studied the outcomes, including whether or not cancer recurred, and overall survival. "For the entire study population with gene test scores between 11 and 25 — and especially among women aged 50 to 75 — there was no significant difference between the chemotherapy and no chemotherapy groups," said the findings, published in the New England Journal of Medicine.

The results show that all women over 50 with a recurrence score of 0 to 25 can be spared chemotherapy and its toxic side effects. For women under 50 with a score of 0 to 15, chemo could be skipped. However, among younger women with scores 16 to 25, outcomes were slightly better

in the chemotherapy group, so in those cases doctors may urge patients to consider a chemo regimen. The results "should have a huge impact on doctors and patients," Albain said.

"We are de-escalating toxic therapy." According to first author Joseph Sparano of Montefiore Medical Center in Bronx, New York, "any woman with early stage breast cancer 75 or younger should have the test and discuss the results" with her doctor. Breast cancer is the leading cause of cancer death in women worldwide, causing some 1.7 million new cases annually and over half a million deaths. The study's primary funding came from the US National Institutes of Health.—AFP

## France extends cheese recall after more E.coli cases

**FRANCE:** More Reblochon cheese from a factory in the French Alps will be removed from the market after children were infected by E.coli bacteria linked to the raw milk-based product with one child possibly dying from it, health authorities said on Friday. French food retailer Leclerc had already issued a recall of Reblochon products produced by cheesemaker Chabert and sold in its own shops under the "Nos regions ont du talent" ("Our regions have talent") brand.

That was extended in mid-May to concern all distributors of the suspect cheese, including retailers Carrefour and Intermarche, which sold the cheese produced in Cruseilles in the Haute-Savoie region under their own brand. The move came after health authorities linked seven cases of E.coli O26 bacteria among children between one-and-a-half and three years old to the cheese, which is a creamy specialty of the French Alps. On Friday, the national public health center extended the recall after 14 suspected new cases of children between one and five were discovered. Six of the 14 cases of infection involved hemolytic-uremic syndrome (HUS) with E.coli O26 bacteria, a potentially serious condition that can cause kidney failure among young children. "The traceability survey conducted by health authorities after a new infection case ... enabled the identification of new batches of Reblochon that were not targeted by the original recall," the Ministry of Agriculture said in a statement. — Reuters

## Novartis readies anti-sexism message for migraine drug

**ZURICH:** With women hardest hit by migraine headaches, Swiss drugmaker Novartis is gearing up its marketing message to counteract sexism that it worries might become a barrier to adoption of its new medicine Aimovig. The injectable monoclonal antibody that Novartis has developed with Amgen won approval in the United States this month and on Friday bagged a recommendation from a key European panel, clearing the way for likely approval on the continent. The drug is expected to be high priced, though countries negotiate their own terms with the company. In the United States, the drug is priced at \$6,900 a year. Novartis is also considering new pricing models for Aimovig.

Novartis's top neuroscience developer Dan Bar-Zohar said he is keenly aware that most migraine sufferers are women. The Basel-based company has data to combat skepticism about the severity of migraines in women. "We are tailoring quite a lot of our messages to this relevant population. We are extremely aware of this gender bias," Bar-Zohar said

in an interview with Reuters. "We have science-based evidence to show this is not just a headache."

To reflect the community of migraine sufferers, Novartis said that about 85 percent of those who took part in its clinical trials were women. The European Medicines Agency's Committee for Medicinal Products for Human Use (CHMP) on Friday recommended the drug for treating migraine headaches in adults. The European Commission's backing usually follows in just a couple of months.

The medicine, also called erenumab or AMG334, is the first in a new class of treatments designed to prevent migraine by interfering with calcitonin gene-related peptide (CGRP), which is involved in the processes that kick off the severe headaches, such as dilation of blood vessels in the brain. In the United States, Amgen and Novartis are pricing the self-injection drug at \$575 a month, before discounts.

### 'Pay, fire and forget'

There, prescription benefits managers had taken aim at the drug, announcing in advance that they saw it as a test case to help rein in prices. Bar-Zohar did not give details on potential pricing in Europe, where cost can differ widely from country to country. But he did say that Novartis is considering a variety of models - including an approach in which it would quickly identify patients who respond to the treatment - to help determine reimbursement levels. "We are exploring some innovative methods in order to price it right," he said, adding Novartis wants to avoid the traditional "pay,



fire and forget" model where it is reimbursed by the pill, in favor of an approach that delivers more value to health care systems and patients.

Studies of the Amgen-Novartis drug included patients who were new to migraine treatments, as well as patients who had tried other therapies unsuccessfully before abandoning them. A late-stage trial of Aimovig found that it reduced episodic migraines by at least half in 30 percent of patients who had failed up to four previous treatments. "These people live literally in the dark," Bar-Zohar said. "This is a breakthrough." Though Aimovig has a head start, competition from makers of would-be rival medicines could eventually become fierce.

Companies including Teva Pharmaceutical Industries <TEVA.TA>, Eli Lilly & Co and Alder Biopharmaceuticals Inc are developing similar treatments. Analysts, on average, have forecast annual Aimovig sales of nearly \$1 billion by 2022, according to Thomson Reuters I/B/E/S, with Novartis sharing a smaller piece of the proceeds. —Reuters

# CLINIC PAGE



Kuwait Times

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## Global Medical Center Welcomes Dr. Marzouq Al-Bader

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What's On

# Asrar Al-Qabandi Bilingual School hosts grade 12 graduation ceremony



Dr Abdulmohsen Al-Howaila with Sheikhha Fadia Saad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah



Martyr Asrar Al-Qabandi Bilingual School held a graduation ceremony for grade 12 students on Saturday. The ceremony was held under auspices of Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education Dr Hamed Al-Azmi. Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education for Private and Thematic Education Affairs Dr Abdulmohsen Al-Howaila attended the event.

Chairperson of Kuwait Women's Voluntary Association for Community Service Sheikhha Fadia Saad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah said Martyr Asrar Al-Qabandi Bilingual School, an affiliate of the Association, is keen in keeping abreast of the latest developments in education.

The school took great strides towards modernization over the last seven years thanks to the honorary chairperson of the Association Sheikh Latifa Al-Salem Al-Sabah, she told reporters. The school is committed to contributing to the development of the educational process and building the capacity of the local cadres, Sheikhha Fadia added. — KUNA



## AUB honors winners of annual Holy Quran competition



Ahli United Bank (AUB) honored the winners of its annual Holy Quran recitation competition, which was organized throughout the month of Ramadan at the Bank's headquarters. The competition included eight categories: male staff and female staff who recite Al-Mursalat verses, staff children who recite Al-Nabaa verses and also younger participants, whilst the other five categories were for the wider public participation and were as follows: category four and five: children boys and girls age group stage between 6 years to 10 years who recited Al jinn verses; category six and seven: boys and girls age group stage between 11 years to 17 years old who recited Al-Hashr verses; and finally the category of men with impaired hearing in memorizing Al-Fatihah, Al-Shamas and Al-Balad verses.

Winners were honored and rewarded during a special ceremony that was held at the bank's main building and was attended



by Sheikh Dr Khaled Al-Mathkour, AUB's Chairman of Sharia Supervision Board, and Abdullah Al Shuaib, AUB's Head of internal Sharia Audit Department.

The bank said in a press release, "the Bank continues its Ramadan Quran recitation activities every year to instill

enthusiasm and competition among the contestants. AUB's management and organizing committee were impressed with the competitive and positive spirit portrayed by all participants, and in return congratulated all winners and all of those who made this unique event a suc-

For the winners from outside the bank as follow:

Contestant	First	Second	Third
children boys age group stage between 6 years to 10 years	Gasser Hany Jamal	Youssef Ekram Alsayed	Anas Alaa Ali
Children girls age group stage between 6 years to 10 years	Aheed Makram Ali	Rahma Alaa Ali	Khadija Ahmed Abdulla
Children boys from the same age group stage between 11 years to 17 years	Mohaned Mohammed Ezzat	Abdulmajed Mohammed Salah Mothafar	Soliman Fouad Al Outabi
Children girls from the same age group stage between 11 years to 17 years	Mariam Sherif Aliwon	Sumia Mohammed Nourwas	Aisha Mohammed Ahmad Al Shimo

cess. The Bank added, "Such activities aim to reflect a positive contribution and collaboration across all members of society to truly understand the values of the Holy Quran and apply its principles throughout their daily lives. The bank's

commitment to similar initiatives is a core element of its comprehensive social responsibility approach that includes a broad range of activities that help to spread more awareness and encourage education around positive values."

For the male employees and the children of AUB employees:

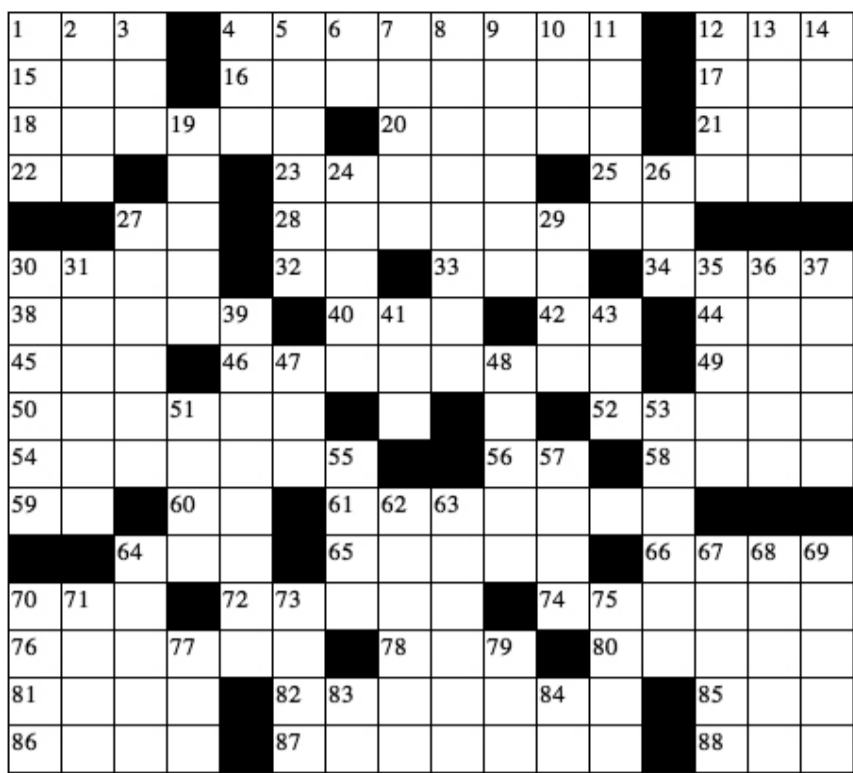
Contestant	First	Second	Third
Male Employees	Abdulqader Sultan	Ali Yousef	Bashar Fayez Othman
Female Employees	Doha Adnan Salmeen	Iman Mahmoud Omrani	Shahar Abdulfattah Sabih
Children of the Employees	Mariam Adel Abbas	Farida Ahmed Rashwan	Othman Hamad Al-Enizi

Finally, for men impaired hearing category:

Contestant	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth	Sixth
Impaired hearing category	Mohammed Shamkhi Jaber	Mahmoud Al Hussaini Mahmoud	Jarah Hmoud Al Outabi	Ramy Jamal Al Eriani	Abdullah Morawa Oubaid Ahmad	Mohammed ,Khalaf Allah

Stars

CROSSWORD 1926



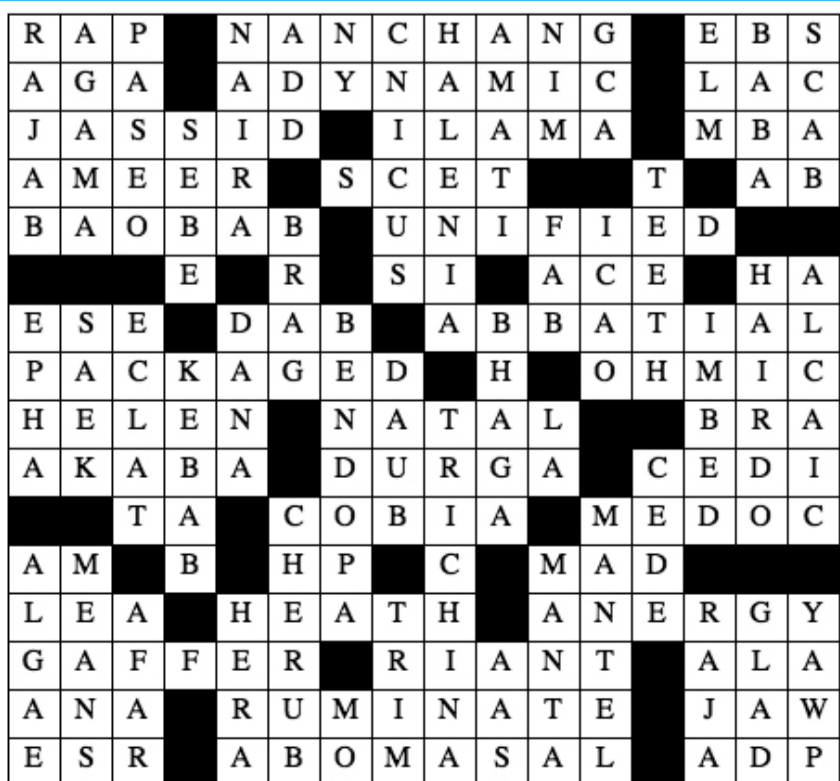
ACROSS

1. A light touch or stroke.
2. Not openly expressed.
3. Experiencing or showing sorrow or unhappiness.
4. North American republic containing 50 states - 48 conterminous states in North America plus Alaska in northwest North America and the Hawaiian Islands in the Pacific Ocean.
5. Having open interstices or resembling a web.
6. Before noon.
7. A piece of armor plate (with eye slits) fixed or hinged to a medieval helmet to protect the face.
8. Someone who lives at a particular place for a prolonged period or who was born there.
9. Having worth or merit or value.
10. Any of various systems of units for measuring electricity and magnetism.
11. The friend of Phintias who pledged his life that Phintias would return (4th century BC).
12. Any of a number of fishes of the family Carangidae.
13. Wild sheep of northern Africa.
14. Formerly the chief magistrate in the republics of Venice and Genoa.
15. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
16. A mild comatose state.
17. Electronic equipment that provides visual images of varying electrical quantities.
18. Without fat or fat solids.
19. Furnace consisting of a special hearth where metal is heated before shaping.
20. (rugby football) The method of beginning play in which the forwards of each team crouch side by side with locked arms.
21. The month following July and preceding September.
22. A soft white precious univalent metallic element having the highest electrical and thermal conductivity of any metal.
23. Flesh of any of several primarily freshwater game and food fishes.
24. The seventh month of the Moslem calendar.
25. A song that was formerly popular.
26. A unit of length of thread or yarn.
27. English classical scholar noted for his translations of Plato and Aristotle (1817-1893).
28. Electro-acoustic transducer for converting electric signals into sounds.
29. Using speech rather than writing.
30. Footwear usually with wooden soles.
31. Tall fan palm of Africa and India and Malaysia yielding a hard wood and sweet sap that is a source of palm wine and sugar.
32. A person who announces and plays popular recorded music.
33. A port in southwestern Scotland.
34. United States tennis player who was the first Black to win United States and English singles championships (1943-1993).
35. A vicious angry growl.
36. Violent and needless disturbance.
37. (possibly Roman) Goddess of horses and mules and asses.
38. A small spiked wheel at the end of a spur.
39. Former name for the order Crocodylia.
40. Belonging to or on behalf of a specified person (especially yourself).
41. Being one more than two.
42. A state in northwestern North America.
43. Large brownish-green New Zealand parrot.
44. A period of time spent sleeping.
45. The compass point midway between northeast and east.
46. The craniometric point at the lowest point on the lower edge of the orbit.
47. A nucleic acid that transmits genetic information from DNA to the cytoplasm.
48. Discrimination against middle-aged and elderly people.
49. 100 avos equal 1 pataca.
50. Acknowledge a new land owner as one's landlord, or tenants.
51. A midwestern state in north central United States in the Great Lakes region.
52. A city in northeastern Ohio.
53. The eighth month of the Hindu calendar.
54. United States athlete who won Olympic gold medals in the decathlon (born in 1930).
55. Interface consisting of a standard port between a computer and its peripherals that is used in some computers.
56. A state in midwestern United States.
57. Essential oil or perfume obtained from flowers.
58. Type genus of the Alcidae comprising solely the razorbill.
59. A period of time containing 365 (or 366) days.
60. An atom or molecule or radical or ion that forms a complex around a central atom.
61. A grouping of a number of similar things.
62. An atom or molecule or radical or ion that forms a complex around a central atom.
63. A landlocked republic in eastern Africa.
64. All the loaves of bread baked at the same time.
65. The 18th letter of the Greek alphabet.
66. The basic unit of money in Bangladesh.
67. (Hindu) A manner of sitting (as in the practice of Yoga).
68. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
69. A city in southern Turkey on the Seyhan River.
70. A period marked by distinctive character or reckoned from a fixed point or event.
71. Scottish philosopher of common sense who opposed the ideas of David Hume (1710-1796).
72. Type genus of the Trigilidae.
73. Large genus of erect or climbing prickly shrubs including roses.
74. Above the surround or above the normal position.
75. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
76. Type genus of the Tetraonidae.
77. Having any of numerous bright or strong colors reminiscent of the color of blood or cherries or tomatoes or rubies.
78. Used of a single unit or thing.
79. A gradual decline (in size or strength or power or number).
80. Jordan's port.
81. Pleasant or pleasing or agreeable in nature or appearance.
82. A bar of sand.
83. A public promotion of some product or service.
84. A silvery ductile metallic element found primarily in bauxite.
85. (British) Your grandmother.
86. A condition (mostly in boys) characterized by behavioral and learning disorders.
87. Capable of being added or added to.
88. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.

DOWN

1. (Irish) Mother of the Tuatha De Danann.
2. Highly excited.
3. A decree that prohibits something.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Choose your company wisely but go ahead and spread your wings and be the social butterfly you have been wanting to be. Scratch that itch and hit the town. There is a fine line between friend and foe for you today. Enjoy the great mood and harmony you are feeling. Keep that ambitious focus and stay cool, calm, and collected. This will pay off in the workplace for you. You will be admired by your peers for how natural things happen for you and the common sense you always exhibit. Aries, today is a day to let your hair down and just be yourself.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

This is a great to climb out of that rut you have been feeling as if you are in. It may take a bit of soul searching and some restructuring of your habits but your determination and focus on what is within will lead you where you wish to be. Start that diet, go for that walk, or join the gym. Working on your physical appearance has never seemed more appealing to you. Old habits die hard, but this is the perfect time for you to put them to rest. Success is right around the corner.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You have a special place in your heart for those close to you. You seem to be the one the younger generation in your life look up to and admire. Your advice and guidance maybe sought from someone who looks to you as a mentor. You may feel as if your greatest growth comes when you are helping others. Today may be one of those days you are spinning your wheels getting physical tasks accomplished. Before frustration takes hold, stop and realize your shoulder to lean on and your listening ear and wonderful advice may be a much greater accomplishment than a completing a simple chore. Gemini, be proud of who you are and what you mean to others.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You tend to be a very private person. Someone or possibly something that happens today seems to reveal you on a deeper level than you comfortably have ever allowed. This may cause great conflict and cause you to feel as if you are struggling to stay in control. This is a very emotional time for you and tempers may flare. This may leave you in deep thought and analyzing who you really are. You feel as if someone has opened the door and exposed all the skeletons in your closet. Keep your emotions in check and think before you speak about this issue.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Don't be alarmed if you feel as if the hair on the back of your neck is standing on end. Something is leaving you with an unsettled feeling. Suspicions are high. Your mind is in overdrive and you will find your words come quick and sharp. You may find yourself in some type of conflict today. This could be with someone or just a feeling of conflicting emotions. You have a deep insight emotionally and may find yourself lost in your thoughts. You may find friends are not very supportive of the mood you are in and your actions today.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

This may be the perfect time for you to step back and take some time for yourself. It seems as if everyone around you is on edge. This is affecting your mood as well and you are feeling more and more stress. Take a breather. This is not a great time for big decisions. You should take a more relaxed but analytical approach when it comes time for change. Do a bit of soul-searching to prevent making any mistakes that could affect your future. You may feel isolated and a sense of loneliness, but this is best for you at this time. Work on being at peace with yourself and you will soon find others drawn to you.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Your dedication and devotion to your career could bring up some issues in your personal life. Someone close to you may feel as if they are no longer a priority in your life. They may feel ignored and left out. It is a sticky situation for you as the drive to climb to the ladder will be very rewarding in the end. The question weighing on your mind is will it be worth the risk of losing someone close to you. You are able to realize this is just temporary but unable to convince those around you who are not fond of the amount of focus and time you have placed on your career. It is a time to learn to juggle your focus and time so not only does your career prosper but also your personal relationships with others. Libra, use caution as you begin to perform this juggling act.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You may be feeling a strong sense of independence today. This may be a feeling of overall strength. This feeling is not only concerning you physically but also emotionally. You have somewhat of a rebellious spirit today. You are leaning a bit towards the mischievous side. You may find that this strong sense of independence has come as you have stepped out of your comfort zone and the actions you have been taking are for from your norm. Scorpio, remember, change can be good.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

This a great time for a bit of soul-searching. Analyzing what brought you to this point in life and how you feel about where you are. You may have find that not only are you very in touch with your own emotions but also with the emotions of those close to you. Today finds you very empathic and understanding to all who cross your path. You may tend to become too emotionally invested in the lives of those around you. Sometimes you need to sit back and keep your focus on you and yours. Taking on the weight of the world may be too much for you to handle and keep your focus far from where it needs to be. You may discover this causes tension in your home life.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

All that sparkles may not be gold, but it sure does catch your eye. You have deep appreciation for the beauty surrounding you and find it hard to pass by any sparkling treasure in your path. Admire it and move on Capricorn and this could be a very good financial period for you if you can resist the urge to spend. This may be a time of change in your life. The changes you are about to make or may be making may not be supported by those close to you. You may experience conflict or major pushback. You are longing to broaden your horizons, a longing to grow and have new experiences. Remember, Capricorn, these things cannot occur without change.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

You may find yourself focusing on that which intrigues you. Seems you find broadening your horizons a priority. You are seeking answers. You have a yearning to broaden the horizons and want to gain as much knowledge as possible. Aquarius, you want to be in touch with the universe on a grander scale. You are full of curiosity. Travel and furthering your education may be two avenues that would assist you in accomplishing these goals.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Listen to your hunches. Now is a great time to go with the flow. You may find your creative juices flowing and those around you seem very impressed with your talents. You are very intuitive when it comes to the feelings of others. You read people well. This is a talent that is admired by your peers and people are drawn to you. You are starting to appreciate yourself as a person and work hard to be good to others. This is a great time for facing your problems head on. Solutions could come easy and you will find great peace after any issues are worked through. Pisces, this is a great time in your life. Enjoy.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Old West 1

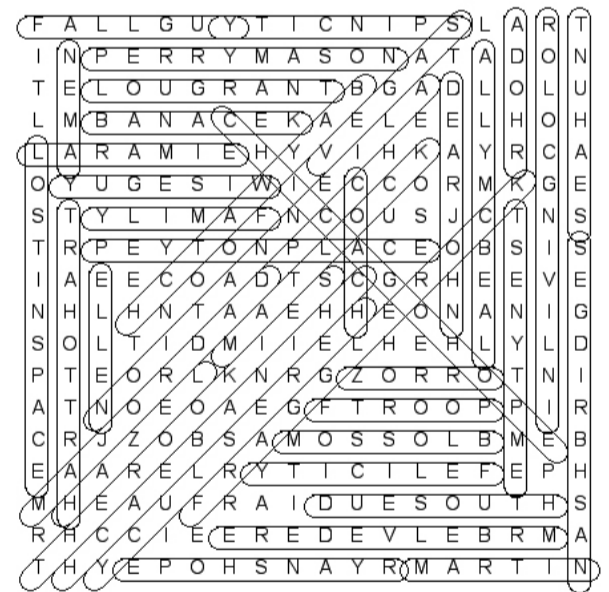
Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining 25 letters spell a George Eliot quotation.



- |               |              |             |              |
|---------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|
| BANKER        | FARRIER      | LAWMAN      | SALOON       |
| BARKEEP       | FORT         | LIVESTOCK   | SHERIFF      |
| BILLY THE KID | FURS         | MINER       | SHOPKEEPER   |
| BOOT HILL     | GOLD MINE    | OUTLAW GANG | SITTING BULL |
| BRAND         | GOLD PANNING | PISTOL      | STAGECOACH   |
| CAMPFIRE      | GRAZE        | PLOW HORSE  | TELEGRAPH    |
| CATTLE DRIVE  | HIRE GUN     | POSSE       | TRACKER      |
| CHAPARRAL     | HOGS         | RAILROAD    | TRAIL        |
| COAL          | HOMESTEAD    | RANCH       | TRAIN        |
| CORRAL        | HOTEL        | RATTLESNAKE | UNDERTAKER   |
| COWBOY        | JUDGE        | RIFLE       | WATER TANK   |
| DOC HOLLIDAY  | LARIAT       | SADDLE      | WELL         |

Yesterday's Solution

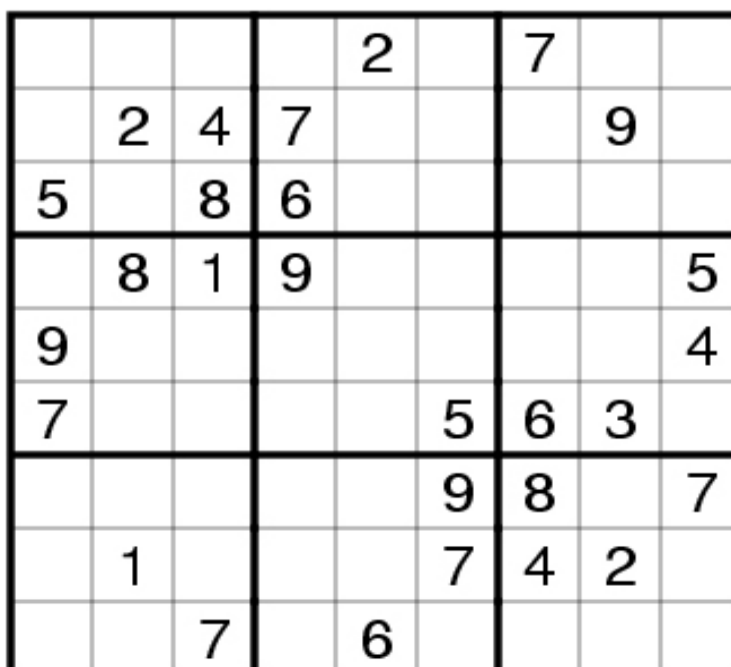
Old TV Shows 4



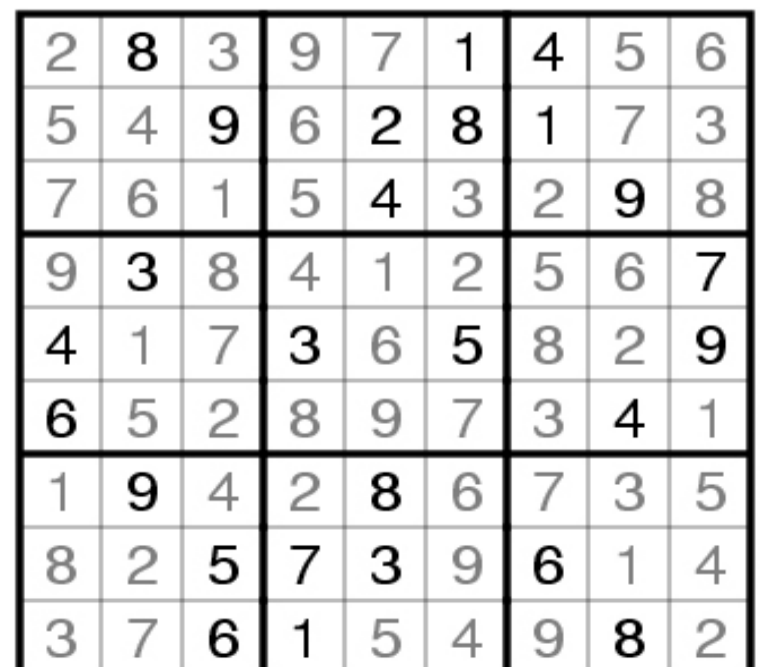
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| ALLY MCBEAL  | ELLEN        | IN LIVING COLOR | PEYTON PLACE |
| AMEN         | EMPTY NEST   | LARAMIE         | RHODA        |
| BANACEK      | F TROOP      | LOST IN SPACE   | RYAN'S HOPE  |
| BAYWATCH     | FALL GUY     | LOU GRANT       | SEA HUNT     |
| BLOSSOM      | FAMILY       | MAJOR DAD       | SPIN CITY    |
| CHICAGO HOPE | FELICITY     | MARTIN          | THE ROOKIE   |
| CHINA BEACH  | FRAGGLE ROCK | MATLOCK         | VEGAS        |
| COACH        | HART TO HART | MR BELVEDERE    | WISEGUY      |
| DEAR JOHN    | HAZEL        | NASH BRIDGES    | ZORRO        |

The hidden TV show is: LITTLE HOUSE ON THE PRAIRIE

Daily SuDoku

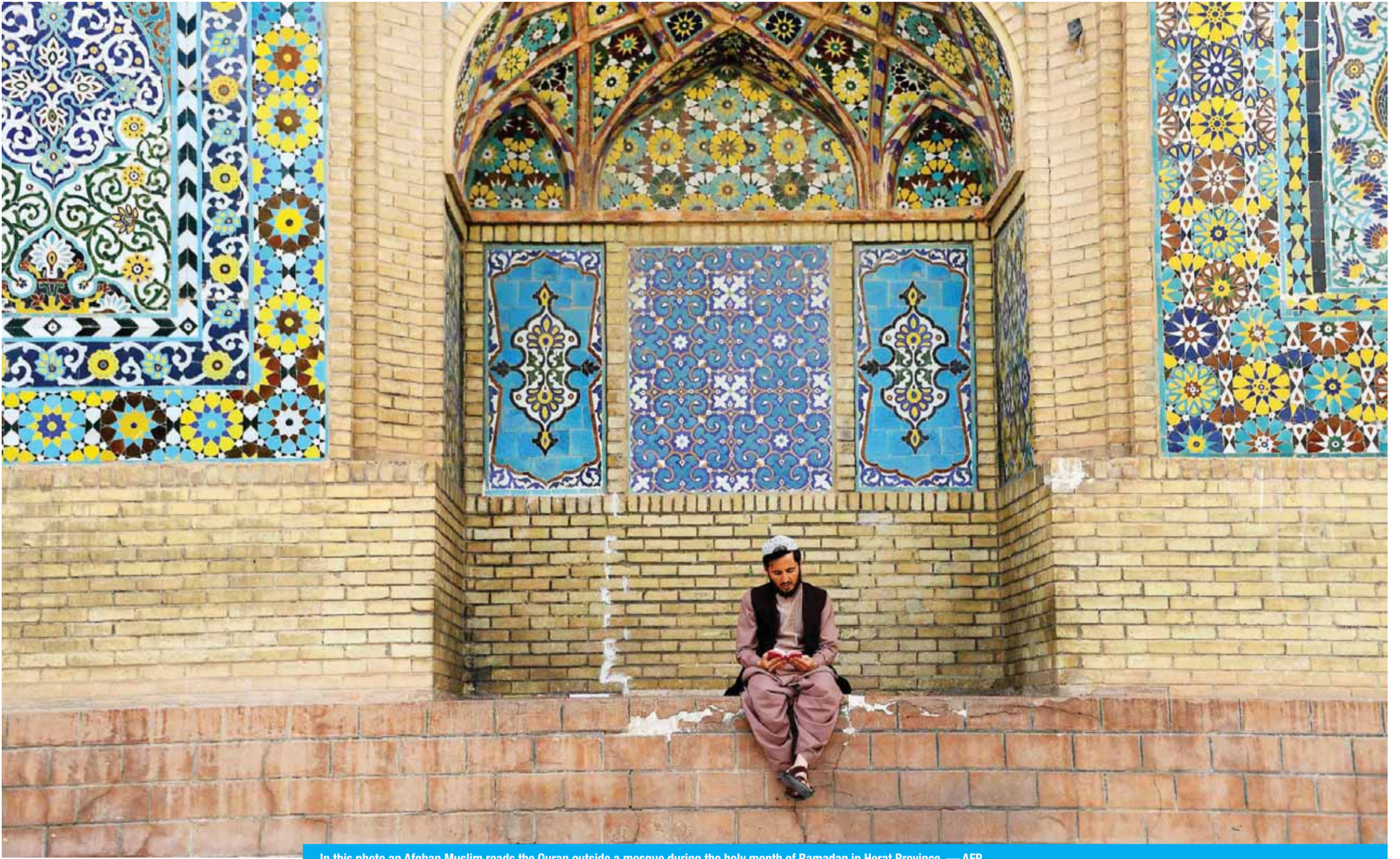


Yesterday's Solution



# Lifestyle

MONDAY, JUNE 4, 2018



In this photo an Afghan Muslim reads the Quran outside a mosque during the holy month of Ramadan in Herat Province. — AFP

## The Uzbek entrepreneur tapping paper's age-old power



Zarif Mukhtarov's paper mill in the village of Koni Ghil, outside Samarkand. — AFP photos

The passage of time seems to have slowed down at Zarif Mukhtarov's paper mill in a village not far from ex-Soviet Uzbekistan's silk road city, Samarkand. Here in the countryside, where rulers of the Timurid Empire once sought a verdant sanctuary from their bustling capital, geese sidle by in pairs and tourists feast on pilau made with local rice from clay-rich soil. Mukhtarov, a 62-year-old Samarkand native, was a potter like his father before he set about reviving a paper-making technique coveted for centuries by much of the known world. Nowadays, he says, the legendary paper once produced in Samarkand has been consigned to history by the bland, white, industrial-made stuff and, of course, computers.

But that doesn't stop thousands of guests arriving at his door every year in the village of Koni Ghil, which has become a must-stop on the country's growing tourist trail. "Foreign guests come here to learn more about our traditions and our history," said Mukhtarov. "Local people come here to learn about themselves," he added, as his kite-flying, eight-year-old granddaughter Mekhrubon tore around the workers' yard in a blur of color.

### A riveting tale

The story of how Samarkand emerged as a global paper-making center is a favorite among historians who study the rise and fall of ancient trade routes linking East Asia and Europe, even if they admit the precise details are hazy. Production there began sometime in the second half of the eighth century AD after Chinese troops invaded Central Asia but were defeated

by forces under the control of Abu Muslim, a general of the Arab Abbasid caliphate. "Among the Chinese (prisoners) captured were masters in the art of making paper," says Makhmud Nasrullayev, a historian at the University of Samarkand.

"In return for their lives being spared, they brought to Samarkand their secret of paper," said Nasrullayev. What separated Samarkand's paper

from the Chinese version and saw it gradually displace papyrus across Europe and the Middle East in the coming centuries was its smooth, glossy finish. This meant that it absorbed less ink and could therefore be used for writing on both sides. The paper produced in Samarkand's mills was also far more durable than papyrus. "Samarkand paper was polished with the help of an agate stone," said Mukhtarov, the mill owner, whose paper is

the superior of three kinds produced at Samarkand's mills until the 19th century, when the city fell under tsarist control. "The Chinese didn't need to polish their paper because they used brushes to write instead of quills," he added.

### From pulp to paper

Mukhtarov's paper comes from the branches of young mulberry trees that are indigenous to

Uzbekistan and also used in the production of silk. The branches are cleaned of their bark and peeled into long, fibrous strands that are boiled in a cast-iron pot for four to five hours. The mixture is then pounded to pulp by a trip hammer powered by a quaint, wooden watermill before it is dried and polished. "For thicker paper you need more fibres, for thinner paper, fewer," Mukhtarov said. This grueling process in some way reflects Mukhtarov's own journey to become an off-the-beaten-track gem on the Uzbek tourism circuit, dominated by striking Islamic architecture in cities like Samarkand and its sisters Bukhara and Khiva.

Mukhtarov first began building his paper mill in 2001 but it was only two years ago that it fully returned the investments made by his family. "We had to borrow money from sisters, brothers, cousins."

Our relatives sometimes asked: "What do we need this (paper) for? Better to find some other type of work!" Nowadays, nobody questions Mukhtarov's vision for the family business, especially as Uzbekistan's government inches away from over two decades of isolation under late ruler Islam Karimov by relaxing restrictions on tourism.

But the master craftsman says he is not content to stop at paper production as he beats a path back through the region's storied past. One project he is currently planning is a new wooden mill to press oil from walnuts and flaxseed, which will be used in the pilau he serves to visitors. "Tourists will witness the birth of plov (local name for pilau) before their very eyes!" he exclaimed with enthusiasm. — AFP



Zarif Mukhtarov's paper mill in the village of Koni Ghil.

## Lifestyle | Awards



Pete Yorn and Scarlett Johansson pose for a picture as they announce the launch of their new extended play record "Apart," in New York City. — AFP

## Johansson on 'no place to hide,' Time's Up and music

There's really no place to hide." So says Scarlett Johansson, movie maven, Avengers heroine and millionaire Hollywood actress as she contemplates the Time's Up revolution following the demise of Harvey Weinstein. "It's quite shocking to see the results of that. It's all very new." Aged 33 and best known for her roles in "Lost in Translation," "The Avengers" and three Woody Allen films, she has already been in the film industry more than two decades and reportedly commands equivalent pay with male co-stars. She has also modeled and is known for her activism, advocating for Planned Parenthood, addressing the 2017 Women's March and appearing at the 2012 Democratic National Convention, calling for Barack Obama's re-election.

Johansson is also a mother and when not doing everything else, she's singing about the aftermath of a failed relationship in her latest collaboration with singer-songwriter Pete Yorn. Their EP, "Apart," came out on Friday. "It's been really impressive," she says, smart casual in a pair of high-waisted pale denim jeans and cream pussy-bow blouse, cheek bones to die for, as she contemplates the repercussions of Weinstein's fall from grace, the sexual harassment watershed of #MeToo and the creation of the Time's Up movement. "I've been in the film industry for such a long time that I'm like these conversations are really important and they're revolutionary."

Born and raised in New York, Johansson is one of those stars who can seemingly turn her hand at anything. A child actress who delivered critically acclaimed performances, her breakthrough role as an adult was in "Lost in Translation." She's done Broadway. Now she's box-office gold, starring in some of Hollywood's biggest blockbusters, such as "Iron Man 2" and "The Avengers" franchise - a stand-alone project for her Black Widow character in the works.

### 'Doors blown open'

Then there are her Ivanka Trump parodies on "Saturday Night Live." To those who feel progress isn't coming quickly enough, she counsels patience. "It's a long process and you have to keep your eye on the prize, and you have to be patient and progressive and persistent and you keep moving forward," she tells AFP during a recent interview with Yorn to promote "Apart."

"Certainly in the film industry, I think there's conversations that are being had today about projects and the importance of diversity," she says. "Ten years ago, nobody was talking about this stuff."

"Every once in a while you'd hear someone say, 'oh we should bring a female voice onto this project' and you were like, 'what the hell does that mean?' "That was may be somebody's idea to bring a woman into the writer's room, or whatever. But now the doors are blown wide open," she adds. The EP is five indie tracks focused on the aftermath of a failed relationship - "where all the juicy stuff is," in the words of Yorn. It comes out on Capitol Records a decade after their first album, "Break Up," in 2009. "In 'Iguana Bird,' the chorus is 'la-la-la-love-you' and I remember thinking 'oh wow, Scarlett would sound so pretty on that' and she came in and she did, so that was like a dream come true," he says.

### 'Deeply wrong'

The EP was recorded in downtown Los Angeles, with Johansson laying down her vocals in one afternoon, squeezed around her crazy schedule. "Scarlett has an amazing work ethic," says Yorn. "She's just super pro." Johansson says music is just another way to express herself. If Yorn obsessed as a New Jersey teenager over bands such as The Smiths, REM and Joy Division, Johansson, growing up in New York, was exposed to more jazz. "It's all coming from mostly here," she says, pointing to her gut. "Sometimes here," she gestures to the heart. "Mostly here," she smiles, back to the gut.

Johansson has, so far at least, not joined the list of actors to distance themselves from Allen over accusations - unproven - that he molested his adopted daughter Dylan when she was seven, a quarter of a century ago. But if that fanned a degree of criticism, she has publicly supported Georgina Chapman, the estranged wife of Weinstein whose husband's transgressions, some had assumed, might spell the end of her Marchesa fashion label. "To me, it seems inhumane to hold someone accountable for their partner's actions," explains Johansson. "It feels extremely, deeply wrong." To that end, she stepped out last month in a crimson Marchesa gown at the Met Gala, the New York's party of the year. "I just really wanted something that was beautiful and my idea of heavenly and romantic." —AFP

## Statham hungry for shark fight in The Meg

Jason Statham was very excited to get to fight the world's biggest shark in 'The Meg'. The 50-year-old actor plays the boss of an underwater research facility that discovers a lost kingdom of believed-to-be-extinct creatures, including the giant megalodon shark, have flourished and he doesn't think there could be a better project to be a part of. Speaking to Empire magazine, he said: "I mean, who doesn't want to watch a movie about the

biggest shark that's ever existed? And I get to be in it? This is as good as it gets." But Jason wouldn't reveal if the movie will see him come to blows with the shark. He laughed: "Fisticuffs with the megalodon? I can't tell you that. I'm not saying it doesn't happen." The British actor - who is engaged to model-and-actress Rosie Huntington-Whiteley - particularly enjoyed working with Jon Turteltaub because the director kept the set fun.

Jason said: "He's a card. In a way, it reminds me of making 'Lock, Stock...' with Guy Ritchie. "The money is different, obviously, but things are structured in ways that are more similar that you might think. But more like Guy, all Jon does is crack jokes and trivialize his ability. He goof around all the time, keeps things relaxed - but he has this amazing technical ability. "He knows what he's doing alright." Meanwhile, the director admitted it was hard to get the "tone" of the movie - which also stars Rainn Wilson and Ruby Rose - right to prevent it straying into a spoof. He said: "We know what you think when you hear 'giant shark movie' and the movie does as well. "It's not that we're dismissive of it - we're not making a B movie like 'Supershark Versus Enormo-Turtle' - but we're not taking ourselves too seriously. Tone is one of the hardest things in films - we're not making a horror but we're not making a spoof either. This is an adventure film that happens to have a giant shark in it. We've done the work in creating a credible world with some of the finest artists in the business and we've assembled a very fine cast from all over the world but I have to remind you, this is a giant shark movie." — Bang Showbiz



Rosie Huntington-Whiteley and Jason Statham

## Bluesman Eddy Clearwater dies of heart failure at age 83

Chicago bluesman Eddy Clearwater, lauded for his guitar playing and flamboyant showmanship, has died of heart failure. Alligator Records announced Clearwater, 83, died Friday in Skokie, Illinois. Known as "The Chief," Clearwater was born Edward Harrington in Macon, Mississippi. A self-taught guitarist, he began his career in Birmingham, performing with gospel music groups, including the Five Blind Boys of Alabama. After moving to Chicago in 1950, Clearwater

drifted into the blues, making a name for himself as Guitar Eddy.

According to Alligator Records, after Clearwater added a rock and roll element to his guitar playing, his then manager came up with the name Clearwater as a play on blues legend Muddy Waters. The name eventually evolved into Eddy Clearwater. His 2003 album, "Rock 'N' Roll City," was nominated for a Grammy Award as best traditional blues album. Clearwater is survived by his wife, Renee, and six children. — AP

In this June 9, 2013 photo, Eddy "The Chief" Clearwater performs with the Chicago Blues Old School, New Millennium, during the Chicago Blues Festival at the Petrillo Music Shell, in Grant Park, in downtown Chicago. — AP



## A fiesta of outstanding TV for all the family this June only on OSN

OSN's outstanding range of content in June covers premieres, much-loved continuing series, award-winning films and powerful documentaries that will satisfy all the family through to Eid and beyond.

### OSN Store

Just months after their cinematic release, buy and keep some of 2017's biggest movies on OSN Store and watch them whenever you like, and as many times as you want!

### Game Night

Monday, June 4

Max and Annie's weekly game night gets kicked up a notch when Max's brother Brooks arranges a murder mystery party - complete with fake thugs and federal agents. So, when Brooks gets kidnapped, it's all supposed to be part of the game. As the competitors set out to solve the case they start to learn that neither the game nor Brooks are what they seem to be.

### Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri

Friday, June 6

Mildred Hayes (Frances McDormand), a hard-nosed mother is seeking justice for her murdered daughter. With no arrests after seven months, Mildred puts up three roadside signs to goad Ebbing police chief into action. But the law - and especially Sam Rockwell's hot-headed deputy - don't take kindly to the provocation.

### Lady Bird

Wednesday, June 20

Marion McPherson, a nurse, works tirelessly to keep her family afloat after her husband loses his job. She also maintains a turbulent bond with a teenage daughter who is just like her: loving, strong-willed and deeply opinionated.

### OSN First HD: Home of HBO

C.B. Strike (Premiere)

Friday, June 6, 10pm (KSA)

A war veteran turned private detective Cormoran Strike (Tom Burke) solves brutal murders with the help of his trusted assistant Robin Ellacott (Holliday Grainger).

### Soufra (Premiere)

Friday, June 8, 8pm (KSA)

Soufra follows the inspirational story of intrepid social entrepreneur and refugee Mariam Shaar as she sets out against all odds to change her fate by launching a successful catering company in Beirut, Lebanon.

### Fahrenheit 451 (Premiere)

Sunday, June 24, 10pm (KSA)

An adaptation of Ray Bradbury's iconic sci-fi novel about a future where media is a drug, history is outlawed and "firemen" burn books.

### Westworld S2 (Finale)

Monday, June 25, 11pm (KSA)

Westworld isn't your typical amusement park. Intended for rich vacationers, the futuristic park - which is looked after by robotic "hosts" - allows its visitors to live out their fantasies through artificial consciousness.

### Gone (Finale)

Thursday, June 28, 10pm (KSA)

The survivor of a famous child-abduction case joins a special task force dedicated to solving abductions and missing person cases. Stars Leven Rambin, Chris Noth and Danny Pino.

### OSN Series First HD

Chicago Med S3 (Premiere)

Tuesday, June 5, 9pm (KSA)

The series focuses on the doctors and nurses of the emergency department at Gaffney Chicago Medical Center as they work to save patients' lives.

### Quantico S3 (Premiere)

Thursday, June 7, 8pm (KSA)

Bollywood superstar Priyanka Chopra is back as the undercover agent Alex Parrish in the third season of the crime thriller.

### Reverie S1 (Premiere)

Sunday, June 10, 7pm (KSA)

A former detective specializing in human behavior is brought in when the launch of an advanced virtual reality program has dangerous and unintended consequences.

### Trust S1 (Premiere)

Friday, June 23, 10pm (KSA)

Donald Sutherland, Hilary Swank and Brendan Fraser star in the true story of the kidnapping of billionaire Paul Getty's grandson by the Italian Mafia in this crime drama saga.



Scandal

### Supergirl S3 (Finale)

Monday, June 28, 9pm (KSA)

This series follows Kara Zor-El (Melissa Benoist), who decides the time has come to embrace her superhuman abilities and fulfill her destiny as a hero by becoming Supergirl. However she must still maintain a low profile as Kara Danvers working for media company CatCo, all while keeping National City safe.

### OSN Play & On Demand

This month sees a great line up of new boxsets come to OSN Play and On Demand: The Magicians S1 - S3, Game of Thrones S1 - S7, American Crime S1 - S2, Entourage S1 - S8, The 400 S1 - S4, Deadwood S1 - S3, House of Lies S1 - S5, The Handmaid's Tale S1, Westworld S1, Scandal S7.

### OSN Movies Disney HD

This month the channel features a Disney Pixar Eid Special, with a four-day marathon of Pixar movies back-to-back, from June 14 to June 17, 9am (KSA). Available to watch are the following: Toy Story, Toy Story 2, Toy Story 3, Brave, Finding Dory, Monsters University, Up, Cars, Cars 2, Cars 3.

### OSN Movies HD: Father's Tribute

Two movies back-to-back as a tribute to fathers all around the world on Father's Day, starting June 21, from 6pm (KSA).

### Dan in Real Life

A widower and father-of-three who also writes a parenting advice column for his local newspaper falls for the girlfriend of his younger brother during a family vacation in this off-beat love-triangle laughter, starring Steve Carell, Dane Cook and Juliette Binoche.

### Daddy's Home

Brad Taggart (Will Ferrell) is a kindhearted radio executive who wants to be the best possible stepfather to his wife's (Linda Cardellini) two children. When her freewheeling ex-husband Dusty (Mark Wahlberg) breezes back into town, Brad's feeling of insecurity quickly develops into an inferiority complex.

### OSN Series Comedy HD

Baskets S3 (Premiere)

Monday, June 18, 8pm (KSA)

Chip Baskets has always dreamed of being a classically trained clown. After flunking out of French clown college - probably due to his inability



Deadwood

ity to understand French - he returns home to Bakersfield, California, where he moves in with his mother, Christine, bickers with his twin brother, Dale. Although longing for his sophisticated Parisian ex-wife, Chip continues to pursue his professional clowning dream.

### Family Guy (Finale)

Sunday, June 17, 10pm (KSA)

Concluding its 16th season, Family Guy continues to entertain its die-hard fan base with humour, parodies, animation and orchestra-backed original music.

### OSN Yahala Oula HD

Al Hob Al A'ama S2

Sunday, June 17, 10pm (KSA)

New and exclusive to OSN Yahala Oula HD. Kamal's new plan changes everything as the battle between Kamal and Amir reaches new heights. Will Kamal find out who killed Omran? With two separate worlds lying on two sides of the street in a seaside town - both too close and yet so far, the tragic love story between Kamal and Nihan intensifies in season 2.

### OSN Yahala Cinema HD

Shiqqah Sittah

Thursday, June 21, 11pm (KSA)

In a form of suspense and excitement and during a period of only one day, a married woman discovers how many lies she's lived.

### Hurob Ederari

Friday, June 22, 11pm (KSA)

This new and exclusive film revolves around the murder of a businessman named Yahya Zakaria (Mohammad Farraj), who accuses four people, Adham Mohammed Awad Azmi (Ahmad al-Sakka), Mustafa Mokhtar Mohammed Ibrahim (Amir Karara), Youssef Mohammed Osman El Sayed (Mostafa Khater) and Ramli (Ghada Adel) of murder. The accused are forced to flee in search of the real killer, otherwise they face execution. Events begin to escalate as each person tries to their innocence.

### Akhi 2

Friday, June 29, 11pm (KSA)

Two brothers Kinan and Wael leave together for a romantic trip. Kinan, an introvert, is a classical musician while Wael has become a pop star. The siblings return in this second part with new adventures.

### OSN Living HD

Simply Susy

Wednesdays & Thursdays,

from June 13, 8.30pm (KSA)

Chef Susy Massetti travels to Bahrain to explore its fresh, local ingredients and highlight how simple it is to cook delicious restaurant-quality food in the comfort of your own home.



House of Lies

Lifestyle | Awards

# Rare Tintin drawings sold for \$422,000 at auction

Two rarely-seen drawings of Tintin from the comic book album "The Red Sea Sharks" sold for \$422,000 (364,000 euros) on Saturday in Dallas, Texas, the auction house selling the sketches said. A pencil-on-paper 35.2x50 cm (13.8 x 19.6 inch) design and a 30.7x47.7 cm India ink copy, drawn by the Belgian cartoonist known as Herge in 1957, however fell short of the estimated price of between \$720,000 to \$960,000. Heritage Auctions' spokesman Eric Bradley told AFP that the set had been bought by a Brussels-based collector who "wished not to be identified at this time".

Herge, whose real name was Georges Remi was himself from Brussels, a city which also plays home to Tintin and often forms the initial backdrop to his adventures. Although

Saturday's auction was held in Texas, it was live streamed at various locations including at Heritage Auction's Dutch headquarters outside Utrecht. The two drawings depict page 58 of the intrepid boy reporter's adventures in the 19th album by Herge, known as "Coke en stock" in French and published in 1958.

They show 12 panels starting with Tintin, his crusty sea-going friend Captain Haddock, his faithful canine companion Snowy and the eyepatch-wearing Estonian pilot Piotr Skut looking out to sea.

The action seamlessly moves underneath their ship, the S.S Ramona, where an attempt by a frogman to plant a limpet mine is cut short as he is hit on the head by a dropping anchor. The mine is then eaten by a ravenous shark



which swims off emitting a series of hiccups. Original Herge drawings rarely appear on the open market as the artist did not have to sell his original artworks, but occasionally gave them away to close friends as gifts. Heritage Auctions added in a statement.

Herge gave the set on auction Saturday to a "Scandinavian friend" in the 1970s who later sold it to a buyer "in a German-speaking part of Europe," Brussels-based comic art expert Eric Verhoest said. Earlier this month a rare original 1939 illustration from the comic book album "King Ottokar's Sceptre" sold for more than 600,000 euros at an auction at Christie's in Paris. The record sale for an original page of Herge's drawings dating from 1937 was set in 2014 at over two million euros. — AFP



Various editions translated into different languages of J.R.R. Tolkien's "The Hobbit" are seen during a preview of the exhibition Tolkien: Maker of Middle-earth.



Visitors look at illustrations by J. R. R. Tolkien during a preview of the exhibition.

## OXFORD UNVEILS UK'S FIRST MAJOR TOLKIEN EXHIBITION IN DECADES

The University of Oxford was set to unveil Friday a "once-in-a-generation" exhibition of materials related to "The Lord of the Rings" author J. R. R. Tolkien, featuring previously unseen objects from several countries. "Tolkien: Maker of Middle-earth", which opened in its Bodleian Libraries, presents manuscripts, artworks, maps, letters and artefacts in the biggest display in decades on the beloved British author-whose works gave rise to the hugely successful film series. Some of the exhibits are returning to Oxford-where Tolkien spent most of his adult life-for the first time since his death in the historic English city in 1973.

"What we wanted to show was Tolkien's original work, stripping back interpretations to where it all started," curator Catherine McIlwaine, Tolkien archivist at the libraries, told AFP. The displays showcase the range of John Ronald Reuel Tolkien's output, from early abstract paintings and tales he wrote for his children, to material related to works published posthumously. "Tolkien has always been a global phenomenon... even when he was alive," said Richard

Ovenden, who heads the libraries. "And we're really the only institution that can do this, having far and away the largest collections of Tolkien materials."

### Draft manuscripts

Bodleian-the university's main research library-has presented much of this extensive archive, alongside interactive elements such as a three-dimensional map of his imagined "middle-earth". But among the centrepieces of the exhibition are some loans: rare draft manuscripts and exquisite illustrations for "The Hobbit"-Tolkien's breakthrough published in 1937 — and his 1954 follow-up "The Lord of the Rings". The displays, which also include his own stunning draft book jacket designs for the works, were borrowed from Marquette University, a Catholic institution in the US state of Wisconsin.

It acquired them from Tolkien in the late 1950s. "To bring those back to Oxford for the first time in 60 years (we knew) was just going to be extraordinary," McIlwaine added. "We thought that's going to make it a really special exhibition that hasn't been done before." She estimates at least a third of the 200 items in the exhibition, which took her five years to organize, have never been seen publicly before. Personal aspects of his life are evoked, including childhood and student days, his career as a scholar of literature, and his family life.

The displays include numerous items loaned by his third son Christopher Tolkien, notably the writing desk and chair from the home office where the author created his fantastical worlds. Memorable fan mail from over the years is also on show, such as a letter from a then 19-year-old Terry Pratchett, the English author of fantasy novels, which began: "this is simply a letter of appreciation". Among the materials from Marquette University are early plot notes for "The Hobbit" showing how Tolkien changed the names of some key characters, such as the famous wizard Gandalf, who was originally called Bladorthin.

### Oxford ties

Bodleian organizers hope visitors will also explore Tolkien's relationship with Oxford. Born in South Africa, he was raised in and around Birmingham but arrived in Oxford as an undergraduate at Exeter College. He returned as a professor of English language and literature at Merton College, becoming friends with other rising literary figures there, including C S Lewis. The university professor with a consuming passion for rare, historical languages and a vivid imagination, is also buried in Wolvercote Cemetery in a northern suburb. Legions of fans flock there to lay flowers at his grave. "I think Oxford really did help to provide the framework in which he was able to flourish as a literary genius," said Ovenden.

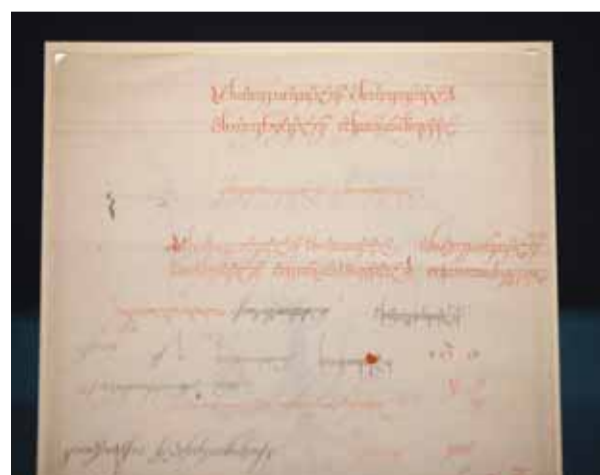
The exhibition runs until October 28 and hopes to attract 100,000 visitors. Bodleian will then collaborate with the Morgan Library and Museum in the United States, and the National Library of France, which are both planning on similar Tolkien exhibitions in 2019. "The popularity of Tolkien just doesn't seem to wane," said McIlwaine, as she prepared to welcome Tolkien family members to cut the ribbon on the Oxford exhibition. — AFP



A photograph of British author J.R.R. Tolkien at the age of 19 is seen on display during a preview of the exhibition.



A picture shows the final cover art on the first edition dust jacket of J. R. R. Tolkien's "The Hobbit" during a preview of the exhibition entitled Tolkien: Maker of Middle-earth at Weston Library.



A work by British author J. R. R. Tolkien entitled "The Fire-writing" showing Tengwar script, an artificial script created by Tolkien, is seen during a preview.



A map of British author J. R. R. Tolkien's Middle-earth is seen during a preview of the exhibition Tolkien: Maker of Middle-earth at Weston Library.



Tengwar scrip is seen on a sign at the "The Lord of the Rings" section during a preview of the exhibition Tolkien: Maker of Middle-earth at Weston Library, part of the Bodleian Library, in Oxford, west of London. — AFP photos

## Shakespeare in trouble: Dutch fret about English on campus

The growing popularity of English as a medium of instruction at Dutch universities is ringing alarm bells among local lecturers and students, with some now even calling for government intervention. As Shakespeare's mother tongue spreads in lecture halls across the county's 14 universities, the Dutch education department is finalizing a proposal to deal with the matter. Britain's exit from the European Union next year has only accelerated the phenomenon, with international students flocking to the Netherlands which provides an ideal base for those wishing to study in English within the EU.

Some 90 percent of the Dutch population speaks English, to the envy of many of its less anglo-competent neighbors. To add to the attraction, many local universities are much cheaper than their British or US-based counterparts. English usage is particularly dominant at Master's degree level. Some "65 percent of bachelor's degrees are in Dutch while 15

percent of master's degrees are in Dutch," education ministry spokesman Michiel Hendrikx told AFP. That some 85 percent of all master's degrees are presented in English riles the largest teachers' association, whose acronym BON stands for "Better Education Netherlands" in Dutch. "The Dutch language is gradually disappearing from campuses," lamented BON's chairman Ad Verbrugge, stressing the "seriousness" of an "unprecedented situation in Europe."

### 'Linguicide'

Pressed by heated debate from campus to parliament, the Dutch Education Ministry will soon publish a letter "with the minister's position on the subject," Hendrikx said. This follows a report in February by the Royal Dutch Academy for Arts and Sciences (KNAW), which blasted the Netherlands for "failing to properly protect and uphold the quality of Dutch as a language and over-estimating the importance of

English." "Universities are forced to offer courses in English to remain in the race" for international students in Europe, said Verbrugge, a philosophy professor at the University of Amsterdam. "We are witnessing a 'linguicide,'" he told AFP. "We always advocate diversity but here we're killing a minority language." "We must preserve all European languages and cultures ... Dutch students no longer master their native tongue," he added.

### Lawsuit

Verbrugge and BON have now launched a lawsuit against two Dutch universities they accuse of killing the Dutch language through the 'Anglicisation' of courses. The eastern Twente University and the southern University of Maastricht offer two master's degree courses in psychology exclusively in English. BON called it an "impoverishment of the teaching quality and a dangerous abandonment in the learn-

ing of the Dutch language." "We must call the universities to order because they're violating the law," which states that all lesson and exams must be in Dutch, the union said.

An exemption can only be made when the subject matter was directly related to a different language such as English, for instance in international business management studies. BON says the effects of such a language policy can even be seen in the labor market. Young expatriates graduating in English at Dutch universities are often tempted to remain in the Netherlands which has a flourishing economy and pleasant living environment, thus taking jobs from local graduates, it said. Verbrugge said BON was unsure whether the lawsuits would be successful "but at least we've raised the issue for discussion." Many Dutch students agree, saying they did not understand the value of "pretending to be English in front of a lecturer who is just as equally Dutch." — AFP

# The Los Angeles restaurants stimulating all five senses

At Vespertine, the last word in outlandish eating, staff are on a mission to "disrupt the course of the modern restaurant" as pioneers in the immersive culinary scene. Something of an overnight sensation in southern California, the eatery was propelled to the top of Los Angeles Times critic Jonathan Gold's prestigious annual rankings after its launch last year. From the volcanic stone crockery and chefs' aprons woven on a loom used for Samurai garments, to the attentive ballet of waiters dressed in monastic black, everything has been orchestrated to stimulate much more than the taste buds.

"We more or less created and synthesized a world that you're stepping into," says chef Jordan Kahn, hair swept into a raven black cur-

on the senses and emotions" while adventurous diners in Beverly Hills can try Somni, Catalan for "dream." Even old hands like Austrian celebrity chef Wolfgang Puck, the head of a gastronomic empire, are getting in on this high-concept culinary high-wire act. His The Rogue Experience—an eight-seat counter in West Hollywood where the tasting menu changes periodically—aims to "challenge expectation and push the boundaries for the future of food."

#### Four-act drama

Vespertine's Kahn says he was inspired to open up shop when he happened upon an odd glass building in west Los Angeles with an exoskeleton of oxidized metal that has become known as "The Waffle." He contacted the



Chef Jordan Kahn speaks at his restaurant Vespertine, in Culver City, California. — AFP photos



Chef Jordan Kahn prepares a dish of scallops, bone marrow and white asparagus at his restaurant Vespertine.

tain on one side and shaved on the other. "We want you to wander around and experience it however you want." In L.A.'s thriving foodie scene, Vespertine has emerged as part of a new generation of restaurants where the experience of eating is matched by an equally sumptuous feast for the other senses.

Dialogue, a tasting menu restaurant in nearby Santa Monica, promises an experience "playing

architect to propose opening a restaurant where the objets d'art would serve as the inspiration for the cuisine, rather than the other way around. A meal at Vespertine is a four-act drama that begins with the welcome in a half-Bauhaus, half-Japanese garden, where customers are offered a drink.

Kahn greets diners in a kitchen worthy of an interior decorating magazine and they are then



Ingredients for a dish of scallops, bone marrow and white asparagus, is seen in the kitchen chef Jordan Kahn.

escorted to the open-air lounge on the top floor. There, customers enjoy a sparkling wine aperitif infused with Californian pine spines and topped with an exotic flower, seaweed chips and a biscuit of burnt onions and blackcurrant. In the dining room, guests taste 15 dishes. Kahn says his work is influenced by the molecular gastronomy of Spanish chef Ferran Adria and the avant-garde Chicago restaurant Alinea, where he cut his teeth.

The menu includes scallops with marrow and slices of white asparagus and a rice pudding with trout eggs and sunflower petals. Dessert is marshmallows sprayed with a buckwheat cream, jasmine sprouts, rhubarb and a carrot confit with blackcurrant coulis. Everything is washed down with biodynamic wines or kombucha cocktails. Navigating the plate can be a game of hide and seek, with diners required to lift leaves or flowers to find the turbot or turkey underneath, plunging the fork blindly into bowls that are partly closed over.

#### Close attention

Vespertine prides itself on paying close attention to each diner, says Kahn, who encour-

ages his waiters to notice guests' eating habits, their dominant hand, mood, desire to converse and so on. Proponents lap up the eccentricity of the immersive dining scene, but detractors are put off by what they see as the pretentious atmosphere, a tendency for over-sweet cuisine, and the exorbitant prices—up to \$400 per head in L.A. It's not a uniquely southern California thing. Ultraviolet in Shanghai outdoes even the wackiest LA restaurant with its 360-degree videos and music piped into the dining room along with aromas for the guests to appreciate.

Spain's El Celler de Can Roca, named best restaurant in the world in several surveys, dazzled with its El Somni banquet, a culinary "opera" on a round table surrounded by a spherical theater screen. Heston Blumenthal's The Fat Duck, in southern England, offers diners Sound of the Sea, a seafood dish served with an iPod that provides a soundtrack of crashing waves as they eat.

Food can appear to take a back seat amid all this ostentation, but Kahn insists that the dining experience is about more than what's on the plate. "Out of 20 courses over six months, do you remember any of the dishes that you had?"

he asks, although he's being rhetorical. "Maybe one or two and, at the end of the day, how important was the food? The important thing was the connection that you felt, and that's long lasting." — AFP



Chef Jordan Kahn prepares a dish of snap peas, kiwi and spruce.



Chef Jordan Kahn uses a culinary tweezer to select flower petals for a dish of scallops, bone marrow and white asparagus.



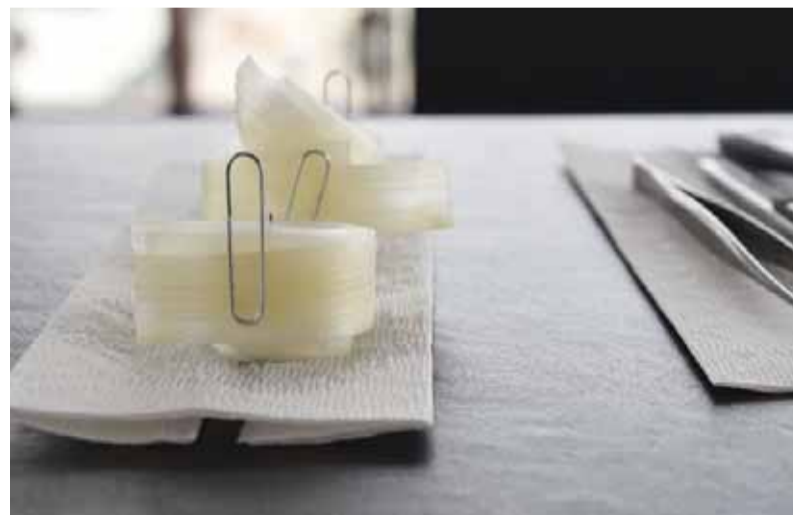
A dish of rice pudding and trout roe is displayed.



A dish of scallops, bone marrow and white asparagus is displayed.



Chef Jordan Kahn uses a culinary tweezer to select flower petals for a dish of scallops, bone marrow and white asparagus at his restaurant Vespertine.



Thin slices of white asparagus, one of the ingredients for a dish of scallops, bone marrow and white asparagus, is seen in the kitchen chef Jordan Kahn.



Chef Jordan Kahn (left) prepares a dish of rice pudding and trout roe at his restaurant Vespertine.

## PLUG PULLED ON 'ROSEANNE,' A RARE TV LOOK AT TRUMP'S AMERICA

Given the boot after a racist rant by its star, "Roseanne" was a rare TV series depicting conservative America despite the election of President Donald Trump, which could have popularized the genre. In its first episode at the end of March, the series dared to set up a constructive dialogue between Roseanne, a Trump supporter and her sister, a fervent Democrat. The bet largely paid off, as "Roseanne" was the most-watched series of the year on major American TV networks. The show had been off the air for 21 years before its reboot, which premiered with almost 22 million viewers, according to ABC. Nonetheless, the network cancelled "Roseanne" after its lead actress Roseanne Barr used Twitter to liken Valerie Jarrett, an African American former White House aide, to an ape.

"Roseanne" was one of the few depictions of

working-class life on US television, and also of Trump supporters, who have been largely ignored by Hollywood. The number of other popular US television series that present a non-caricature image of conservative America can be counted nearly on one hand. There is the police drama "Blue Bloods" on CBS and Netflix's "One Day at a Time," which in different ways present issues at the heart of the family.

Traditionally, comedy and especially sitcoms were considered the best vehicle for showing conservative America. Several series considered classics in the United States were based on interaction between Democratic and Republican viewpoints. These included "All in the Family" (1971-1979) and "Family Ties," which aired from 1982-1989. For Dom Caristi, a professor at Ball State University, a television landscape that used to be concentrated around the three main



In this file photo actress Roseanne Barr attends the Disney ABC Television TCA Winter Press Tour in Pasadena, California. — AFP

channels, ABC, CBS, and NBC, drove them to compete for a larger audience share.

#### Roseanne-free 'Roseanne?'

But "that's no longer true," he said. Today, "a few million viewers is good enough," and "they can try to appeal to a smaller segment." About 500 series are competing on US television. According to several studies, the programs that succeed in uniting supporters of the left and right are non-political. These include reality shows, talent competitions such as "The Voice" or "America's Got Talent," as well as sitcoms such as "The Big Bang Theory." The polarization of American political life makes it difficult to address the subject without leaving a show open to rejection by one part of the electorate, a factor amplified on social media.

"We live in a fragmented media world,"

where the mere fact of suspecting that a series could be conservative or progressive will automatically turn off a segment of the public, said Dannagal Young, an associate professor of communication at the University of Syracuse. But Robert Thomson, of the University of Syracuse, says the success of "Roseanne" as well as the new CBS series "Young Sheldon," a spin-off from "The Big Bang Theory" that takes place in conservative Texas, will encourage similar efforts by channels, platforms and producers. "You've got a lot of other network executives that are going to be looking to develop shows like 'Roseanne' that don't have Roseanne in them," Thomson said. Indeed, the entertainment website TMZ is reporting that ABC is considering re-booting Roseanne without her as the central character. Instead, the show would focus on daughter Darlene, the report said. — AFP

# Classifieds

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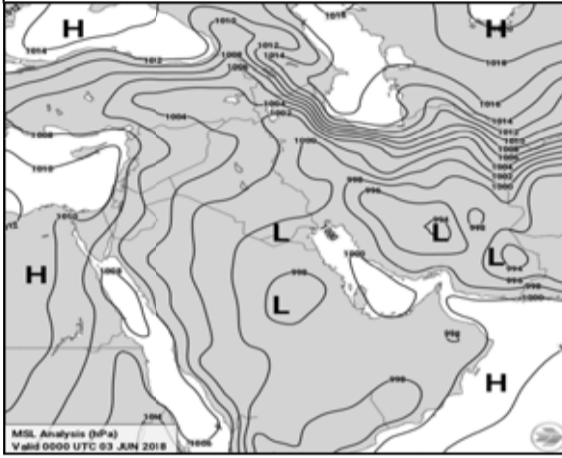


## Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

**BY DAY:** Hot with light to moderate freshening at times north easterly wind to south easterly wind, with speed of 15 - 50 km/h causing rising dust over some areas and some scattered clouds will appear.

**BY NIGHT:** Fair with light to moderate easterly wind, with speed of 08 - 30 km/h and some high clouds will appear.

WEATHER WARNING	No Current Warnings
-----------------	---------------------

STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART	03/06/2018 0000 UTC
KUWAIT CITY	45 °C	32 °C		
KUWAIT AIRPORT	45 °C	32 °C		
ABDALY	44 °C	29 °C		
BUBYAN	--- °C	--- °C		
JAHRA	45 °C	33 °C		
FAILAKA ISLAND	40 °C	30 °C		
SALMIYAH	39 °C	30 °C		
AHMADI	39 °C	31 °C		
NUWAISIB	45 °C	32 °C		
WAFRA	45 °C	30 °C		
SALMY	45 °C	30 °C		

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Monday	06/04	Hot and Relatively humid specially over coastal areas and some high clouds will appear	46 °C	31 °C	SE	15 - 35 km/h
Tuesday	06/05	Hot and Partly cloudy and rising dust	46 °C	32 °C	SE-NW	15 - 40 km/h
Wednesday	06/06	Hot and rising dust and some high clouds will appear	48 °C	32 °C	NW-N	12 - 40 km/h
Thursday	06/07	Very hot and rising dust	49 °C	33 °C	NW	15 - 42 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	03:15
Sunrise	04:49
Zuhr	11:46
Asr	15:20
Sunset	18:44
Isha	20:15

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	38 °C
MIN. Temp.	32 °C
MAX. RH	64 %
MIN. RH	32 %
MAX. Wind	E 36 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

## Hospitals

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

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Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khaldiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
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Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
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Arrival Flights on Monday 4/6/2018					Departure Flights on Monday 4/6/2018				
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time		Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	
FEG	441	Asyut	00:05	KAC 341	Sohag	13:50			
THY	772	Istanbul	00:15	IAW 157A	Al Najaf	13:55			
DLH	625	Dammam	00:50	KAC 672	Dubai	13:55			
KAC	504	Beirut	00:50	QTR 1078	Doha	14:10			
KAC	102	London	00:50	KNE 231	Riyadh	14:10			
JZR	539	Cairo	01:00	KAC 618	Doha	14:10			
PGT	858	Istanbul	01:15	GFA 221	Bahrain	14:15			
JZR	267	Beirut	01:25	KAC 286	Dhaka	14:25			
RJA	642	Amman	01:35	KAC 692	Muscat	14:25			
UAE	853	Dubai	01:40	JZR 751	Madinah	14:30			
KKK	1268	Istanbul	02:00	KNE 537	Jeddah	14:35			
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	SVA 500	Jeddah	14:45			
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:15	JZR 789	Riyadh	14:45			
QTR	1086	Doha	02:30	KAC 788	Jeddah	14:50			
JZR	607	Kochi	02:55	KAC 304	Mumbai	15:05			
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:05	KNE 529	Jeddah	15:05			
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05	ETD 303	Abu Dhabi	15:05			
KAC	418	Manila	03:05	KAC 412	Bangkok	15:10			
MSC	415	Sohag	03:10	OMA 645	Muscat	15:20			
KAC	382	Delhi	03:10	KAC 562	Amman	15:20			
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	ABY 127	Sharjah	15:35			
QTR	1076	Doha	03:30	KAC 502	Beirut	15:35			
JAI	572	Mumbai	04:00	JZR 563	Sohag	15:40			
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	04:15	UAE 857	Dubai	15:45			
KAC	1544	Cairo	04:25	SAW 705	Damascus	16:00			
JZR	609	Hyderabad	04:30	JZR 534	Cairo	16:10			
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:30	QTR 1072	Doha	16:15			
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:10	FDB 051	Dubai	16:20			
THY	770	Istanbul	05:15	KAC 118	New York	16:20			
JZR	603	Mumbai	05:25	KAC 542	Cairo	17:00			
KAC	344	Chennai	05:30	SVA 510	Riyadh	17:15			
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:40	GFA 215	Bahrain	17:30			
JZR	561	Sohag	05:55	JZR 145	Doha	17:35			
BAW	157	London	06:10	JZR 777	Jeddah	17:35			
WAN	338	Alexandria	06:25	MSR 620	Cairo	18:30			
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:25	RJA 640	Amman	19:00			
KAC	204	Lahore	06:30	GFA 217	Bahrain	19:05			
KAC	678	Dubai	06:45	KAC 744	Dammam	19:10			
WAN	342	Sohag	06:55	ABY 123	Sharjah	19:20			
KAC	302	Mumbai	07:00	KAC 776	Riyadh	19:35			
JZR	143	Doha	07:20	KAC 156	Istanbul	19:35			
JZR	529	Asyut	07:30	KAC 674	Dubai	19:40			
KAC	354	Bengaluru	07:45	FDB 057	Dubai	19:50			
JZR	503	Luxor	07:50	KAC 616	Bahrain	20:00			
KAC	384	Delhi	08:05	DLH 624	Frankfurt	20:05			
KAC	358	Kochi	08:05	OMA 647	Muscat	20:05			
UAE	855	Dubai	08:25	KNE 381	Taif	20:10			
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:55	KAC 620	Doha	20:15			
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	MEA 402	Beirut	20:15			
IRA	667	Esfahan	09:15	QTR 1088	Doha	20:40			
SAW	703	Damascus	09:30	KLM 445	Amsterdam	21:00			
QTR	1070	Doha	09:30	UAE 859	Dubai	21:15			
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	ALK 229	Colombo	21:15			
IAW	157	Al Najaf	10:00	ETD 307	Abu Dhabi	21:15			
MSC	405	Sohag	10:15	KAC 168	Paris	21:20			
AXB	889	Mangalore/Bahrain	10:20	KAC 162	Geneva	21:50			
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	GFA 219	Bahrain	21:50			
MEA	404	Beirut	10:55	QTR 1082	Doha	22:05			
JZR	703	Taif	11:00	ETD 309	Abu Dhabi	22:10			
QTR	1074	Doha	11:00	KAC 786	Jeddah	22:15			
JZR	557	Alexandria	12:05	AIC 975	Chennai/Goa	22:25			
WAN	134	Doha	12:20	WAN 136	Doha	22:30			
RBG	553	Alexandria	12:30	SVA 502	Jeddah	22:45			
SAW	701	Damascus	12:30	JAI 574	Mumbai	23:00			
UAE	871	Dubai	12:45	THY 764	Istanbul	23:15			
WAN	542	KTM	12:50	AZQ 4565	Baku	23:30			
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00	MSR 2614	Cairo	23:30			
KAC	774	Riyadh	13:30	FDB 071	Jeddah	23:35			
JZR	779	Jeddah	13:45	JZR 241	Amman	23:40			

## News

## Qatar: A year of crisis in the Gulf

DUBAI: It has been a year since Saudi Arabia and its allies cut ties with Qatar, sparking the biggest diplomatic crisis to hit the Gulf in years. Here is a recap:

## Regional rupture

Simmering regional tensions boil over on June 5, 2017, when Saudi Arabia and its allies Bahrain, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) announce almost simultaneously that they are severing diplomatic ties with Qatar. They accuse Doha of supporting "terrorists" and being too close to Saudi Arabia's Shiite archrival Iran-charges Qatar denies. Land and maritime borders with the Gulf peninsula are shut, air links suspended and Qatari citizens expelled. Riyadh says it acted to "protect its national security from the dangers of terrorism and extremism". In a country dependent on food imports, there is alarm over whether the border closures will lead to food shortages in Qatar. Saudi Arabia also closes the Riyadh bureau of Qatari broadcaster Al Jazeera.

## Demands and a deadline

On June 22 the Saudi-led bloc sends Qatar a list of 13 demands, which include shutting down its Al Jazeera media network, curbing relations with Iran and closing a Turkish military base it hosts. They give Qatar 10 days to comply. After a two-day extension, Qatar says on July 4 the list is "unrealistic and is not actionable". Saudi Arabia and its allies threaten new sanctions. On July 25 they unveil a "terrorist" blacklist of 18 groups and individuals suspected of links to Islamist extremists and to Qatar. The blacklist later grows to include almost 90 names.

## Outreach turns sour

Saudi state media reports on September 8 that Qatar's Amir has called the Saudi crown prince to express interest in talks. An initial positive response turns sour when the Saudis accuse Qatari media of incorrectly implying that the kingdom initiated the out-



ABU SAMRAH: Photo shows a view of the Qatari side of the Abu Samrah border crossing with Saudi Arabia. The year-old acrimonious dispute between Qatar and its neighbors is forging a 'new' Gulf, potentially transforming what was a stable region of the Arab world, experts warn. — AFP

reach. On September 9 Saudi Arabia suspends any dialogue with Qatar.

## Breaking isolation

Seeking support from outside the region, Qatar signs a series of defense deals with foreign powers. In June Doha inks a \$12-billion (10.4 billion euro) deal to buy US-made F-15 fighter jets. In early December, it finalizes contracts with France worth more than \$13 billion, including the purchase of 12 French-built fighter jets and 50 Airbus passenger planes. It also concludes a \$8 billion deal with Britain to buy 24 Typhoon fighters. In

standing political caliber and wise leadership of... Kim Jong Un," KCNA cited Assad as saying during a meeting with North Korean Ambassador Mun Jong Nam on Wednesday. The Syrian president's office refused to comment on the report when contacted by AFP. Pyongyang and Damascus have maintained warm ties for decades and reportedly shared a military relationship for some years, including during the ongoing Syrian civil war. Suspicions over chemical weapons trade between Pyongyang and Damascus have been raised in the past by the UN and South Korea.

There were also widespread reports that North Korea helped Syria build a nuclear plant that was destroyed by Israeli bombing in 2007. Both regimes have been the target of international isolation-Pyongyang over its banned nuclear program and Damascus for atrocities committed during the seven-year civil war. Since coming to power in 2011, Kim has not met another head of state in North Korea. He only made his first overseas trip as leader this year, travelling to China to meet President Xi Jinping, an ally of the reclusive regime. — AFP

accused the detainees of "coordinated activity undermining the security and stability of the kingdom".

Previous reports in state-backed media branded some of the detainees traitors and "agents of embassies". Campaigners have dismissed the reports as a "smear" campaign. The crackdown has also sparked a torrent of global criticism, casting a shadow on the kingdom's much-publicized liberalization push launched by powerful Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman. The self-styled reformer has sought to break with long-held restrictions on women and the mixing of the genders, with the decades-old driving ban on women slated to end June 24.

The European Parliament last week approved a resolution calling for the unconditional release of the detained activists and other human rights defenders, while urging a more vocal response from EU nations. "The Saudi Arabian authorities' endless harassment of women's rights activists is entirely unjustifiable, and the world must not remain silent on the repression of human rights defenders in the country," Samah Hadid, Amnesty International's Middle East director of campaigns, said last week. "Saudi Arabia's allies-in-particular the US, UK and France-must push Saudi Arabian authorities to end their targeted repression of human rights activists in the country." — AFP

submitting to God and His management of our lives - should have the characteristic of beauty. The Quran describes real patience as beautiful. "Therefore, be patient with beautiful patience" (70:5). Beautiful patience is one of contentment and absolute conviction of God's goodness and care. In Ramadan, for example, patience means being cheerful and productive throughout the month, and anticipating God's pleasure, forgiveness and generous rewards.

The Quran encourages us to be patient: "Indeed, mankind is in loss, except those who believe and do righteous deeds, and exhort one another to uphold truth and exhort one another to persevere with patience," (103:2-3). "Those who show patience and work righteousness - for them is forgiveness and a great reward" (11:11). "So persevere in patience, for the Promise of God is true." (40:77) What a greater way to show patience than Ramadan!

*Courtesy of the TIES Center, whose mission is to empower Kuwait's expats through social and educational services that promote a positive and productive role in society, and to facilitate opportunities for intra- and interfaith interactions that promote social solidarity. For more information, please call 25231015/6 or e-mail: info@tiescenter.net.*

ban. Yesterday, Duterte said he hoped to visit Kuwait to express his gratitude. "I'd like to thank the Kuwaiti government for understanding us and keeping their faith (in) us and practically (giving in) to all of my demands," Duterte said. His demands included giving Filipino workers a day off and seven hours of sleep each night, as well as allowing them to keep their passports and phones often confiscated by employers, Duterte said. — AFP

January 2018, it approves legislation allowing 100-percent foreign ownership in most sectors of its economy. Previously reliant on its Gulf neighbors, it increasingly turns towards Iran and Turkey, particularly for food imports. Shortly after the crisis unfolds, Ankara fast tracks the deployment of troops to its military base in Qatar-part of a 2014 bilateral defense agreement.

In January Qatar says fighter jets from the UAE, one of the boycotting countries, violated its airspace in December and early January. The UAE later accuses Qatari fighter jets of "intercepting" two Emirati passenger planes en route to Bahrain, drawing a swift denial

from Doha. Both sides complain to the UN.

## White House welcome

On April 10 US President Donald Trump receives the Amir of Qatar, calling him "a friend of mine" and a "gentleman", softening his tone after initially backing the Saudi-led bloc. Amir Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani uses the opportunity to say: "We do not and we will not tolerate people who fund terrorism." Trump also praises Qatar's purchases of military equipment from the US, which has about 10,000 troops at an airbase outside Doha-its largest in the Middle East. — AFP

## Jordan protests snowball over IMF-backed austerity

AMMAN: Angry protests rocked cities across Jordan overnight against IMF-backed austerity measures including a new income tax draft law and price hikes, hours after the government and unions failed to reach an agreement to end the standoff. Some 3,000 people faced down a heavy security presence to gather near the prime minister's office in Amman until the early hours of Saturday morning, waving Jordanian flags and signs reading "we will not kneel".

Protests have gripped the country since Wednesday, when hundreds responding to a call by trade unions, flooded the streets of Amman and other cities to demand the fall of the government. Last month, the government proposed an income tax draft law, yet to be approved by parliament, aimed at raising taxes on employees by at least 5 percent and on companies by between 20 and 40 percent. The measures are the latest in a series of economic reforms since Amman secured a \$723-million three-year credit line from the International Monetary Fund in 2016.

Since January, Jordan-which suffers high unemployment and has few natural resources-has seen repeated price rises including on staples such as bread, as well as extra taxes on basic goods. The price of fuel has risen on five occasions since the beginning of the year, while electricity bills have shot up 55 percent since February. The IMF-backed measures have sparked some of the biggest economic protests in five years. Overnight, protesters outside premier Hani Mulki's office shouted slogans including "the ones raising prices want to burn the country" and "this Jordan is our Jordan, Mulki should leave".

## 'Right to demonstrate'

Demonstrators tussled with security forces and some fainted, but others smoked water pipes and one sat on the pavement and played the Arabian lute or oud.

## Qatar crisis creates 'new Gulf' with no...

Continued from Page 1

"I don't think it is too far-fetched to say that new power centers in the Middle East are emerging," said David Roberts, assistant professor at King's College London.

According to Le Monde newspaper, Saudi Arabia has written to French President Emmanuel Macron warning of "military action" if Qatar goes ahead with its planned purchase of a Russian air defense missile system. Qatar is already picking up the tab, as it absorbs the huge costs of regional isolation, despite its vast wealth in gas resources. "As for winners and losers, there are clearly no winners thus far, and in many ways everyone has been a loser," said Christopher Davidson, a Middle East politics professor at Durham University. Ulrichsen said that despite its "resilience", Qatar has "not eliminated the costs of the crisis". Without a clear winner in sight, the Gulf crisis is largely seen by the outside world as a bewildering spat between indistin-

In another part of the city, security forces used tear gas to prevent hundreds of demonstrators from joining the rally near Mulki's office, Jordanian news websites reported. "Women have started looking in rubbish bins to find food for their children, and every day we're hit by price hikes and new taxes," said one protester.

Bank employee Mohammad Shalabiya, 28, said demonstrators wanted "to tell the government that the citizen's income isn't suitable for this kind of law and that we have a right to demonstrate". Lina Rshaidat, 35, a housewife with a red keffiyeh scarf around her neck, said the proposed law was "unjust" and would "harm the Jordanian people". According to official estimates, 18.5 percent of the population is unemployed, while 20 percent are on the brink of poverty. The Economist Intelligence Unit earlier this year ranked Jordan's capital as one of the most expensive in the Arab world.

## Struggling economy

Jordan, a key US ally, has largely avoided the unrest witnessed by other countries in the region since the Arab Spring revolts broke out in 2011, although protests did flare late that year after the government cut fuel subsidies. But the country has long played host to refugees from neighboring Iraq, and according to government figures, over one million people have fled to Jordan from Syria's devastating seven year war, exacerbating its struggling economy.

Amman has repeatedly urged international donors to provide extra funds to help it host them. On Saturday Mulki met with trade union representatives who demanded the income tax law be revoked, but they failed to reach an agreement. The head of Jordan's federation of unions, Ali Obus, demanded that the state "maintain its independence and not bow to IMF demands".

King Abdullah II called on parliament to lead a "comprehensive and reasonable national dialogue" on the new tax law. "It would not be fair that the citizen alone bears the burden of financial reforms," he told officials on Saturday. The IMF says the loan aims at slashing Jordan's public debt from about 94 percent of GDP to 77 percent by 2021, through "reforms to bolster economic growth and gradual fiscal consolidation", according to its website. A majority of 78 out of parliament's 130 representatives are opposed to the income tax law. The speaker of Jordan's senate called a consultative meeting yesterday. — AFP

guishable former allies.

Mediation efforts have been led by Kuwait and the US, which has its largest Middle East air base in Qatar. Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah, said diplomatic efforts are "ongoing". "The latest of these efforts and ideas will be presented during a Gulf-American summit in September, and this summit will be an opportunity to end this crisis," he said.

US President Donald Trump seemed firmly behind the Saudis at first, but has since called Sheikh Tamim a "great gentleman" and urged a peaceful outcome. In the middle, corruption allegations against Trump's son-in-law, Jared Kushner, have surfaced over his dealings with the Gulf states, notably Qatar. Diplomacy may eventually be supplanted by imperatives such as Saudi domestic concerns or weariness over its joint military efforts with the UAE in the Yemen war.

The crisis has impacted east African states with alliances to the Gulf, rewarded defense contractors, and may have massive ramifications for Qatar's 2022 football World Cup. With nationalism in the Gulf on the rise, Roberts said "the crisis has been an opportunity for Qataris to demonstrate their national fervor". It "has created animosities that may take years, even a generation, to overcome", said Ulrichsen. —AFP

base in the region which is home to thousands of US personnel and a forward command centre. The minister also called for the restoration of a 2015 agreement between world powers and Iran that lifted sanctions from Tehran in exchange for curbs on its nuclear program. US President Donald Trump last month withdrew from the Iran nuclear deal and ordered the reimposition of sanctions suspended under the accord. —AFP

## Syria president to meet North Korean leader

SEOUL: Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad said he plans to visit North Korea's leader Kim Jong Un, Pyongyang's state media reported yesterday, potentially becoming the first head of state to meet Kim inside the isolated country. "I am going to visit the DPRK and meet... Kim Jong Un," Assad said, the North's state-run KCNA news agency reported, using the abbreviated version of the country's official name. The announcement came as anticipation mounts for a historic nuclear summit between Kim and US President Donald Trump in Singapore on June 12, following a whirlwind round of diplomacy.

"The world welcomes the remarkable events in the Korean peninsula brought about recently by the out-

## Saudi Arabia detains 17 in sweeping crackdown

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia said it detained 17 people for "undermining" the kingdom's security, in what campaigners have dubbed a sweeping crackdown against activists just weeks before a ban on women driving ends. Rights groups earlier reported arrests of at least 11 people last month, mostly identified as women campaigners for the right to drive and to end the conservative Islamic country's male guardianship system.

Without naming anyone, the public prosecutor's office said the number of detainees stood at 17, adding that eight of them had been "temporarily released" until the investigation is completed. Nine suspects, including four women, remain in custody after they "confessed" to a slew of charges such as suspicious contact with "hostile" organizations and recruiting people in sensitive government positions, it said in a statement released by the Saudi Press Agency. The statement

## Lessons of Ramadan...

Continued from Page 1

The Quran guarantees us that "And We will surely test you with something of fear and hunger and a loss of wealth and lives and crops, but give good tidings to the patient who, when disaster strikes them, say, 'Indeed, we belong to God, and indeed to Him we are returning'" (2:155-156).

Our reaction in adverse circumstances beyond our control should be to turn our thoughts to God, who describes Himself as wise, merciful and caring. We should not disagree or be dissatisfied with what He does. As the Quran reminds us, "He cannot be questioned as to what He does, while they will be questioned" (21:23). Instead, we should believe that God allowed such circumstances for our ultimate benefit. The Quran reminds us that "perhaps you dislike something and it is good for you and perhaps you like something and it is bad for you. And God knows, while you know not" (2:216). We must trust in God and His knowledge of the "big picture."

Both kinds of patience - making the effort to follow to the way of life God envisions for us, and then truly

## Philippines leader apologizes...

Continued from Page 1

Kuwait, prompting Duterte to lift the employment



Sports

# Lorenzo wins Italian MotoGP as champion Marquez finishes 16th

## Portugal's Oliveira wins MotoGP2 at Italian GP

**LUCO DI MUGELLO:** Spain's Jorge Lorenzo claimed his first MotoGP win in a year and a half at the Italian Grand Prix in Mugello yesterday as world championship leader Marc Marquez fell and finished in 16th place.

Lorenzo took the lead early and held on till the end with Italian Ducati teammate Andrea Dovizioso finishing second and Valentino Rossi, who had started from pole position, completing the podium on a Yamaha.

Spanish world champion Marquez remains top of the championship standings after five races despite finishing way down in 16th after crashing into the gravel early in the race and struggling to restart his Honda.

"It's a special to win here with Ducati," said former three-time world champion Lorenzo of his first win with the Italian team.

The Spaniard, who had retired from two of the first four races this season in Qatar and Spain.

Marquez had been bidding for his fourth straight win this season but slipped on lap five with former seven-time world MotoGP champion Rossi, 39, moving up to second in the standings 23 points behind.

"It was a very difficult race, but we expected it. I struggled a lot especially at the front," said Rossi.

"But in the end what I did was the right choice, because I managed to push in the final but keeping

(Andrea) Iannone at a distance. It was my goal to return to the podium at Mugello, I'm very happy."

Earlier Portuguese KTM rider Miguel Oliveira snatched his first win in the MotoGP2 category this season as Spaniard Jorge Martin rode his Honda to a thrilling battle to the line in the MotoGP3 category.

Earlier, Portuguese KTM rider Miguel Oliveira snatched his first win in the MotoGP2 category this season at the Italian Grand Prix in Tuscany.

Oliveira, 23, started from 11th position but clawed his way back to finish ahead of Kalex riders Lorenzo Baldassarri of Italy and Spaniard Joan Mir at 0.184sec and 0.334sec respectively.

Oliveira-second in the world championship standings-closes the gap on overall leader Francesco Bagnaia (Kalex), who finished fourth on his home circuit.

Spaniard Jorge Martin rode his Honda to a thrilling battle to the line in the MotoGP3 category. The 20-year-old crossed just 0.019sec ahead of Italian Marco Bezzecchi (KTM) with Italy's Fabio Di Giannantonio (Honda) third at 0.024.

Bezzecchi holds the overall world championship lead with Martin moving up to second place ahead of Honda teammate Di Giannantonio. — AFP



MUGELLO: Ducati Team's Spanish rider Jorge Lorenzo celebrates on the podium after he won the MotoGP Grand Prix at the Mugello race track yesterday. — AFP

“It was a very difficult race”

## Lexus LC claims class win on its debut in German endurance race

**NURBURGRING:** Overcoming the challenges of one of the world's most demanding circuits, the No 56 GAZOO Racing's Lexus LC, driven by Takeshi Tsuchiya, Takamitsu Matsui, Naoya Gamo, and Yuichi Nakayama, made a remarkable debut race and claimed the first position in the SP-PRO class of the 24 Hours of Nurburgring endurance race recently in Germany.

The No. 56 GAZOO Racing's Lexus LC demonstrated its out-and-out pace in qualifying, lining up 32nd on the starting grid in a field of 147 cars with a best lap time of eight minutes and 34.591 seconds around the climbs and descents of the 25-kilometer German racetrack.

Shigeki Tomoyama, President, GAZOO Racing Company, said: "Although GAZOO Racing's Lexus LC was forced to pit-in many times unexpectedly due to the impact at the beginning of the race, we are delighted to complete the 24 hours and the whole race. The drivers, mechanics, engineers, and support staff all carried out their roles, and we made every effort to race the car without giving up until the very end. We would like to express our sincerest gratitude to all of our suppliers and partner companies who have helped to sustain these activities."

Tomoyama stated that the knowledge and technologies refined here at the Nurburgring



circuit will not only be incorporated into models in the GAZOO Racing brand line-up but also utilized in a variety of future production cars.

Commenting on the win, Yugo Miyamoto, Chief Representative of Middle East & North Africa Representative Office, Toyota Motor Corporation, said: "The 24 Hours Nurburgring endurance race proved to be an excellent experience, testing the team's strengths and vehicle's capabilities, while also showcasing the best of Lexus. Despite a challenging debut race, the Lexus LC dazzled the audiences with its winning performance, adding to our achievements and capabilities in motorsports."

Miyamoto added: "We remain dedicated to continuously building on the experience gained on racetracks all over the world to not only engineer amazing vehicles but also capture our customers' hearts and minds and ignite their emotions. We would like to thank our fans and customers for their continuous

support and for being an inspiring force behind our continued success."

The main race started with a total of 147 vehicles on the tarmac with Takamitsu Matsui at the wheel of the Lexus LC. Immediately after the start of the race, the No 56 GAZOO Racing's Lexus LC suffered impact damage. However, it was able to continue, with repairs being made during the first scheduled routine pit stop as it did not need an emergency pit-in. Technical issues that the team had not encountered in testing emerged even after that, but were all successfully addressed, with the drivers, mechanics, and engineers corresponding quickly and surely, returning the car to the course once more.

The No 56 Lexus LC continued the race from 6:30 in the morning without any significant issues and managed to increase its position in the race ranking. When the checkered flag was finally waved, the No.56 Lexus LC took first place in the SP-PRO class and finished 96th overall.

## Ariya powers to four-shot lead at US Women's Open

**SHOAL CREEK:** After waking up before daybreak to complete her second round at the US Women's Open, Thailand's Ariya Jutanugarn said she would have little trouble sleeping on Saturday night as she heads into the final round with a four-stroke lead.

Ariya, who had to rise at 4 a.m. to complete the weather-delayed second round at Shoal Creek before cracking on with her third round, carded a five-under-par 67 for a 12-under 204 total and a healthy cushion over Sarah Jane Smith (74).

South Korean Kim Hyo-joo (68) was another two shots back in third place on a day when nobody could make a sustained challenge at the two frontrunners. "I think I'm going to sleep pretty well because I didn't sleep much last night and I'm so tired right now," said Ariya, who started the third round three strokes adrift of Australian Smith.

Victory for the Thai would give her a second major title after her 2016 Women's British Open triumph, and break the recent dominance at the US Women's Open by South Korean and American players, who have claimed the past 11 tournaments. Ariya used her prodigious power to muscle her favourite three-wood tee shots past Smith's drives with regularity, and displayed a deft short game in a round that included only one blemish, a bogey at the par-three 16th.

Smith, who failed to land a single birdie but



SHOAL CREEK: Ariya Jutanugarn of Thailand plays her tee shot on the second hole during the third round of the 2018 US Women's Open at Shoal Creek on Saturday in Shoal Creek, Alabama. — AFP

remains Ariya's closest pursuer at eight-under 208, said the Thai was a "spectacular player". "She hits it a long way but her short game is impeccable," added the world number 97, who is winless in 222 starts on the LPGA Tour.

"She rolls the ball beautifully. She's just the whole package. It was fun to watch her play. "I know Ariya is going to have a great day. That is a given," she added. "I'm going to need a really good day to have a chance." Ariya said she had some weaknesses in her game, but was stumped to name them.

"Wait, I'm thinking," she said. "I'm not sure what, but I'm pretty sure I have. "I'm pretty

sure tomorrow is going to be a good day, even though I don't know what the outcome is going to be." The second round, which was interrupted by a long lightning delay, was completed earlier on Saturday.

Ariya, who had 10 holes left, trimmed the margin from four shots to three before grabbing a quick lunch and getting back to work. Two early birdies brought her to within a shot of Smith, who bogeyed the eighth and ninth holes to surrender the lead. It was a masterclass at times from Ariya, one of the highlights being a four-iron approach at the par-five 11th that covered the pin and led to a tap-in birdie. — Reuters

## DeChambeau leads by one, Woods in the hunt at Memorial

**DUBLIN:** Bryson DeChambeau birdied four of his last six holes to surge to a one-shot lead on Saturday going into the final round of the US PGA Tour's Memorial tournament. DeChambeau, 24 signed for a bogey-free 66 to move to 14-under 202 as the Californian looks to secure a second PGA Tour victory after capturing last year's John Deere Classic.

Red-hot Chilean sensation Joaquin Niemann, Patrick Cantlay and Kyle Stanley were a stroke back on 203. Overnight co-leaders Niemann and Stanley both carded 70 while Cantlay's 66 included two eagles, one of them a hole-in-one at the par-three eighth.

A further six players were within five shots of DeChambeau's lead-including 14-time major champion Tiger Woods. Woods briefly grabbed a share of the lead before stumbling with two bogeys in his last three holes. South Korea's An Byeong-hun was alone in fifth after a 69 for 204 and England's Justin Rose carded a 69 for 206.

Woods posted a 68 to head a group on 207 that also included Japan's Hideki Matsuyama (71). DeChambeau, ranked 38th in the world, kick-started his push to the top of the board with birdies at the fifth and seventh holes. He posted back-to-back birdie "threes" at 13 and 14 and picked up a stroke at 16 before landing his 145-yard approach at the last five feet from the pin en route to a birdie.

"I just want to birdie every hole," he said. "That's all we're trying to do out there. "No matter if you're one back or tied for the lead every hole is an opportunity to make a birdie

and that's just what I'm going to try and do every single day." DeChambeau said his brilliant putting display was his best since he captured the 2015 US Amateur title. "I would say I'm putting the best I have in my life," he said.

### WOODS 'PLAYED BEAUTIFULLY'

Niemann, 19, highlighted his round with a 50-foot eagle putt at the par-five seventh. He is contesting just a fifth US PGA Tour event since turning pro straight after the Masters in April, and the Santiago-born teenager said he will draw on his amateur successes as he tries to win on Sunday, when the field will tee off early from the first and 10th tee as organizers try to beat expected inclement weather.

"It's a strong field on the leaderboard and I think everybody's going to go out there and try to make the most birdies possible," Niemann said. "So I think that I have to go low tomorrow to have a chance."

Woods rolled in a 14-foot eagle putt at the par-five fifth and was five-under for the day through nine. The five-time Memorial winner missed a short birdie on 14 but gained a share of the lead at 11-under with a birdie at 15.

Three-putt bogeys at 16 and 18 quelled his momentum and Woods was left to wonder what could have been. "I shot 68 today but, again, that's probably the highest score I could have possibly shot today," he said. "I played really, really well. I played beautifully, actually, had total control of what I was doing out there and just didn't finish it off." — AFP



DUBLIN: Tiger Woods reacts to his tee shot on the third hole during the third round of The Memorial Tournament Presented by Nationwide at Muirfield Village Golf Club on Saturday in Dublin, Ohio. — AFP

## Sports

# Scherzer's pinch single in 14th sparks Nationals over Braves 5-3

## Stanton hit a two-run blast for his first home run

ATLANTA: Washington second baseman Wilmer Difo delivered a triple to score Max Scherzer in the 14th inning and lead the way for the Nationals' 5-3 win over the host Atlanta Braves on Saturday. Scherzer hit a one-out pinch single off Atlanta reliever Miguel Socolovich (0-1) and scored easily when Difo tripled into the gap in center. Spencer Kieboom drove in Difo with a single to left to help the Nationals end their two-game losing streak. The winning pitcher was Justin Miller (2-0), who threw three scoreless innings, did not allow a hit and struck out five. Sean Doolittle pitched a clean 14th to earn his 14th save. The Nationals evened the score at 3-3 in the seventh when Juan Soto hit the third pitch he saw from reliever Sam Freeman for a solo homer, his second. Soto struck out with the bases loaded and two outs in the 11th.

### CUBS 7, METS 1 (14 INNINGS)

Albert Almora Jr. hit a two-run double in the top of the 14th inning to key a six-run outburst and lift visiting Chicago to a marathon win over New York. The Cubs have won the first three games of the four-game series and six of their last seven. The Mets have lost eight of 10. The two teams scored once apiece in the sixth before matching zeroes until the 14th, when the Cubs batted around. The teams combined to strike out 39 times, including 24 times by the Cubs—the most ever recorded by the Mets in a single game.

### YANKEES 8, ORIOLES 5

Giancarlo Stanton hit a two-run blast for his first home run in two weeks as visiting New York moved a season-high 20 games over .500 with a victory over Baltimore. The Yankees (38-18) won for the sixth time in

eight games. Stanton delivered the big blow, pulling a first-pitch fastball from Kevin Gausman (3-5) over the right field fence. The 391-foot drive was Stanton's 12th homer and first in 42 at-bats since May 19 in Kansas City. The Yankees survived an injury scare in the sixth. Rookie Gleyber Torres was hit in the right forearm by a Miguel Castro fastball but stayed in the game.

### RED SOX 5, ASTROS 4

Christian Vazquez and Andrew Benintendi slugged home runs in the seventh inning, and visiting Boston rallied past Houston. Astros right-hander Justin Verlander surrendered only three hits over six innings, but the Red Sox made him throw 101 pitches, forcing the Astros to rely on their scuffling bullpen to try to secure the final nine outs while protecting a one-run lead. Right-hander Will Harris recorded two quick outs to open the seventh before allowing the first homer of the season by Vazquez to tie the game. Two batters later, after Harris (1-3) walked No. 9 hitter Jackie Bradley Jr., Benintendi hit his eighth homer several rows deep into the upper deck in right for a 5-3 lead.

## Arenado singled twice for Rockies

### RANGERS 3, ANGELS 2 (10 INNINGS)

Ronald Guzman's one-out single in the 10th inning off Jose Alvarez scored Rougned Odor from second base, lifting Texas to victory over host Los Angeles. The Rangers entered the ninth inning trailing 2-1 but pushed across a run to tie the game, thanks to a replay challenge. They had runners on first and third with one out when Adrian Beltre flied out to left against Angels reliever Blake Parker. Jurickson Profar tagged from third and went home, while Carlos Tocci tagged from first and went to second. Left fielder Justin Upton's throw went to second base, Tocci being



ANAHEIM: Rougned Odor #12 of the Texas Rangers dives to the plate beating the throw to Martin Maldonado #12 of the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim in the 10th inning for the winning run at Angel Stadium on Saturday in Anaheim, California. — AFP

tagged out and Profar reaching home too late for the run to count, essentially ending the game. But the Rangers challenged the call, and while Tocci was still ruled out, the call at home was reversed, Profar scoring the game-tying run.

### DODGERS 12, ROCKIES 4

Chris Taylor had two hits in the seventh inning, including a triple to cap an eight-run rally, and visiting Los Angeles routed Colorado. Joc Pederson had four hits, including two home runs, and scored four times, Matt Kemp homered and Pedro Baez (2-3) pitched an inning of relief to get the win for L.A. Trevor Story had three hits and Nolan Arenado singled twice for the Rockies.

### GIANTS 2, PHILLIES 0

Left-hander Andrew Suarez combined with two relievers on a three-hit shutout and Joe Panik scored twice after a pair of hits as host San Francisco blanked Philadelphia for the second consecutive game. Suarez, a rookie who had compiled a 5.65 ERA in his first seven major league starts this season, stilled the Phillies on three hits over seven innings, pitching the Giants to their third consecutive win. The game remained scoreless until the sixth, when Panik led off with a double. He then scored on a couple of ground balls, taking third on Brandon Crawford's bouncer to shortstop and dashing home when Andrew McCutchen hit a roller slow enough that Panik was able to beat shortstop Scott Kingery's throw to the plate.

### TWINS 7, INDIANS 1

Eddie Rosario homered, Brian Dozier added two RBIs and Lance Lynn won his third straight start as host Minnesota beat Cleveland. Rosario homered in a three-run third inning and Dozier had RBIs in the third and in a four-run sixth as the Twins won their second in a row after losing seven of the previous eight. Lynn (4-4) gave up two hits and one run in six innings, with

five strikeouts, five walks and a hit batter. Francisco Lindor and Bradley Zimmer had two hits for Cleveland, which scored its only run on a double steal by Jason Kipnis and Greg Allen in the second. The Indians had a six-game winning streak broken in the second game of the series Friday.

### CARDINALS 3, PIRATES 2

Kolten Wong led off the bottom of the ninth inning with a walk-off home run to break a tie and give St. Louis the win over visiting Pittsburgh. Pittsburgh has lost 11 of 15, including two games this series in which St. Louis has won in a walk-off manner. The Pirates endured a gut-wrenching game in the series opener when they overcame one- and four-run deficits to take a three-run lead, only to lose in the bottom of the ninth. Austin Meadows, the National League Rookie of the Month for May, hit a leadoff homer, his fifth, to right in the top of the ninth off Cardinals closer Bud Norris to pull Pittsburgh into a 2-2 tie. Norris (2-1) blew a save after converting each of his first 11 opportunities but picked up the win.

### BREWERS 5, WHITE SOX 0

Milwaukee launched four home runs to back right-hander Jhoulys Chacin, who also got some help from his bullpen in a victory over host Chicago. Chacin (4-1) outduelled James Shields, who hasn't won a game since Opening Day despite pitching well recently. Shields (1-6) gave up three solo home runs but worked into the eighth inning. The White Sox have lost seven of their last nine games. The Brewers, leaders of the National League Central, have won 12 of their last 16 games, and they avoided back-to-back losses for the first time since late April, when the Cubs swept them in four games at Wrigley Field. Erik Kratz, Jonathan Villar, Lorenzo Cain and Jesus Aguilar were responsible for all the scoring with their home runs. — Reuters

## MLB results/standings

Milwaukee 5, Chicago White Sox 0; Kansas City 5, Oakland 4; St. Louis 3, Pittsburgh 2; NY Yankees 8, Baltimore 5; Washington 5, Atlanta 3; Minnesota 7, Cleveland 1; Detroit 7, Toronto 4; LA Dodgers 12, Colorado 4; Chicago Cubs 7, NY Mets 1; Boston 5, Houston 4; San Diego 8, Cincinnati 2; Texas 3, LA Angels 2; San Francisco 2, Philadelphia 0; Arizona 6, Miami 2; Seattle 3, Tampa Bay 1.

American League					National League				
American League - East					National League - East				
W	L	PCT	GB		W	L	PCT	GB	
NY Yankees	37	17	.685	-	Atlanta	34	24	.586	-
Boston	40	19	.678		Washington	33	24	.579	0.5
Tampa Bay	28	29	.491	10.5	Philadelphia	31	25	.554	2
Toronto	25	33	.431	14	NY Mets	27	29	.482	6
Baltimore	17	41	.293	22	Miami	20	38	.345	14
American League - Central					National League - Central				
Cleveland	30	27	.526	-	Milwaukee	37	22	.627	-
Detroit	28	30	.483	2.5	Chicago Cubs	32	23	.582	3
Minnesota	24	30	.444	4.5	St. Louis	31	25	.554	4.5
Kansas City	21	37	.362	9.5	Pittsburgh	30	28	.517	6.5
Chicago White Sox	17	38	.309	12	Cincinnati	21	38	.356	16
American League - West					National League - West				
Seattle	36	22	.621	-	Arizona	30	27	.526	-
Houston	37	23	.617	-	Colorado	30	28	.517	0.5
LA Angels	31	28	.525	5.5	San Francisco	28	30	.483	2.5
Oakland	30	29	.508	6.5	LA Dodgers	28	30	.483	2.5
Texas	25	36	.410	12.5	San Diego	26	34	.433	5.5

## Urdapilleta guides Castres past Montpellier to Top 14 title

PARIS: Faultless Argentinian fly-half Benjamin Urdapilleta kicked 19 points to guide Castres to a convincing 29-13 victory over Montpellier in the Top 14 final on Saturday. Castres sprang out to lead 19-6 at the break, Urdapilleta on target with four penalties before converting Julien Dumora's try, misfiring Springbok Ruan Pienaar hitting two penalties for Montpellier, league table toppers at the end of regulation season.

Montpellier hit back with a deserved penalty try in the second period, Urdapilleta knocking over his fifth penalty before Steve Mafi crashed over for his team's second try with five minutes to play.

Stand-out Castres centre Thomas Combezou admitted his team had expected a "tight physical war of attrition" as they tied up a fifth French league title, the last coming in 2013. "We wanted to win and we did it!" he said. "It's the magic of rugby and knock-out rugby. It's exceptional."

Castres captain Mathieu Babillot said his team had "gone looking for it". "We knew Montpellier were a team with few weak points and that we had to be present in every part of the game," he said. Montpellier coach Vern Cotter, whose side are yet to win a French title having also finished runners-up in 2011, added: "We made too many mistakes. Six months of work and today we just didn't turn up."

"We weren't ourselves. Castres played a good match, you can't take anything away from them. We're disappointed, we couldn't express ourselves." Castres coach Christophe Urios had warned his side, which finished in the sixth and final play-off spot, were "laid back but ambitious" and so it proved against a star-



SAINT-DENIS: Castres' players celebrate with the bouclier de Brennus trophy after winning the French Top 14 final rugby union match between Montpellier and Castres at the Stade de France in Saint-Denis, north of Paris, on Saturday. — AFP

studded Montpellier side for whom Pienaar and All Black fly-half Aaron Cruden were unable to dictate the flow of play.

### MISFIRING PIENAAR

Pienaar missed a fourth-minute penalty, but Urdapilleta made no such mistake a couple of minutes later to open the scoring at a packed Stade de France. Montpellier were eventually on target in the 12th minute, Bok centre Frans Steyn booting a three-pointer.

Urdapilleta, capped 10 times by Argentina, restored Castres' lead with his second and third penalties in quick succession in a close first quarter of a physical match. Steyn went wide with a penalty effort from his own half, but Montpellier-with 10 of the starting XV foreigners (6 South Africans, and one each from Australia, Fiji, Georgia and New Zealand) — were made to pay for a further indiscretion as the 32-year-old Urdapilleta booted his fourth penalty. Pienaar pulled one back to make it 12-6, but Castres, with a heroic defence against a

flat-footed Montpellier, delivered a hammer blow just before the break. Boxed into their own 22-metre area, Montpellier botched the line-out with an untidy slapdown that went dead to gift Castres a 5m scrum.

Scrum-half Rory Kockott consequently worked his forwards, Urdapilleta a decoy in the box for a possible drop-goal. But suddenly Kockott moved the ball wide, Combezou straightened before feeding Dumora, who feigned a pass to scythe past a leaden-footed Fulgence Ouedraogo for a try, Urdapilleta hitting the extras.

Montpellier, undoubtedly fired up by a rocket of a half-time talk from Cotter—who previously lost three Top 14 finals with Clermont (and won one), took the game by the scruff of the neck at the start of the second period.

Castres held out as long as they could before first lock Loic Jacquet was yellow carded and then a penalty try was awarded as Montpellier took advantage of their numerical advantage in the subsequent scrum. — AFP

## All Blacks facing test of depth ahead of France opener

WELLINGTON: All Blacks coach Steve Hansen looks likely to face a severe test of his squad's depth for the first test against France next week after a string of injuries over the last few days further denuded his already depleted stocks. The All Blacks were always going to be without captain Kieran Read, who is still recovering from back surgery, but the number eight has been joined on the casualty list by a handful of other first-choice players.

The latest was Brodie Retallick, who suffered a pectoral injury playing for the Waikato Chiefs in Super Rugby on Saturday. Chiefs coach Gavin Cooper told local media yesterday that the injury was serious and Retallick was unlikely to face the French in Auckland.

Stand-in skipper Sam Whitelock, Retallick's second row partner, must also be rated doubtful for the Eden Park contest after missing the Canterbury Crusaders' last three matches because of concussion symptoms. Cooper had marginally better news about All Blacks openside flanker Sam Cane, who, he said, might not have been a late withdrawal from the Chiefs' bench with an abdominal strain on Saturday had the match been a playoff.

Crusaders number eight Jordan Taufua (call) and centre Jack Goodhue (hamstring), both named in Hansen's squad for the France series, were unable to take to the field to face the Chiefs because of injuries.

Another loose forward, Liam Squire, faces an almost certain ban of at least one week after a disciplinary hearing later tonight, where he will face a charge of dangerous play. Among the contenders to replace Read at the back of the scrum, Squire led with his shoulder when clearing out Wellington Hurricanes scrumhalf TJ Perenara while playing for the Otago Highlanders on Friday.

Hansen last week called up Chiefs prop Karl Tu'inukuafe to his squad as cover for Tim Perry (hamstring) and will have been relieved to hear the loosehead was only suffering cramp when he was taken off the field in Hamilton.

First-choice loosehead Joe Moody recently returned from shoulder surgery, while Kane Hames, who won eight caps last year, has not played at all this season as he battles concussion. Goodhue's injury is just the latest to hit Hansen's midfield options after Sonny Bill Williams was ruled out for the series on Friday after undergoing knee surgery. Ryan Crotry, who with Williams forms Hansen's preferred centre partnership, also missed Super Rugby action for the Crusaders on Saturday because of concussion.

The consensus over the last few years is that New Zealand could beat most of their international rivals with a team of reserves such is their strength in depth and the world champions look like they could be in the position of having to prove that against the French next Saturday. —Reuters

## Sports

# Loew fumes as 'sloppy' Germany crash on Neuer's comeback

## 'If we play like that in Russia, then we have no chance'

KLAGENFURT: Joachim Loew slammed "sloppy" Germany as the world champions crashed to a 2-1 defeat by Austria on Manuel Neuer's comeback to leave them winless in their last five games. "If we play like that in Russia, then we have no chance," fumed Germany head coach Loew in Klagenfurt on Saturday.

Less than a fortnight before the World Cup kicks off in Russia, Germany have now suffered back-to-back defeats after also sliding to a 1-0 loss to Brazil in Berlin in March.

The good news from a German perspective is that Bayern Munich goalkeeper Neuer looks set to go to the World Cup, having proved his fitness despite eight months on the sidelines due to injury.

However, when the Germany defence buckled in the second half, Neuer was powerless to stop Martin Hinteregger and Alessandro Schoepf scoring after Mesut Ozil had given the Germans an early lead.

"That was a good comeback from Manuel Neuer after so long out," said Loew. "He made one or two outstanding saves, but the defeat annoys me.

"We didn't put into practice what we had planned. "After the break, we fell into a pattern which I didn't like at all and we were far too sloppy in our game going forward."

However, Loew was keeping calm with one eye on the World Cup.

"There is a lot of work to do, but we won't drive ourselves crazy," he said. "In two weeks, the team will

be very differently prepared and I won't be having sleepless nights."

Loew left out World Cup winners Thomas Mueller, Toni Kroos, Mats Hummels and Jerome Boateng, but the Germans only controlled the rain-delayed game for the first half an hour.

Loew declined to comment when a poll by national broadcaster ZDF showed the majority of German fans would rather see Barcelona goalkeeper Marc-Andre Ter Stegen than Neuer play at the World Cup.

### 'KEEP CALM'

Both Neuer and Ter Stegen are set to fly to Russia. Despite missing 259 days with a fractured foot, Neuer looked sharp but Loew says he will see how his goalkeeper's problematic left foot reacts on Sunday.

This was Austria's first win over their neighbours in nearly 32 years - dating back to October 1986

when Rudi Voeller scored West Germany's only goal in a 4-1 defeat in Vienna. Austria's match-winner still sees Germany as among the favourites to defend their world title in Russia.

"It's always fun to win, but it is especially nice against Germany," said Schalke midfielder Schoepf.

"But they have some quality players and are still one of the favourites for the title. Loew must cut four names on Monday before Germany name their final 23-man World Cup squad and several players have reason to worry.

“They have some quality players”



KLAGENFURT: Austria's Peter Zulj (C) vies with Germany's Niklas Sule (R) during the international friendly football match Austria versus Germany in Klagenfurt, Austria, on Saturday. — AFP

"After the break, we couldn't find a structure that deserved to win against Austria," said Nils Petersen. The Freiburg striker was the top scoring German in the Bundesliga, but is one of the chief candidates to be axed after making his debut for 76 minutes against Austria.

"I'll keep calm and let myself be surprised by whatever happens on Monday," said the ex-Bayern Munich striker. Germany play Saudi Arabia in Leverkusen on Friday in their final warm-up match before facing Mexico in Moscow in their opening World Cup match on June 17. — AFP

## Serena 'betrayed' as Sharapova feud fires up French Open

PARIS: Serena Williams will be fired up to tighten her 14-year grip on Maria Sharapova by a sense of betrayal as the two iconic stars play out the latest chapter of their bitter feud at the French Open today.

Sharapova has not defeated her fellow former world number one since 2004 — a streak of 18 matches—the same year she made her global breakthrough at Wimbledon as a slender teenager prone to fits of giggles.

The 22nd match of their one-sided rivalry will once again be played out against a familiar soundtrack of suspicion and bad blood. Williams, the three-time French Open champion and 23-time major winner, has vented her anger at Sharapova's claims that she had wept after losing the 2004 Wimbledon title match.

The 36-year-old American described references to her as "100 percent hearsay" while other revelations in Sharapova's memoir, 'Unstoppable', she dismissed as "not necessarily true". Williams is particularly angry as Sharapova's claims came just months after the American had hailed her for the manner in which she announced her failed drugs test at the 2016 Australian Open.

"I was one of the few people that said that she was brave to say something," said Williams referring to Sharapova's "drug incident". "I didn't have anything negative to say about Maria."

Sharapova's test for meldonium led to a 15-month ban. Ironically, the Russian's last match before her suspension was against Williams in the quarter-finals in Melbourne. Williams has



(COMBO/FILES) In this combination of file photographs created yesterday, Russia's Maria Sharapova (L) plays a forehand return to Netherland's Richel Hogenkamp during their women's first round match and Serena Williams of the US plays a backhand return to Germany's Julia Goerges during their women's singles third round match. — AFP

monopolised their on-court clashes for the last 14 years so much so that Sharapova has taken just one set in a decade. Despite that, the Russian, with five Slams to her name, still brings in the serious money.

### 'BLACK HEART'

Her net worth was valued at \$285 million by Forbes last year while, according to the Richlist, Williams's financial assets were estimated at \$170 million. Elsewhere, as she rebuilt her reputation, Sharapova featured in a no warts at all Netflix documentary 'The Point'.

Not to be outdone, Serena opened the doors to HBO for a four-part mini-series, 'Being Serena', focussing on her homelife and return to action after the birth of daughter Olympia. As well as vying for commercial and

PR supremacy, the two have fought very public battles over their private lives. On the eve of Wimbledon in 2013, Williams gave an explosive interview to Rolling Stone magazine in which she left nobody in any doubt as to her target.

"She begins every interview with 'I'm so happy. I'm so lucky' - it's so boring," said Williams without namechecking the Russian. "She's still not going to be invited to the cool parties. And, hey, if she wants to be with the guy with a black heart, go for it." The 'black heart' was a not so subtle reference to Bulgarian tennis player Grigor Dimitrov, a rumoured former boyfriend of Williams, who was then dating Sharapova. A few days later, at a Wimbledon news conference, Sharapova aimed a trademark icy riposte. — AFP

first time at this stage of the season. They went 0-2 at home in the 1998 finals against the Detroit Red Wings.

While much is being made about the Capitals playing at home in pursuit of their first Stanley Cup championship, Trotz wants the team to keep to its principles. "I don't think we change at home," he said. "I just think managing the puck is a key for us at home. When we do that, we do it well. We're pretty effective."

Washington goalie Braden Holtby made 21 saves. Holtby faced only 13 shots through two periods. Tomas Nosek scored for Vegas, which has lost two games in a row. Vegas, an expansion team bidding for history, has dropped consecutive playoff games for the first time.

The team's bounce-back ability is one of its strengths, coach Gerard Gallant said. "We've done that all year," Gallant said. Golden Knights goalie Marc-Andre Fleury stopped 23 shots. The Golden Knights played better defensively than earlier in the series, so that was a positive step. Gallant said tightening up the defense was one of the priorities.

"I think we know the way we want to play," Fleury said. "We just have to execute it. I think this group has been through it together." Kuznetsov, the NHL playoff scoring leader, was on the ice after suffering an upper-body injury in Game 2, creating uncer-

tainty about his availability. Kuznetsov has registered 27 points in the postseason, including an assist on Ovechkin's goal.

Capitals defenseman Brooks Orpik also was in the lineup after he needed stitches to repair a finger injury sustained in Game 2. However, he wasn't on the ice late in the game, receiving some treatment for an undisclosed ailment.

Neither team scored in the first period, with a total of 12 shots on goal. While some of the scoring chances might have seemed tame compared to the two games in Las Vegas, there was no shortage of action. The Capitals had an apparent first-period goal nullified because of goalie interference against Smith-Pelly.

Ovechkin's goal came 70 seconds into the second period. It was his 14th goal of the postseason. Kuznetsov scored with 7:10 left in the second period to give the Capitals a 2-0 lead. While one of Vegas' goals was to cut down on the space the Capitals had to work with on the offensive end, that lasted only so long. Washington posted 14 second-period shots.

Nosek scored 3:29 into the third period. That ended Holtby's home-ice streak of more than 103 minutes without yielding a goal. Smith-Pelly's goal eased some tension for the Capitals, coming with 6:07 to play. Jay Beagle picked up his second assist of the game on the scoring sequence. — Reuters

## Southgate ready to protect Sterling

LONDON: Gareth Southgate claims Raheem Sterling justified his decision to protect the troubled England star despite his booking for diving against Nigeria. Southgate kept faith with Sterling after a troubled week for the Manchester City winger and he responded with a mixed performance in Saturday's 2-1 win in the World Cup warm-up at Wembley.

Sterling had been forced to apologise to his England team-mates after turning up to their training camp a day late following a flight mix-up on his way back from a holiday. Adding to Sterling's woes, the 23-year-old endured criticism for unveiling a new tattoo of an M16 assault rifle on his calf that he said was a tribute to his father, who was shot dead when the City star was a child.

Southgate had considered dropping Sterling for the Nigeria clash, but after what the England manager perceived as unfair criticism of the tattoo, he decided it was right to stand by his man. Sterling partially

repaid Southgate's faith with a lively first-half display which included setting up Harry Kane for England's second goal.

But that was overshadowed when he was booked for an embarrassing dive in a failed attempt to win a second-half penalty. Southgate said he hadn't clear seen the incident so he didn't want to publicly reprimand Sterling.

"I've not had a chance to see that back again, it looked a very tight call from where I was sitting. He was travelling at such speed," he said. Asked whether he was relieved to see Sterling give a committed performance following his difficult week, Southgate said: "It wasn't about getting a response, I knew with the form he was in he would play well."

"I had a decision about whether to play him when he turned up late, but once he started coming under fire from all directions it wasn't a difficult decision. "The most important job for me is to protect the players. The lateness was 10 days ago, how long do you go on with something?"

"The situation was one we didn't want to happen and one we don't want to see again. "But I think that was the best way to deal with it. You have to balance the message to the group." A contrite Sterling insisted he had no complaints about Southgate's handling of the incidents. — AFP

## Nigeria must improve before WCup: Mikel

LONDON: Nigeria captain John Obi Mikel admits his side have to improve quickly if they are to make an impact at the World Cup. The Super Eagles lost 2-1 to England in a friendly at Wembley on Saturday. Nigeria were punished for a dismal first half display as goals from Gary Cahill and Harry Kane put England in control.

Arsenal's Alex Iwobi pulled one back for the visitors after the interval, but Nigeria couldn't find an equaliser despite their improved second half performance. Mikel knows Nigeria have to sharpen up in Russia if they get through a tough group featuring Argentina, Iceland and Croatia.

"We are a very young team and we have to learn, it is good for this young team to have a taste of what we are going to face in Russia," Mikel said. "We have to learn together as a team, we have to improve and that is why we played this game against such a quality side."

"We can know where we are and now we go back to training and try and improve." Coach Gernot Rohr agreed

with Mikel's assessment that Nigeria have much to work on. But the Nigeria boss blamed their slow start on fatigue caused by a difficult journey to England and rain that stopped them training the day before the match.

"The first lesson is we are not ready yet. We have to work much more in the two weeks before our first game," the German said. "We missed totally the first half but the preparation wasn't good. "We couldn't train on Friday because of rain, the pitch wasn't good. We arrived after a 10 hour flight, with many stops."

"In the first half our usual formation didn't work. Some of our players weren't fit and England put the pressure on us. "This bad beginning was an opportunity to change and play a bit more like England in the second half. It was much better. "Also we changed four players. Unfortunately we can't change four players if there is a problem in the World Cup."

Meanwhile, former Chelsea midfielder Mikel saw enough from England to feel he can back Gareth Southgate's team as potential World Cup winners. "I think they have a very good chance of going all the way because the youthfulness and energy in this team... you can feel it," he said.

"I think the pace in the team, you can feel it, and that is why we had some problems in the first half. "In the second half we corrected some mistakes and played a lot better. I think the England team have a good chance." — AFP

## Kuznetsov soars as Capitals seize 2-1 series lead

WASHINGTON: Evgeny Kuznetsov was healthy enough to provide a goal and an assist as the Washington Capitals defeated the Vegas Golden Knights 3-1 in Game 3 of the Stanley Cup Final on Saturday night at Capital One Arena in Washington. The Capitals are in good shape, too, as their top players keep producing in the postseason.

Alex Ovechkin and Devante Smith-Pelly also scored for Washington. The Capitals lead the best-of-seven series 2-1. Game 4 is Monday night in Washington. Ovechkin continues to come through with solid production, and it's no surprise that he's maintaining a high level of play during this high-profile time of the season.

"You can tell by the expressions on his face all the time, his emotion," Washington coach Barry Trotz said of his star winger. Saturday night marked the first Stanley Cup Final game in Washington in two decades, with the Capitals winning on home ice for the

**25** Lorenzo wins Italian MotoGP as champion Marquez finishes 16th



**26** Urdapilleta guides Castres past Montpellier to Top 14 title



**27** Loew fumes as 'sloppy' Germany crash on Neuer's comeback



PARIS: Germany's Alexander Zverev returns the ball to Russia's Karen Khachanov during their men's singles fourth round match on day eight of The Roland Garros 2018 French Open tennis tournament in Paris yesterday. — AFP

## Zverev reaches first Grand Slam q-final

### Keys sees off Buzarnescu at French Open

PARIS: German second seed Alexander Zverev claimed his third successive comeback win at the French Open to reach his first Grand Slam quarter-final yesterday, edging Russian Karen Khachanov in five sets.

The 21-year-old played some stunning tennis in the closing stages of a dramatic 4-6, 7-6 (7/4), 2-6, 6-3, 6-3 fourth-round victory and will next face Dominic Thiem who reached a third successive quarter-final in Paris by seeing off Japan's Kei Nishikori 6-2, 6-0, 5-7, 6-4.

World number 38 Khachanov has now lost at the last-16 stage at Roland Garros twice in a row, while Zverev ended his wait for a maiden major last-eight appearance at the 12th attempt. "Well, I'm young, so I might as well stay on court, get some practice and entertain you guys," smiled Zverev, who is bidding to become the first German man to win the French Open since 1937.

"Me and my brother are guys that spend three, four hours a day in the gym, lifting heavy weights, on the treadmill. It paid off today." A tight first set heated up in the 10th game when Zverev saved two set points, the second after becoming incensed when the umpire overturned a line call of out from a Khachanov shot.

But the Russian sealed the set at the third time of asking, leaving the world number three needing a fight-back for the third consecutive match. There was excitement at the end of the second set too as a marathon game saw Zverev fail to serve it out to level the match, firing long on Khachanov's fifth break point after wasting three set points.

But the German gathered himself, taking a tie-break as the momentum swung back in his favour. That proved a false dawn for Zverev, though, as Khachanov eased through the third set with some powerful hitting.

But Zverev, as he did in his wins over Dusan Lajovic and Damir Dzumhur, forced a decider, sealing the set with an ace after saving two break points. And he secured an impressive victory, finishing the match with 63 winners and 17 aces.

Former champion Novak Djokovic faces Fernando Verdasco later in the day, looking to reach the last eight of a Grand Slam for the first time since Wimbledon last year.

American 13th seed Madison Keys reached the quarter-finals for the first time with a 6-1, 6-4 win over Romania's Mihaela Buzarnescu. Keys, the US Open runner-up last year, will face either Czech 26th seed Barbora Strycova or Yulia Putintseva, the 98th-ranked Kazakh, for a place in the semi-finals.

The 23-year-old American has now reached at least the last-eight of all four majors, after ending the dream

run of Buzarnescu, who had never won a Grand Slam match before the tournament.

"First week, my goal is to get to the second week," said Keys. "Then once you get to the second week, every match obviously has more nerves, and there's more on the line and all of that." Later yesterday, Caroline Wozniacki will look to continue her serene progress so far against Russian youngster Daria Kasatkina. But all eyes will be on today's showdown between Serena Williams and Maria Sharapova, with the latter trying to end an 18-match losing streak to her bitter rival. Three-time champion Williams is playing her first Grand Slam tournament since taking time off last year due to pregnancy, while Sharapova is at Roland Garros for the first time in three years after serving a doping ban in 2016 and being refused a wildcard 12 months ago. — AFP

### LeBron vows NBA fightback after 'one of toughest career losses'

OAKLAND: Cleveland's LeBron James, known for bouncing back stronger from playoff losses, promises such heroics in the NBA Finals after what he calls one of the toughest defeats of his career. Defending champion Golden State opened the best-of-seven championship series with a 124-114 over-time home victory Thursday after the Cavaliers led in the final seconds.

Referees reversed a charging foul on Warriors forward Kevin Durant on video review into a blocking foul on James in the final minute of regulation time and Cleveland's J.R. Smith squandered a last shot chance in the fourth quarter apparently unaware the score was level.

"It's one of the toughest losses I've had in my career," James said Saturday. "Because of every-

thing that kind of went on with the game and the way we played.

"It was a tough 24 hours... for our whole ball-club because we put ourselves in a great position to be successful." James scored 51 points, grabbed eight rebounds and passed off eight assists, his scoring total the most in an NBA Finals game since 1993 and the most ever in a losing cause.

But far from demoralized, James said he is re-energized by the chance to level the series before the scene changes to Cleveland next week in the fourth consecutive finals between the two clubs.

"You should feel excited about the opportunity to be better and be great and move forward," James said. "I woke up feeling excited about the opportunity that presents itself tomorrow.

"I expect us to come and play with the same grit we had in game one. And we made a lot of mistakes in game one. I expect us to be better." Improvements after defeats have become a James trademark in the playoffs. Four times after producing fewer than 27 points in a post-season loss this year, James has scored 42 or more in the following contest.

But where do you go from 51 points? "That means he has to score 60 now, right?" Cavs coach Tyrone Lue said of James. "Well, got to score 60

tomorrow then I guess. "After a loss, it's tough. But I think he always comes out and leads by example and sets the tone early. I think, offensively, we need him to do that, especially on this floor with their crowd and the way they play. We need him to set the tone early in all the games."

Stephen Curry, who led the Warriors with 29 points in the opener, says his team will be more aggressive in keeping James from comfortable situations. "We've got to be a little bit more aggressive," Curry said. "It just means doing things a little bit faster, a little bit more physical, and trying to make not just him but everybody else more uncomfortable out there to start the game. I think we can do that." Draymond Green poked James in the right eye during a drive to the basket that the Cavs playmaker says looks worse than it hurts. "There is going to be a little animosity and a little edginess," Curry said. "We're enjoying the competitive environment." A victory today would put the Warriors halfway to their third crown in four seasons, the other denied when Cleveland rallied from 3-1 down in the greatest comeback in NBA Finals history. "They might have been deflated, and they came back and won. So we're expecting another great effort from them," Warriors coach Steve Kerr said. — AFP

### England win second Test

LEEDS: England thrashed Pakistan by an innings and 55 runs to win the second Test at Headingley yesterday. Victory, completed inside three days, saw England level the two-match series at 1-1 after Pakistan won the first Test at Lord's by nine wickets.

It was also England's first victory in a Test match since they beat the West Indies at Lord's in September, with the side having endured a winless run of six defeats in eight Tests coming into this fixture. By sharing the spoils in this short campaign, England avoided a third successive series defeat after reverses in Australia and New Zealand.

Jos Buttler's blistering 80 not out yesterday saw England to a total of 363 and commanding first-innings lead of 189. Pakistan then collapsed to 134, losing their last seven wickets for just 50 runs. Stuart Broad took three for 28 and off-spinner Dominic Bess grabbed his first wickets at Test level in a return of three for 33.

The match ended when England captain Joe Root, on his Yorkshire home ground, held a sharp slip catch to dismiss last man Mohammad Abbas off the bowling of Broad.

**Brief scores:**  
Pakistan 1st Innings 174 (Shadab Khan 56; S Broad 3-38, J Anderson 3-43, C Woakes 3-55).  
England 1st Innings 363 (J Buttler 80 no; Faheem Ashraf 3-60).  
Pakistan 2nd Innings 134 (S Broad 3-28, D Bess 3-33). — AFP