



**2** Amiri envoy delivers letter to Oman's Sultan Qaboos



**16** Real bury PSG, Liverpool sink Porto to reach last 8



# Assembly passes law to accept bedoons in army

MPs to grill minister today • New prison being built to tackle overcrowding

## Zain signs MoU with Huawei to explore solutions

BARCELONA: Zain, a leading telecommunications provider in the Middle East and Africa, vowed to further expand focus on digital transformation and talent development, through signing a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Huawei Technologies. The signing took place during MWC 2018 in Barcelona in the presence of Zain Vice Chairman and Group CEO Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi and Guo Ping, rotating CEO of Huawei.

Under the terms of the agreement, Huawei and Zain will establish a Joint Innovation Team to explore collaboration opportunities in digital transformation. Kharafi commented: "Our goal at Zain Group is to ensure that our clients enjoy a world-class user experience and benefit from the most cutting-edge products and



BARCELONA: Management teams headed by Zain Vice Chairman and Group CEO Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi and Guo Ping, rotating CEO of Huawei, hold a meeting on the sidelines of MWC 2018.

solutions. We believe that our strategic partnership with Huawei will help us continue to deliver outstanding services to our customers and further bolster our transformation to be a leading digital lifestyle operator." (See Page 17)

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: In a tension-packed session that included a verbal exchange between the speaker and an opposition lawmaker, the National Assembly yesterday passed several laws including one allowing the government to accept stateless people or bedoons in the army. MP Askar Al-Enezi, the head of the interior and defense committee, said that over 25,000 bedoons are waiting to join the army. The Assembly also passed amendments to the fund for small and medium enterprises, limiting the soft loan ceiling to just KD 500,000, and also approved a law on regulating conflicts of interests.

The session also agreed to debate a grilling against State Minister for National Assembly Affairs Adel Al-Khorafi today after the minister requested it. The minister is charged of failing to perform his duties and providing MPs with a wrong response to a question.

The session kicked off with a heated exchange between opposi-



KUWAIT: MPs react during a parliament session at the National Assembly yesterday. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

tion MP Shuaib Al-Muwaizri and Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem over a demand by the government to investigate claims made by Muwaizri during a previous session. Muwaizri protested strongly at the position of the speaker, reminding him that lawmakers cannot be held accountable for whatever they say

inside the Assembly chamber and the government request is illegal. He said the speaker should have immediately rejected the demand.

Muwaizri said if such a request is made again, he will immediately grill the prime minister.

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### News in brief

#### Russian plane crash kills 39

MOSCOW: A Russian transport plane crashed on landing at Russia's Hmeimim airbase in Syria, killing all 39 onboard, the defense ministry said in a statement. The ministry said the 33 passengers and six crewmembers were all military personnel. "The reason for the crash according to preliminary information could have been a technical fault," the ministry said, adding that the plane had not come under fire according to a report from the ground. The transporter was around 500 m from the runway, the statement said.— AFP

#### Bibi: Saudis to open airspace

JERUSALEM: Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Saudi Arabia has agreed to allow Air India to use its airspace in flights to and from Israel. But Air India said yesterday that while it had issued such a request, the regulator had yet to give it a positive answer. The new Israel-India route was announced by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his visit to Israel in July. In his January reciprocal visit to India, Netanyahu implied the route could pass over Saudi Arabia, which beyond significantly shortening flight time would be a public indication of a warming of ties with Israel.— AFP

#### Blockade impact on Qatar fading

DUBAI: The economic and financial impact on Qatar of a nine-month Saudi-led blockade is fading, but some risks for the emirate remain, the International Monetary Fund has said. In a report released late Monday, the IMF said the effect of the blockade on economic activity in Qatar had been "transitory" as new trade routes were quickly established and growth remained positive. Foreign financing and resident private sector deposits had fallen by \$40 billion but that had been offset by cash injections by the central bank and the sovereign wealth fund.— AFP

#### 'No dancing' at Saudi concert

RIYADH: A "No dancing or swaying" instruction on tickets to Egyptian pop sensation Tamer Hosny's upcoming concert in Saudi Arabia has triggered an avalanche of mockery and ridicule on social media. Thousands of fans were taken by surprise when tickets for Hosny's first-ever Saudi concert in the western city of Jeddah on March 30 came with the edict that dancing was "strictly prohibited". "Ladies and gentlemen, please fasten your seatbelts," one Twitter user said. Another tweeted: "No dancing or swaying in a concert! It's like putting ice under the sun and asking it not to melt."— AFP

## Only article 20 visa ban for Bangladeshis

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: A new ban on the recruitment of Bangladeshi nationals will only affect article 20 visa workers (domestic helpers) and not article 18 (private sector) workers, according to Abdullatif Khan, Councilor and Labor Attache at the Bangladeshi Embassy. "We were informed today (Tuesday) that the visa ban that was imposed due to a number of problematic cases involving our nationals will be temporary. Bangladeshis and probably Kuwaitis are involved in visa trading, so until corrective measures are implemented, recruitment will be temporarily suspended," Khan told Kuwait Times in an exclusive interview.

According to Khan, there are around 200,000

## UK warns Russia over spy's illness, may skip WCup

SALISBURY, England: Britain warned Russia yesterday of a robust response if the Kremlin was behind a mysterious illness that has struck down a former double agent convicted of betraying dozens of spies to British intelligence. Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson named Sergei Skripal, once a colonel in Russia's GRU military intelligence service, and his daughter Yulia as the two people who were found unconscious on Sunday on a bench outside a shopping center in southern England.

Skripal, 66, and his 33-year-old daughter were exposed to what police

said was an unknown substance in the city of Salisbury. Both are still critically ill in intensive care, police said. "We don't know exactly what has taken place in Salisbury, but if it's as bad as it looks, it is another crime in the litany of crimes that we can lay at Russia's door," Johnson told the British parliament. "It is clear that Russia, I'm afraid, is now in many respects a malign and disruptive force, and the UK is in the lead across the world in trying to counteract that activity."

Prime Minister Theresa May was briefed at a meeting of the National Security Council on the investigation into the incident, her spokesman said without elaborating. If Moscow were shown to be behind Skripal's illness, Johnson said, it would be difficult to see how UK representation could go to the World Cup in Russia in a normal way. A government source said that meant attendance

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## Saudi women will drive but face bumpy road

KHOBAR, Saudi Arabia: Mervat Bukhari, a force of nature draped head-to-toe in the Islamic niqab, braved insults and taunts to become the first Saudi woman to work at a gas station, something unimaginable not long ago. The kingdom, where conservatives once bridled at even limited freedoms for women, is in the midst of reforms that mark the biggest cultural shake-up in its modern history.

Kickstarted by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the reforms include the historic decision allowing

women to drive from June, attend football games and take on jobs that once fell outside the narrow confines of traditional gender roles. But the backlash faced by women like Bukhari illustrates how newfound empowerment is a potential social lightning rod in a country unaccustomed to such visibility for women.

When Bukhari, 43 and a mother of four, was promoted as supervisor of a gas station in eastern Khobar city last October, insults began pouring in on social media

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MOSCOW: Former Russian military intelligence colonel Sergei Skripal attends a hearing at the Moscow District Military Court in this Aug 9, 2016 file photo. — AFP



KHOBAR, Saudi Arabia: A picture taken on Feb 20, 2018 shows Saudi gas station supervisor Mervat Bukhari talking to a worker at her workplace. — AFP

# Amir receives Competition Protection Authority members

His Highness sponsors army officers' graduation ceremony today



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with President of the Competition Protection Authority Dr Rashed Shabib Al-Ajmi and board members. — KUNA



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with President of the Financial Supervisory Authority Abdulaziz Dakhil Al-Dakhil.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace yesterday Minister of Trade and Industry and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Khaled Nasser Al-Roudhan, accompanied by Dr Rashed Shabib Al-Ajmi, President of the Competition Protection Authority, and board members. The meeting was attended by Amiri Diwan Affairs Minister Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah.

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah also received His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad, President of the Financial Supervisory Authority Abdulaziz Dakhil Al-Dakhil, and KUNA Board Chairman and Director General Sheikh Mubarak Al-Duaij Al-Ibrahim Al-Sabah.

In other news, His Highness the Amir, the Commander of the Armed Forces, is set to attend today the Kuwait Army's annual graduation ceremony for the 21st officers and for 45th cadet officers. The event takes place under the patronage of His Highness the Amir at the Military College.

Separately, His Highness the Amir's envoy, Deputy Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah visits Oman's opera house.



Deputy Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah visits Oman's opera house.

Mubarak Al-Sabah delivered a letter to Sultan Qaboos Bin Saeed of Sultanate of Oman from His Highness the Amir. In his letter, His Highness the Amir thanked

Qaboos bin Saeed and the Omani people for their support and participation with the recently held Kuwait national celebrations. Later yesterday, Sheikh Mohammad Al-



Khaled Al-Bousaidi, Minister of the Omani Sultan Court (right) receives a letter sent by His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to Sultan Qaboos Bin Saeed of Oman, delivered by the Amir's Envoy Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah.

Abdullah visited the Royal Opera House in Muscat. Minister Sheikh Mohammad, who was accompanied by Hussein bin Ali bin Abdulatif, Advisor at Sultan's court, toured

the opera house halls. He was then honored with a luncheon held by Khaled Al-Bousaidi, Minister of the Omani Sultan Court. — KUNA

## KIPCO, KFAS partner for Sharakah Forum

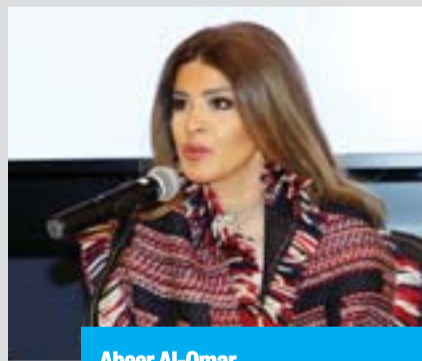
By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: Kuwait Projects Company (KIPCO) and Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Science (KFAS) announced their strategic partnership for the KIPCO Sharakah Forum 2018 for the second consecutive year at a press conference held yesterday at KIPCO Tower. The KIPCO Sharakah Forum is an annual platform developed by KIPCO to bring together the most important leaders from the private, public and civic sectors in Kuwait to promote cross-sector partnerships and collaboration in the fields of social responsibility and social impact.

This year's forum will be held from March 11 to 15, 2018 under the patronage of Minister of Social Affairs and Labor and the Minister of Economic Affairs Hind Al-Sabeeh and Minister of Commerce and Industry and State Minister for Youth Affairs Khaled Al-Roudhan, both of whom will participate in the activities of the forum.

Two workshops will be held on the opening day (March 11), in which officials from the public, private and non-profit sectors will participate. These include KIPCO's Vice-Chairman (Executive) Faisal Al-Ayyar, Deputy General Manager for Scientific Affairs at KFAS Dr Salem Al-Hajraf, Vice Chairman and CEO of Qurain Petrochemical Industries Company Saadoun Ali and others.

Vice Chairman and CEO of Kuwait Hotels Companies (KHC) Fawzi Al-Musallam said hosting this forum for the second day is the least they can provide to NGOs that are engaged in voluntary works in the community and to improve social life in general. "As KHC is a member of KIPCO Group, it joins the efforts by the parent company in cooperation with its other subsidiary companies. There are over 300 representatives from various sectors and particularly the nonprofit



Abeer Al-Omar

sector, who have confirmed their attendance in the Sharakah Forum," he pointed out. Group Corporate Social Responsibility Manager at KIPCO Abeer Al-Omar noted that the Sharakah Forum is based on the previous efforts of KIPCO to gather the main leaders of social responsibility and sustainable development in Kuwait. "We aim to increase the standards and impact through increased collaboration between various sectors, and last year's Sharakah Forum is the best example. We are proud that we are pioneers in this field," she said.

The one-day forum will be followed by three days of workshops for non-profit organizations and entrepreneurs who are interested in the financial sustainability of their organizations. "These workshops will be presented by local and international experts in social responsibility and sustainability. They will include data, personal experiences, social participation in open places, technological tools of social cooperation and others. These workshops aim to strengthen the role of local nonprofit organizations and to empower them. The high participation by big companies in Kuwait proves that these companies understand the needs of local NGOs. We look forward to a successful forum," added Omar.

Director of Innovation and Enterprise Development Directorate at KFAS Dr Bassam Al-Feeli spoke about the role of KFAS in building and improving human resources in the community. "We encourage and promote science and knowledge in all fields in building a knowledge-based economy. KFAS invests in national initiatives and many development projects," he stated.

## Sheikh Mubarak journalism award honors winners

KUWAIT: The Higher Committee of Sheikh Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah Award for Journalistic Excellence has concluded the 10th session of the prominent prize with a grand ceremony at Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Cultural Centre where winners were honored.

Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah attended the ceremony on behalf of its sponsor His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad A-Sabah. Minister of Information Mohammad Al-Jabri accompanied him to the event.

Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled addressed the gathering held late Monday, thanking His Highness the Premier for patronizing the Award saying they are very proud of late Sheikh Mubarak Al-Hamad who "instilled in us the culture of giving as a translation of love to the nation."

He voiced pleasure with the growth and expansion the Award realized over the past ten years, lauding the decision to allow youth winners further training overseas. He also praised the Award's Higher Committee for their hard efforts and the variety of prizes.

Meanwhile, KUNA Board Chairman and Director General Sheikh Mubarak Al-Duaij Al-Ibrahim Al-Sabah highly appreciated His Highness the Premier for patronizing the Award, which has become a landmark on the Kuwaiti media scene. He also thanked minister Al-Jabri for his support to the Kuwaiti media to excel on the regional and international levels.

Sheikh Mubarak Al-Duaij congratulated the winners, and wished them further success and creativity in the future. He extended congratulations to the Award's officials on its 10th anniversary, saying KUNA has had the honor to embracing the prize since its first session. Cooperation with the Award will carry on to discover, and encourage efficiencies in the field, and to push the media higher amid the atmosphere of freedom and democracy in dear Kuwait, KUNA chief stressed.

Sheikh Mubarak Al-Duaij prayed to Allah Almighty to preserve Kuwait an "oasis of security, safety and stability" under His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-



KUWAIT: Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah (center left) honors Chairman of the Arab and International Relations Council (AIRC), Mohammed Jassim Al-Saqr (center right) during the ceremony. — KUNA

Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad A-Sabah.

The ceremony is held amid Kuwait's celebrations of 57th National Day, the 27th Liberation Day and the 12th anniversary of the assumption of office by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, said head of the Award's Higher Committee Ayman Al-Ali.

The Award has a decade of professional journalistic achievements, he said. Over the past ten years, the Award has been keen on being a beacon of fruitful competition for promising and talented Kuwaitis, Ali said.

In line with directives of the Award's sponsor, youth Sinners will have more training abroad in cooperation with leading Arab and foreign agencies, he revealed. Al-Ali, on behalf of the Higher Committee, thanked His Highness the Prime Minister for sponsoring the award, as well as Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled for supporting the ceremony and attending it. Thanks were also extended to KUNA Board Chairman and Director General Sheikh Mubarak Al-Duaij Al-Ibrahim Al-Sabah who "has hosted the award for years at the agency."

Chairman of the Arab and International Relations Council (AIRC), Mohammed Jassim

Al-Saqr, a former Kuwaiti MP, a politician and award-winning journalist, was honored by the ceremony. Saqr thanked the Award officials, and patron, saying it has contributed remarkably to promoting professional journalism in Kuwait over the past decade. KUNA's Baraka Al-Jassar, winner of the third prize, reports category (general), commended the Award's officials for their support to journalists, offering them a chance to unleash their talents and creativity. The fact that the Award has completed ten years demonstrates success and distinction, Jassar said.

Nasser Al-Khamri, winner of the second prize in interview category, from Al-Jarida daily, said the Award prompted an atmosphere of fair competition among young journalists and media men. This is the second time Khamri wins in the contest. Second winner in the Tamer Abdulaziz reports category (general), from Al-Jarida, stressed the objective criteria of judging participants, thanking the Higher Committee for good organization of the ceremony. KUNA's Ghazi Al-Qaffaf, who won second prize in photographing (general), expressed deep pleasure since it was his first time to join the competition, one of the strongest in Kuwait. Mahmoud Bushehri, also from KUNA, won the third prize in the interview for youth category. He said it encourages youth to work harder and lavish more effort. — KUNA

Local

# Expat govt employees need double clearance for private sector visa

## Health ministry to 'limit' hiring of non-Kuwaitis

By A Saleh

**KUWAIT:** A public sector employee is required to obtain permission from the state department where he is employed in addition to 'security approval' from the Interior Ministry before he or she can transfer to work in the private sector, according to a new condition announced yesterday. The new directive issued by the Public Authority for Manpower yesterday stipulates new conditions for workers under article 17 visas wishing to transfer to article 18 visas, who in that case would need to receive clearance from their employer as well as the Interior Ministry, the authority's spokesperson and public relations director Aseel Al-Mazyad said yesterday.



### Environmental violations down by 86%

#### Environmental violations down

According to recent statistics issued by the Environment Public Authority (EPA), the total number of environmental violations dropped by over 86 percent. Statistics also showed that 178 environmental violations were cited in 2017 compared to over 1,300 in 2016. The statistics reviewed during a semi-

annual titled 'Students and Environment Protection Law' organized for public school students explained that smoking in public areas dropped from 1,073 cases in 2016 to only 150 in 2017. The statistics also showed that littering violations dropped from 144 to only 21, engineering and environmental violations dropped from 133 to only five and violations concerning obtaining licenses prior to any construction project, even expansions, dropped from 47 to only two. EPA credited the drop to awareness campaigns it launched over the past two years.

#### Hospital projects

Health Minister Sheikh Dr Basel Al-Sabah said the official opening date of Jaber Hospital will be determined as soon as it is handed over by the Ministry of Public Works (MPW) after it is furnished and equipped. He added that the hospital includes a specialized 65-clinic center and a nurse dormitory. Responding to a parliamentary inquiry filed by MP Salah Khorsheed, Sheikh Basel stressed that the Ministry of Health (MoH) is currently assessing the manpower needed in various medical fields and technicians according to the bed capacity of each of its hospitals. He stressed that hiring non-Kuwaitis will be limited to certain specialties that cannot be

filled by Kuwaitis.

Sheikh Basel noted that the new Amiri Hospital is expected to open on May 28 and the Kuwait Cancer Center will open on May 24. The minister added that the infectious diseases hospital's demolition and reconstruction project was supposed to start on March 16, but the contractor requested extending the period until Nov 24. Sheikh Basel also pointed out that the new Farwaniya Hospital project is scheduled to conclude on Dec 26, 2019 and the new Adan Hospital project on Jan 27, 2020. Finally, he said that the new Jahra Hospital project is still being reviewed at the Amiri Diwan.

#### Co-op jobs

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor (MSAL) has started the approval process for Kuwaitis who have applied to work in various co-operative societies, assistant undersecretary for cooperative affairs Abdul Aziz Shuaib said, noting that a special committee will be formed to set the needed conditions and qualifications for various positions, including leading ones. Shuaib added that efforts are being exerted to Kuwaitize all jobs in various co-ops and stressed that the pace of replacement will be accelerated after forming special teams to resolve any problems.

## Welsh police open probe in Kuwaiti student's death

By A Saleh

**KUWAIT:** A 23-year-old Kuwaiti master's student was killed in a car accident in Cardiff, Wales. The Wales Online said British police have opened an

investigation and urged eyewitnesses to testify. The site said Souldan Al-Shammari died when his silver Corvette collided with a blue Ford Focus and a black Mercedes C220 travelling in the opposite direction on Newport Road's Rummy Hill at around 4:50 pm on Feb 27. A 23-year-old woman, who was a passenger, remains in a critical but stable condition at the University Hospital of Wales in Cardiff. Nobody else was injured. In a statement published by Wales Online, Shammari's family said: "Souldan had come from Kuwait to study a master's degree in law at Cardiff University. He is one of seven brothers all who live in Kuwait. Souldan was passionate in his studies and will be sorely missed by all his family."

## Social affairs ministry sacks absent staff

**KUWAIT:** Dozens of Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor (MSAL) employees were terminated and their salaries were cut for being absent from work on multiple occasions without legal or medical justification. Some employees were absent following sick leave or leave of absence, while others wanted to work in other places and left before getting approvals, according to sources with knowledge of the situation. One source was quoted in a report saying that administrative decisions were taken to terminate a significant number of employees for not reporting to work. About the legal status of the terminated employees, the source said some of them applied to return to work, adding that their applications are being discussed.

#### Couple hurt

A Kuwaiti couple suffered smoke inhalation in their Sabhaiya apartment after faulty wiring caused a fire. Firemen and paramedics responded to a call and found the couple inside the burning apartment, who were rescued and rushed to Adan Hospital. The fire, which completely destroyed the apartment, was put out.

#### Messy breakup

Salwa police station investigator summoned an Arab man over allegations by a Kuwaiti woman who said that he planned to marry her, but later changed his mind. The man said he asked the woman to stay away from

him but she was refusing to do so, adding that he knows that she frequents sorcerers to make him marry her. He said the building's haris (janitor) told him there was a bouquet of flowers on his car, then when he looked closely, he found witchcraft items and burned material. When asked how he knew it was the woman who placed it on the car, he said he was sure about it.

#### Drug dealer caught

Jahra detectives arrested a man with possession of three bags containing shabu and more than 400 psychoactive pills. The suspect targeted adolescents and students, and was known to them as 'The King'. Detectives received tips about an Egyptian man who provided drugs to teenagers in exchange of money or valuables, to a point where the addicts began stealing items. The suspect reportedly had drug pills at the time of his arrest. He later confessed that he has been selling drugs for a long time, particularly shabu and pills. Police were surprised when they arrived at his luxurious apartment, where they found the drugs and large amounts of money. He said the drugs trade took him out of poverty and he was spending money lavishly. He was sent to the DCGD.

#### Driving under the influence

A woman driving while being under the influence of drugs collided with a wall, while a man who was with her fled. The woman had joints laced with the drug 'chemical' - the street name for a drug made from 'Spice' (methamphetamine) mixed with added chemicals. She was placed under arrest and sent to the Drugs Control General Department (DCGD). — Translated by Kuwait Times from the Arabic press

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**KUWAIT:** Director General of Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFSD) Lieutenant General Khaled Al-Mikrad received yesterday Assistant Director General for Manpower and Logistic Back Up in Jordan Brigadier Mohammad Al-Malaaba and his delegation, who are participating in the 5th International Fire and Safety Conference and Exhibition in Kuwait. —By Hanan Al-Saadoun

## Local

# Zain main sponsor of 5th Int'l Conference of Family Medicine in the Middle East

## As part of strategy to contribute to healthcare development

**KUWAIT:** Zain, the leading telecommunications company in Kuwait, announced its sponsorship of the 5th International Conference of Family Medicine in the Middle East (WONCA), which was held from 1-3 March 2018 at Jumeirah Hotel under the patronage of the Minister of Health Sheikh Dr Basel Al-Sabah and the attendance of the Secretary General of the Kuwait Institute of Medical Specialties (KIMS) Dr Ibrahim Hadi.

Zain took part in the opening ceremony, which witnessed the presence of Chairman of the Higher Committee of the Conference, Dr Huda Al-Duwaisan, as well as a number of local and international specialists, and experts in the fields of family medicine. Zain's support to the conference came as part of the company's Corporate Sustainability and Social Responsibility strategy towards the contribution of the development of the Kuwaiti healthcare sector.

The conference aimed at discussing and researching the latest medical advancements in the fields of family medicine, and discussed the need to apply the principles of family medicine with the highest quality, and to transfer and develop traditional clinics to ideal family clinics. The event stressed the importance of introducing the family medicine program within the curricula of medical students

at Kuwait University in an intensive manner. Zain's support to this conference is an extension of a series of partnerships the company is continuously adopting to serve its strategic and sustainable goals, ultimately contributing to the wellbeing and health of the community. Zain's contribution falls under the company's Corporate Sustainability and Social Responsibility strategy and shows its keenness in having a productive role in social and health activities.

### Under the health minister's patronage

Hospital, Dasman Diabetes Institute, and other leading health institutions for several awareness campaigns related to the health sector.

It is worth mentioning that WONCA is a non-profit organization founded in 1972 by member organizations in 18 countries, and now has 118 members in 131 countries and territories with membership of around 500,000 family doctors, and more than 90 percent of the world's population.

Zain's solid Corporate Sustainability and Social Responsibility strategy primarily focus on the wellbeing of the entire nation. For that reason, the company has maintained its support to all kinds of initiatives that spread awareness and help make a difference. Zain partners with the Ministry of Health, Central Blood Bank of Kuwait, Al-Salam



**KUWAIT:** Zain is honored during the conference.

## Alghanim Industries hosts Al-Bayan Bilingual School students

**KUWAIT:** On 27 and 28 February 2018, Alghanim Industries, one of the largest privately owned companies in the region, hosted Al-Bayan Bilingual School (BBS) students at the company headquarters in Al-Hamra Tower, as part of their Introduction to Business class. During their visit, the CEO of Alghanim Industries, Omar K Alghanim made welcoming remarks.

The students were presented with an overview of the company, its history, its diverse businesses and its robust Corporate Social Responsibility programs. This was followed by detailed depictions of some of the inner workings and roles that exist across Alghanim Industries, by employees hailing from various departments and businesses. The students learned about Alghanim Engineering, the leading engineering service provider in the region, Costa Coffee, London's favorite coffee shop chain and part of Alghanim Industries Food and Beverage portfolio, and Business Development and Mergers and Acquisitions.

Dubbed "employees of Alghanim Industries" for the day, the students were then taken on a comprehensive tour of the state-of-the-art headquarters, beginning from the 70th to the 73rd floor. Alghanim Industries' headquarters features an entirely open office floor plan, designed to encourage collaboration, teamwork, transparency and innovation.

Welcoming the students, CEO of Alghanim Industries, Omar K Alghanim, said: "We are excited to host one of the most impressive academic institutions in Kuwait. You represent the next generation of leaders and entrepreneurs. The future is very much in

your hands. But the challenges you will face are greater than those of past generations."

He went on to say, "The past 10 years saw greater change than the last 100, and the next 10 years will produce an even bigger change. We live in a fast-changing world and you have to be ready, and willing to work. As a business leader, I hear a lot of great ideas for new businesses from young people. Some really inspiring ideas - but inspiring ideas on their own aren't enough. Success is one percent inspiration and 99 percent perspiration. The future of Kuwait is in your hands and it's in your power to make sure our future is bright and prosperous."

Speaking about the visit, Instructor at Al-Bayan Bilingual School, Fatima Kamali, said: "This real life experience our business class students were exposed to during their visit to Alghanim Industries was one of the best entrepreneurial learning experiences our soon to be future leaders encountered this year. We are grateful to Mr. Omar Alghanim and Alghanim Industries for hosting more than 70 students and making this a memorable event. I have always said to my students, in the words of Julius Caesar, 'experience is the best teacher of all things'."

The visit concluded with lunch and specially, Kuwait-themed, drinks for the students offered by Costa Coffee, part of Alghanim Industries' Food and Beverage portfolio. More employees were present to engage with the students, and a photo booth studio was installed, giving students the chance to capture memorable group pictures of their visit.

These initiatives come as part of Alghanim Industries' Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) program, which is committed to empowering the underprivileged, supporting education and encouraging entrepreneurship. It is also worth noting, the company previously held an information session for merit scholar students studying in the United States to learn about the history of the company and its diverse businesses. The company is also one of the largest supporters for INJAZ-Kuwait, as it encourages its employees to volunteer regularly in INJAZ's different programs.



**KUWAIT:** Omar Alghanim speaks to the students.



**Students pose for a group photo while taking a tour in Al-Hamra offices.**

## Gulf Bank sponsors Women TechMakers Kuwait convention

**KUWAIT:** Gulf Bank is pleased to announce its sponsorship of the International Women's Day Convention and Hackathon, organized by Women TechMakers Kuwait (WTM) and Arab Women in Computing (ArabWIC). The convention and Hackathon, scheduled to go on for one day on International Women's Day tomorrow and will be held in Hall W6 at the Gulf University for Science and Technology in West Mishref. The event will target the advancement of women in technology in Kuwait and includes

engineers, computer scientists, graphic designers, mathematicians to entrepreneurs, where participants can find a chance to network, learn and grow. The convention has two discussion panels happening in parallel with a 12-hour Hackathon for social good.

The panels will highlight Kuwaiti women in the technology sector, as well as provide tips on how to cultivate a conducive ecosystem for tech startups in Kuwait. WTM Kuwait and ArabWIC Kuwait will also be hosting a 'Hackathon for social good' code competition where teams will develop innovative technical solutions that will benefit social good in Kuwait in accessibility for persons with disabilities, domestic violence awareness, and startups and government procedures. The event is for everyone interested in tech and elevating women's status in computing in Kuwait.

Laila Al-Qatami, Assistant General Manager for Corporate Communications at Gulf Bank, said: "Gulf Bank's corporate social responsibility program is committed to sponsoring local events which make an impact for the community. Women's empowerment is a key strategic initiative and this initiative goes a long way towards empowering women in the science, technology, engineering and math disciplines to showcase their talent and creativity and learn from like-minded individuals to cultivate their entrepreneurial spirit and technological know-how."

Gulf Bank is strongly committed to giving back to Kuwait through its corporate social responsibility program. The Bank supports numerous events focusing on youth, education, health and fitness, helping the underprivileged, women's empowerment, as well as promoting Kuwait's heritage and culture.

## KFH-Bahrain sponsors GCC Financial Forum

**MANAMA:** Kuwait Finance House - Bahrain (KFH-Bahrain), one of the leading Islamic Banks in the Kingdom and an integral contributor to the evolution of Bahrain's Islamic Financial sector, has sponsored the 7th GCC Financial Forum hosted at the Four Seasons Hotel Bahrain Bay, on the 20th and 21st of February 2018.

Co-hosted by Bahrain Economic Development Board, this industry-leading conference brought together eminent speakers and C-level financial professionals, economists, policy makers, investors, regulators, and bankers from the regional and international financial communities, who converged to discuss and debate trends, challenges, future outlooks and opportunities facing the financial sector.

The 2018 Forum, themed 'Innovation and the Future of Financial Services', has been tailored to explore how the merging of Fintech and innovation, such as blockchain, Artificial Intelligence, and big data are driving a fundamental re-structuring of the financial services industry.

Abdulhakeem Al-Khayyat, the Managing Director and CEO at KFH-Bahrain commented: "We are happy to be one of the sponsors of the 7th Annual GCC Financial Forum 2018 which has been running successfully for seven consecutive years and has positioned itself as one of the most significant gatherings of financial leaders and experts in the region. The event has an established reputation as a fundamental platform for information and knowledge exchange, and is considered a key driver of the evolution of the financial sector."

"As one of the leading financial institutions in Bahrain, we see it as our duty to support such events and we look forward to benefiting from the market insights and viewpoints shared by a host of regional and international experts," further commented Khayyat.

The event boasts a list of high caliber speakers including Lord Mervyn King,



**MANAMA:** Abdulhakeem Al-Khayyat, the Managing Director and CEO at KFH-Bahrain, visits KFH-Bahrain's booth at the forum.

form for information and knowledge exchange, and is considered a key driver of the evolution of the financial sector."

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The event boasts a list of high caliber speakers including Lord Mervyn King,

Economist and Former Governor of the Bank of England and Mohamed El-Erian, Chief Economic Advisor at Allianz who will be joined by experts from Bahrain, including Shaikh Ahmed bin Mohammed Al-Khalifa, Minister of Finance; Zayed Alzayani, Minister of Industry, Commerce and Tourism; Rasheed Mohammed Al-Maraj, Governor of the Central Bank of Bahrain, and Khalid Al-Rumaihi, Chief Executive of the Bahrain Economic Development Board.

## ABK celebrates National and Liberation Days

**KUWAIT:** Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) celebrated National and Liberation Days with its staff members on February 22, 2018, marking the start

of national celebrations. All employees at the Head Office and across all branches were presented with the Kuwait flag and themed pins upon arrival, and enjoyed a morning full of food, refreshments, giveaways, music and Arabic coffee throughout the day, while the headquarters were lit in national colors ahead of the celebrations.

This year ABK also presented their staff with two competitions. The first one was the decorating of ABK branches by creating an ambience in the branch that aligns with the community the

branch is in and the second was 'ABK's Little Artists', a drawing competition for the children of ABK employees where the drawing had to reflect National and Liberation Day with the ABK brand incorporated. The brand could either be the logo or an ABK building. ABK is committed to Kuwait and the community and by celebrating the countries national holidays with its people, it reaffirms the sense of national spirit amongst its employees and the communities in which it operates.



**KUWAIT:** ABK staff celebrate the National and Liberation Days.

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: First lieutenant Sarah al-Sarraf (right) and Officer Al-Jazy Abdul Quddus, female members of the Kuwaiti National Assembly guards, pose for a picture outside the entrance of the National Assembly in Kuwait City yesterday. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

# UNHCR highlights concerns of women in refugee camps

## Kuwait contributed \$343 million in response to Syrian crisis

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), in collaboration with Bleems, a platform for flower, confectionary and sweets in the GCC, launched an advocacy campaign highlighting the concerns of women in refugee camps on the occasion of Mother's Day. "We are happy to support this campaign in support of many refugee women around the world," said Dr Hanan Hamdan, Head of the UNCHR office in Kuwait. She said the need to highlight concerns of female refugees is necessary so that people understand the conditions of women in such sorry circumstances.

"Mothers are the prime reasons why many children are surviving harsh conditions such as war. Displacement is a terrible situation for many families in war-torn areas in the MENA region, not to mention Syria and camps in neighboring countries. Women are taking a bigger role, so we should be grateful for all their sacrifices," she noted.

"Bleems is here to support us in the awareness campaign to shed light on these issues and raise people's awareness on the plight of individuals in their struggles and the severe humanitarian situations they are facing, especially refugees and internally displaced people in the region," Hamdan said.

According to Hamdan, the UNCHR office in Kuwait has initiated several collaborative projects with key government counterparts, as His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Sabah has been globally recognized as a humanitarian leader. "Kuwait provided through UNCHR a generous contribution of \$343 million in response to the Syrian crisis," she said. Hamdan added that with the partnership with Bleems, they will be able to highlight a new perspective that is full of innovative entrepreneurial elements as the world celebrates Women's Day on March 8 and Mother's Day on March 21.

"Our collaborative effort is only on the awareness side - we are happy that as the largest supplier of flowers and confectionaries in the Middle East, we have a



KUWAIT: Dr Hanan Hamdan, Head of the UNCHR office in Kuwait (left) and Sulaiman Al-Tarrah, Co-Founder and CEO of Bleems attend a press conference in Kuwait yesterday. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

responsibility to share some of our expertise. The way to thank our customers is to give back - it is part of our social responsibility. We are committed to CSR and the way to pay forward is to make this program possible through UNCHR," said Sulaiman Y Al-Tarrah, Co-Founder and CEO of Bleems. "The celebration of

Mother's Day is the least that we can do to recognize and appreciate mothers for their tremendous role in this crisis we see in Syria. We cannot just 'wait and see' without sharing anything. We need to care and act so they can be assured that there are people around that care," he added.



### On the occasion of Mother's Day

## Naqeeb among most influential Arab women

KUWAIT: Arabian Business magazine has announced their annual most 50 influential Arab women among which was Attorney Faten Al-Naqeeb the founder and managing partner of a well reputed law firm in Kuwait with local and international practice and the Al-Naqeeb international company for contracting.

Naqeeb expressed her gratitude, and advised that such recognition is without a doubt is an honorable one that gives her

pride. This global recognition for Arab women in general and a Kuwaiti Attorney in particular is a pride and honor, she said.

Naqeeb was recognized as one of top influential women due to her involvement in many cases locally and internationally, as well as her recently published book entitled 'The Legal Guide to Doing Business in Kuwait' which was found to be very useful to many organizations and esteemed institutions locally and internationally. She was also recognized for her constant contribution and efforts to women empowerment.



Attorney Faten Al-Naqeeb

## EPA celebrates Wildlife Day

KUWAIT: The world witnesses a sharp decline in biodiversity due to the misuse of vital resources, Chairman of the Environment Public Authority (EPA) Sheikh Abdullah Ahmad Al-Hmoud Al-Sabah said. "The misuse of these resources has led to the extinction of many plant and animal organisms at higher than normal rates," EPA chief said in a speech yesterday during the celebration of World Wildlife Day.

He added that by celebrating this occasion, EPA shows Kuwait's commitment to the efforts meant to raise the awareness of the individuals and the communities about the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora

(CITES) and its applications. He explained that CITES is a multilateral treaty to protect endangered plants and animals; its aim is to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival. He said that the celebration of World Wildlife Day this year was under the slogan 'Big Cats'. However, it was agreed with the General Secretariat of the CITES agreement on choosing the slogan 'Falcons and Illegal Trade' for Kuwait to suit its needs and combat this phenomenon.

He pointed out that in recent years there has been a significant and continuous decline in the number of falcons, therefore, all types of falcons were included in the CITES Convention for conservation and protection. He stressed that Kuwait has an important geographical location as an important stopover for migratory birds during their seasonal perilous journey.

Meanwhile, Director of Biodiversity Conservation Department Abdullah Al-Zaidan said in a similar speech that Kuwait chose the falcon's slogan in this year's celebration due to the importance of this organism at the local, regional and international levels. He stressed the necessity of countering illegal trade of wild animals, especially falcons, adding that protecting the wildlife is the duty of all. The civil society organizations would carry on with efforts to combat desertification and curb encroachments on the environment, as well as assessing the environmental conditions, he noted.

In the meantime, head of the wildlife department in EPA Sharifa Al-Salem, talked about the terms of CITES agreement, and Illegal trade of endangered species of falcons, stressing that Kuwait has adopted the international laws and principles on the environment protection. — KUNA



A hard sell? Saudi Crown Prince goes West to woo allies

## Sri Lanka declares emergency to quell anti-Muslim riots



**GAMICHLI:** Members of the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) attend the funeral of Kurdish fighters from the Syrian Democratic Forces that were killed in combat against Islamic State (IS) group in Deir Ezzor. — AFP

# Russia, US air strikes 'caused mass deaths'

## Islamic State, insurgent groups accused of war crimes

**GENEVA:** Air strikes by Russia and a US-led coalition killed civilians in Syria on a large scale last year, while the Assad government carried out unlawful chemical weapon attacks in rebel-held eastern Ghouta, UN war crimes investigators said yesterday. Islamic State fighters and other insurgent groups committed war crimes including deadly attacks on civilians and using them as human shields, the investigators said in their latest report covering six months through January 15.

During the period, "victims of the Syrian conflict have suffered greatly as violence countrywide re-escalated to new heights," the UN Commission of Inquiry said. "(Syrian) government forces continued to use chemical weapons against armed group fighters in eastern Ghouta," it said in its report. Among other key findings, it said that an air strike by a "Russian fixed-wing aircraft" using unguided weapons last November hit a market killing at least 84 people in Atareb, west of Aleppo, in a "de-escalation zone" declared by Russia, Iran and Turkey.

It found no evidence that the Russian strike had deliberately targeted the market, but said "this attack may amount to the war crime of launching indiscriminate attacks resulting in death and injury to civilians", the first time it has explicitly implicated Moscow in possible war crimes. And three US-led coalition strikes on a school near Raqqa in March 2017 killed 150 residents - roughly five times the toll acknowledged by the

Pentagon, which said at the time that dozens of militants and not civilians were killed.

The UN investigators found no evidence that Islamic State fighters were at the site, and said the US-led coalition had violated international law by failing in its duty to protect civilians. The independent investigators called on all sides to allow access to besieged areas and all detainees. Justice must be served in any peace deal ending the conflict soon entering its eighth year, they said.

The report is based on 500 confidential interviews conducted with victims and witnesses abroad or in Syria via social media. The Assad government has never let the team into the country. "Vital civilian infrastructure has been decimated by repeated attacks on medical facilities, schools and markets. Humanitarian aid has been instrumentalised as a weapon of war with siege warfare and denial of life-giving assistance used to compel civilian communities and parties to the conflict alike to surrender or starve," it said.

Syrian government forces used chemical weapons against insurgents in eastern Ghouta, including chlorine three times in July, and in Harasta on the western edge of the zone in November, the report said. "The use of chemical weapons is prohibited under customary international humanitarian law regardless of the presence of a valid military target, including when used against enemy fighters," it said. The Syrian government has denied using chemical weapons, saying it surrendered its stockpiles after signing the global ban in 2013.

providing air and ground support for its allies in the Syrian government.

The UN investigators, noting that efforts for the UN Security Council to refer Syria to the International Criminal Court (ICC) have stalled, due to Russian vetoes, welcomed national jurisdictions taking up more cases. Victims must be helped to obtain justice, which should be a "central component" of any negotiated settlement ending the war, they said. There must be "no pardons or amnesties for those responsible for ordering or carrying out gross human rights violations and committing international crimes such as war crimes, crimes against humanity or genocide".

Re-examining a US-led coalition air strike on a school sheltering displaced people in Al-Badiya, Raqqa in March 2017, when the area was controlled by Islamic State forces, they found after extensive interviews with survivors and rescuers that "of more than 200 residents in the school, 150 were killed". "Information gathered by the Commission does not support the claim that 30 ISIL fighters were in the school at the time of the strike, nor that the school was otherwise being used by ISIL," it said. "The international coalition should have known the nature of the target and failed to take all feasible precautions to avoid or minimize incidental loss of civilian life, injury to civilians and damage to civilian objects, in violation of international humanitarian law." — Reuters



### UN war crimes Investigators' latest report

#### No pardons or amnesties

The multi-sided Syrian civil war has

killed hundreds of thousands of people and driven at least 11 million from their homes. Neighboring countries and global powers have entered the conflict, backing allied forces on the ground. The United States joined the war in 2014, leading an international coalition carrying out air strikes against Islamic State fighters in both Syria and Iraq, who were largely defeated last year. Russia joined the conflict in 2015,

## Italian left mulls Five Star deal to end the deadlock

**ROME:** Senior members of Italy's vanquished Democratic Party yesterday were defying outgoing leader Matteo Renzi and eyeing a possible deal with the triumphant Five Star Movement after an election that ended in deadlock. Anti-establishment Five Star Movement (M5S) leader Luigi Di Maio declared his party "the winners" after obtaining nearly 33 percent of the vote, but they need to form alliances in parliament if they are to govern.

Renzi ruled out the prospect as he announced his resignation on Monday, following disaster at the polls that saw his party's centre-left coalition slump to third place with 23 percent of the vote. "During the campaign, we said we would not do a government with extremists. We have not changed our mind," Renzi said, adding that the Democratic Party (PD) would "not be a crutch for anti-system forces". Political expert Giovanni Orsina said Renzi's departure meant "a convergence between the PD and the M5S is

much more probable because Renzi was an obstacle to this."

But Renzi yesterday said he would only step down once a new government is formed, and would act as a "guarantor" that his party made no compromise with what he called the "wind of extremism" that swept Italy in Sunday's election. However other leading voices in his party disagree and he now faces pressure to bring forward his resignation. Michele Emiliano, governor of the Puglia region and a leading PD member said his party could offer "external support" to a M5S government. In an interview with Il Fatto Quotidiano daily, Emiliano berated Renzi for not stepping down immediately. "In order to cling on, he is willing to stall the political system," Emiliano said.

#### Euro 'failed currency'

With almost all ballots counted, the main right-wing alliance was in the lead with 37 percent, followed by the M5S and the centre-left alliance led by the PD. The vote has drawn comparisons with the Brexit referendum in Britain and the election of US President Donald Trump because of the anti-immigration and anti-establishment rhetoric, raising concern in European capitals about instability. Far-right leader Matteo Salvini of the League party, the biggest grouping in the right-wing coalition after Sunday's election, has claimed his right to govern. — AFP

## Wedding party truck overturns in India; 30 dead

**AHMEDABAD:** A truck carrying a wedding party plunged off a bridge in western India yesterday and killed at least 30 people, mostly women and children, officials said. Police in Gujarat state said the accident happened after the truck driver tried to overtake a van but lost control of the vehicle, plunging eight meters (26 feet) into a dry riverbed.

Images from the scene showed bloodied passengers being assisted by bystanders as the dead were covered in sheets.

Many passengers were trapped under the vehicle that overturned after it crashed through the bridge railing and nosedived into the ground. AM Sayyed, local deputy superintendent of police, said the initial death toll rose after five passengers died from their injuries in hospital.

Nearly 60 people were travelling in the open truck and most victims were women and children, local police officer KJ Kadapda told AFP. Many of the injured were in critical condition and officials fear the death toll could rise further. The accident happened in Bhavnagar district about 200 kilometres (125 miles) from the state capital Ahmedabad. Authorities have announced financial aid of 400,000 rupees (\$6,148) to the family of each of the deceased. India has some of the world's deadliest roads. More than 150,000 people are killed each year with most accidents blamed on poor roads, badly maintained vehicles and reckless driving. — AFP



**BHAVNAGAR:** Onlookers gather around the bodies of passengers who had been travelling in a truck that plunged off a bridge in Bhavnagar district, about 200km from Ahmedabad in India's western Gujarat state yesterday. — AFP

## International

# Sri Lanka declares emergency to quell anti-Muslim riots, violence

## Two people dead; homes set ablaze

**COLOMBO:** Sri Lanka yesterday declared a nationwide state of emergency after riots targeting Muslims left at least two people dead and homes ablaze in a hill station popular with tourists. The government said it was imposing the extraordinary measures after police failed to curb violence in Kandy, a central district famed for its tea plantations and Buddhist relics. Heavily-armed police commandos were deployed to restore order in Kandy after rioters defied an overnight curfew and went on the rampage. "The government is taking all possible measures to protect the people, especially Muslims," Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe told parliament.

He said an inquiry had also been opened into security lapses by police that allowed mobs of Sinhalese rioters to burn mosques as well as homes and businesses belonging to Muslims. The body of a 24-year-old Muslim man was pulled out of a burnt home yesterday. Police said two dozen people had been arrested in the wake of the riots. The emergency measures, imposed for the first time since 2011, give authorities sweeping powers to arrest and detain suspects for long periods, and deploy forces where needed. President Maithripala Sirisena said the measures would "redress the unsatisfactory security situation prevailing in certain parts of the country".

"The police and armed forces have been suitably empowered to deal with criminal elements in the society and urgently restore normalcy," he said. City planning minister Rauff Hakeem described the riots as a "monumental

security lapse" and recommended disciplinary action against those responsible for allowing the situation to deteriorate. Sri Lanka's parliament yesterday issued an apology to its Muslim minority, which constitutes 10 percent of the country's population of 21 million. The violence in Kandy, a serene region of verdant hills frequented by tourists and pilgrims, has threatened to reignite communal tensions that have roiled Sri Lanka in recent weeks.

### War-era measures

The emergency declaration was made after a special cabinet meeting with President Sirisena. It is the first time in seven years Sri Lanka has resorted to such a measure. The island nation was under a state of emergency for nearly three decades as government forces battled Tamil rebels in a civil war that ended in 2009. Riots

## Body of a Muslim man pulled out of a burnt home

erupted on Monday after a man from the island's mainly Buddhist Sinhalese majority died at the hands of a Muslim mob last week. Hakeem said the riots were concentrated in Kandy, but the government wanted to send a strong message following recent outbreaks of communal violence elsewhere in the country.

Mobs set fire to Muslim-owned businesses and attacked a mosque in the east of the country last week after a Muslim chef was accused of adding contraceptives to food sold to Sinhalese customers. The government dismissed the allegation as baseless and ordered the arrest of those fomenting unrest in the area. Last November



**KANDY:** Sri Lankan police commandos patrol next to debris of from a damaged shop in the central district of Kandy yesterday, after a state of emergency was declared.—AFP

riots in the south of the island left one man dead and homes and vehicles damaged. In June 2014 riots between Buddhists and Muslims left four dead and many injured.

That bout of violence was instigated by a Buddhist extremist group whose leaders are on trial, accused of spurring religious conflict.—AFP

## DR Congo survivors recount nightmare of ethnic massacre

**BUNIA:** The assailants were methodical. They came in waves. First came the ones who killed. Then came the ones who torched homes. And finally, the ones who looted anything of value. Ahead of them, terrorized villagers fled for their lives—the latest victims of the ethnic conflict that bedevils Ituri, the troubled northeastern province of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The bloodshed is part of a cycle of violence between the Hema and Lendu communities, cattle herders and farmers who have long fought over land—a conflict that has recently intensified as DR Congo struggles over its future. At least 49 people were killed last week, bringing the death toll since mid-December to more than 100, while 200,000 people have fled their homes, according to estimates by humanitarian workers. Many of them are women, frequently targeted for sexual assault, and children. "The attackers were organised in three groups," said Françoise Malosi, 54, recalling an attack on the Lendu village of Blukwa early last month. "The first line was young men, armed with machetes, spears and arrows, and they were the ones who cut people's throats," she said at the Bigo medical centre in Bunia. "After them was a group which set fire to people's homes, and after that, there was a group which stole cattle and things of value," she said. "We fled into the bush, and spent three days sheltering there."

### Flight into danger

Doctors without Borders (MSF) last week said that in the previous month, around 40,000 people had fled across Lake Albert to neighboring Uganda and 20,000 to Bunia, the capital of Ituri. The Bigo medical centre is struggling with the human influx. Nurse Baseke Kazimoto said the facility has treated 1,900 displaced people since February 9, including 450 pregnant women, 20 of whom have given birth. At Lake Albert, the misery is complete. People fleeing the violence are crossing by canoe—a trip that takes between six and 10 hours and is filled with danger. Some have drowned, witnesses say.



**BUNIA, DR Congo:** Internally Displaced Congolese people rest inside a Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) Camp in Bunia.—AFP

Those arriving gather at Sebarogo in Hoima district, where about 1,000 people have fallen sick with cholera, causing 30 deaths, MSF said last Wednesday. In Bunia, most of those displaced are living with host families. About 2,000 are holed up in tents around the regional hospital—six toilets and four showers are currently available for them, and more are being built. There, a woman with five children, who had lost her husband, tried to build a shelter. "I came from a village called Che, where attackers burned all our homes. We walked for three days—we have been sleeping outdoors, exposed to the mosquitoes, the rain and cold."

### Children at risk

Aid workers are deeply worried about food—some children are clearly malnourished. "Every day, we need on average 500 kilograms of rice, 300 kilos of beans and 40 litres (10.5 US gallons) of oil to provide just one hot meal per person," said Pastor Ignace Bingi, a coordinator with a local NGO, Lasi. Dirty children, barefoot and clad in dusty

raggs, wander around the camp. Many have lost their parents or been separated from their families. Lasi puts the figure at around 100. The UN children's agency Unicef on February 23 said it had identified 70 unaccompanied children and 245 children who had been separated from their parents and who "need urgent help" at the hospital site.

Hema and Lendu groups have a long history of low-level violence over land disputes. But in the late 1990s and early 2000s their fight became a broader, more brutal battle stoked by Rwanda and Uganda, which were eager to seize gold, diamond and timber along with influence as part of a wider war that played out inside DR Congo's borders. The latest flare up is part of a patchwork of unrest in the vast country suffering from growing insecurity and political tension. New conflicts are erupting and old ones are reviving as President Joseph Kabila seeks to maintain his grip on power two years after the legal end of his second term. Presidential elections, twice postponed, are now scheduled to take place on December 23.—AFP

## Uncertain future for 'Dreamer' immigrants as deadline passes

**WASHINGTON:** US President Donald Trump claimed Monday he was "ready to make a deal" protecting hundreds of thousands of immigrants brought to the country illegally as children, as lawmakers missed an initial deadline for resolving their fate. The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program that shields nearly 700,000 of the so-called Dreamers from deportation was supposed to expire on March 5, six months after Trump announced he was ending it.

But a US District Court judge issued a nationwide injunction that requires the government to allow recipients to renew their permits to live and work in the country, and the US Supreme Court declined to accept the administration's request to intervene. Both those developments have taken the pressure off lawmakers. With Dreamers and advocates stressing that the immigrants remain in legal limbo—weeks after the White House and Congress failed spectacularly to address their fate—Trump insisted he was ready to negotiate a solution. "It's March 5th and the Democrats are nowhere to be found on DACA. Gave them 6 months, they

just don't care," Trump said on Twitter. "Where are they? We are ready to make a deal!" With courts unlikely to rule definitively on immigration before summer, and the case expected to head to the Supreme Court after that, Congress is not expected to act before the mid-term elections in November. Immigration advocates have used the unmet deadline as an inflection point to pressure Congress and the White House. "March 5 is the deadline Trump gave the Congress to act and they haven't done anything," Bruna Boubid, a 26-year-old student and Dreamer from Tampa, told AFP as she and others marched on the Washington Mall to the US Capitol. "We are here to make sure they don't forget about us."

Hundreds of activists and Dreamers descended on Washington to press lawmakers into action. Many in a crowd of chanting protesters blocked traffic near the Capitol, while others demonstrated inside congressional office buildings. Some 87 arrests were made, US Capitol Police reported. Immigration-related demonstrations took place in several other cities, including New York. "Stop playing with our lives!" said Lizbeth Huitzil, a young Mexican woman protesting in front of Trump Tower.

Lawmakers had every opportunity to legislate a fix, but the fate of the Dreamers has proved too divisive for Congress to resolve. Last month, Democrats forced a brief government shutdown over the issue, demanding that the Senate's Republican leaders set aside time to debate immigra-



**NEW YORK:** Venezuelan dreamer Francis Madl (center), from the New York Immigration Coalition and other immigrants and pro-immigration advocates protest in front of Trump Tower in New York to ask Congress to pass a clean Dream Act that legalizes immigrants in the United States.—AFP

tion. They agreed, but despite a week of floor debate last month, the Senate failed to pass any of a series of proposals addressing the situation of the Dreamers, and House Speaker Paul Ryan has not brought a legislative solution to the floor for a vote.

### 'Cruel and reckless'

Among the Senate bills that failed to advance was a Trump-backed plan that would provide a pathway to citizenship for 1.8 million Dreamers—the nearly 700,000 DACA registrants, plus 1.1 million who were eligible but did not register—in exchange for

extra border security funding and dramatic curtailment of legal immigration.

Several congressional Democrats and immigration advocates have warned that despite the court injunction, DACA recipients remain in legal uncertainty thanks to a crisis they say is of Trump's making. "Without a permanent solution, Trump's cruel and reckless decision will tear more families apart, shatter communities, drive immigrants into the shadows, and make us all less safe as a result," Democratic National Committee chairman Tom Perez said in a statement.—AFP

## News in brief

### School burns phones

**DHAKA:** A hardline Islamic school in Bangladesh said yesterday it had confiscated hundreds of mobile phones and torched them in a bonfire because they were distracting students from their learning. Pupils at the seminary in southeast Bangladesh were ordered to hand over their cellphones Sunday to school administrators who then tossed the devices en masse into a fire in a nearby field. "These devices are ruining their character," said Azizul Hoque, a spokesman for the Darul Ulum Moinul Islam madrassa, or Islamic seminary. "The students use internet (on their phones) throughout the night and then doze during classes the next morning. Their parents are concerned." Hoque said the seminary—a 123-year-old institution with 14,000 registered students—was not against technology "but the negative results of mobile phones far outweigh its positives"—AFP

### Thieves steal \$5 million

**SAO PAULO:** A group of thieves stole \$5 million in cash, which had been due to travel from Brazil to Switzerland aboard a Lufthansa jet, at a large freight airport near Sao Paulo, police said yesterday. The spectacular heist, which took place late Sunday, was completed in a matter of minutes, and authorities have yet to arrest a suspect. The crooks entered Viracopos International Airport's freight terminal using a pickup on which they had "placed stickers mimicking the runway security company's logo," federal police said in a statement. Germany-based Lufthansa's plane had been traveling from Guarulhos airport in Sao Paulo and was making a stop at Viracopos—Brazil's biggest freight terminal—with Zurich as its final destination. The stolen money had been held under the auspices of secure transport provider Brinks, according to the Folha de Sao Paulo newspaper.—AFP

### Child marriages

**NEW DELHI:** A significant drop in Indian girls being forced into marriage has led a global decline in the number of child brides, the United Nations said yesterday. According to UN children's agency UNICEF, 25 million child marriages have been prevented around the world in the last decade, with the sharpest drop in India and the rest of South Asia where girls as young as eight have reportedly been forced to wed. "South Asia has witnessed the largest decline in child marriage worldwide in the last 10 years... in large part due to progress in India", it said. "In the current trend, 27 percent of girls - nearly 1.5 million girls - get married before they turn 18 in India. This is a sharp decline from 47 per cent a decade ago."—AFP

### 16 killed in Nigeria

**MAKURDI:** At least 16 people, mostly women and children, were killed in clashes between youths and cattle herders in central Nigeria, police said yesterday. Monday's violence in the village of Omutu, in the Okpokwu area of Benue state, is the latest flare-up linked to tensions over land and grazing rights in the restive region. State police spokesman Moses Yamu said in a statement that a meeting had been called to calm anger after a herdsman was killed on Monday and another went missing. "Unfortunately as the search and peace meeting were going on some herdsman surreptitiously went on (a) rampage, resulting in the mcheting to death of 15 persons, mainly women and children," he said. Yamu said some houses were set on fire during the violence and four people were arrested.—AFP

## International

# A hard sell? Saudi Arabia Crown Prince goes West to woo allies

## London offers rare audience with the queen

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia's crown prince wants to persuade his British and US allies that "shock" reforms have made his country a better place to invest and a more tolerant society on his first foreign tour as heir apparent. But it could be a tough sell. Prince Mohammed bin Salman, who starts talks in London today, has won Western plaudits for seeking to reduce Saudi Arabia's reliance on oil, tackle chronic corruption and transform the deeply conservative, mainly Sunni Muslim kingdom. But the severity and secrecy of an anti-corruption crackdown last November, after Prince Mohammed ousted an older cousin as crown prince in a palace coup last June, has unnerved some investors.

Though London and New York are rivals to host the partial public listing of state oil firm Saudi Aramco, the enthusiasm of some Western business leaders—even for such an important contract—has been sapped by concerns about human rights and a lack of limitations on executive power in Saudi Arabia.

"Investors are intrigued by MbS's (Prince Mohammed's) reform projects, and there will be a huge amount of interest in hearing his views, but uncertainty lingers," said Jane Kinninmont, a Middle East expert at Chatham House think tank.

Rachel Reeves, head of an influential business committee in British parliament, warned against risking London's reputation as a finance centre by watering down corporate governance rules to secure the Aramco listing. This, she said, could "ultimately dam-

age our attractiveness to foreign investment." Prince Mohammed has defended last November's crackdown, in which dozens of top business leaders and princes were detained, as necessary to combat "the cancer of corruption". Most detainees have now been released, and the authorities say they have arranged to seize more than \$100 billion in assets.

### Audience with Queen

The ambitious young prince, just 32, is sure to repeat his message at talks in Britain with Prime Minister Theresa May and when he meets President Donald Trump during a visit to the United States starting on March 19. He will also have a rare audience with Queen Elizabeth and dinner with Prince Charles, the heir to the throne in Britain, after arriving from Egypt.

Any visit to the London Stock Exchange—and later the New York Stock Exchange—will be watched closely by investors because of the potentially lucrative

Aramco listing expected later this year. Talks with faith leaders in Britain including the Archbishop of Canterbury, the senior bishop and principal leader of the Church of England, offer Prince Mohammed an opportunity to project a more tolerant image of Saudi Arabia, sources close to the trip told Reuters.

Under the reforms closely associated with the crown prince, social restrictions have been loosened, such as bans on cinemas and women driving. He has promised to promote a more moderate form of Islam.



ISMAILIA, Egypt: Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi (right) and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman receive flowers as they visit the Suez Canal on Monday. — AFP

Business deals are possible with British defense group BAE Systems and European weapons maker MBDA, and initial agreements could be concluded on gas exploration, petrochemicals and industry, according to British and Saudi sources. They gave no details of the potential deals. Foreign minister Boris Johnson lauded security ties with "one of Britain's oldest friends in the region" in a newspaper article last week and praised Prince Mohammed's reforms.

But rights groups and opposition lawmakers have criticized London's support for the prince, particularly

over the licensing of 4.6 billion pounds (\$6.37 billion) worth of arms sales to Saudi Arabia since the start of the Yemen conflict. Anti-war and human rights groups plan a protest outside May's Downing Street office today. "Theresa May should use this visit to announce the UK will no longer supply arms to Saudi Arabia while the devastating Saudi-led bombing of Yemen continues and make clear Britain's strong opposition to widespread human and civil rights abuses in Saudi Arabia," opposition Labour party leader Jeremy Corbyn said. — Reuters



## US, Britain hope to win Aramco public offering

Aramco listing expected later this year. Talks with faith leaders in Britain including the Archbishop of Canterbury, the senior bishop and principal leader of the Church of England, offer Prince Mohammed an opportunity to project a more tolerant image of Saudi Arabia, sources close to the trip told Reuters.

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## Toxic tales and political poisonings

LONDON: Since ancient times, poisoning has been a favored method of bumping off political adversaries, with historians still debating if Cleopatra, Napoleon and Alexander the Great were assassinated this way. The list of people who have fallen victim to a toxin could now have grown with the hospitalization in Britain of a former Russian double agent after suspected exposure to "an unknown substance". The methods, toxin of choice and final result vary widely but here are five high-profile poisonings or attempted poisonings:

### Bulgarian with a broly

In 1978, at the height of the Cold War, Bulgarian dissident Georgi Markov was waiting for a bus home after a shift at the BBC World Service. He felt a sharp jab in his thigh and turned to see a man picking up an umbrella. Three days later, Markov was dead, killed by what many believe to have been a poisoned dart filled with ricin and fired from the broly. A post-mortem examination established he had been killed by a tiny pellet containing a 0.2-milligram dose of ricin. Ricin is 6,000 times more powerful than cyanide and a speck no bigger than a grain of salt is enough for fatal results. The case has never been solved.

### VX in KL

A more recent poisoning but one no less brazen or worthy of a Cold War thriller was the broad-daylight assassination with a nerve agent of North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un's half brother. Kim Jong-Nam was attacked at Kuala Lumpur International Airport by two women, who were captured on CCTV shoving something into his face. He suffered a seizure and was dead before he even reached hospital. An autopsy revealed traces of VX—a fast-acting toxin that sparks respiratory collapse and heart failure—on the dead man's face and in his eyes. Tiny amounts of the poison are enough to kill an adult, whether it is inhaled or absorbed through the skin.

### 'Toxic tea for three'

On November 1, 2006, former Russian secret agent Alexander Litvinenko met two Russian contacts for tea at a top London hotel to discuss possible future business opportunities. The 43-year-old fell ill immediately afterwards and was found to have drunk tea laced with Polonium-210—a rare and expensive radioactive isotope produced in Russia. He died after three agonizing weeks and was eventually buried in north London in a lead-lined coffin to prevent radiation leakage. A British inquiry found that Russian President Vladimir Putin had "probably approved" the ex-spy's murder, a finding dismissed by Moscow as a "joke." Litvinenko's killing caused widespread public outrage in Britain after radioactive traces were found at various sites around London, with media dubbing it the world's first act of "nuclear terrorism."

### Disfiguring dioxin

Viktor Yushchenko would go on to be president of Ukraine but in September 2004, he was engaged in a bruising election campaign battle against pro-Moscow candidate Viktor Yanukovich when he fell seriously ill. Months of tests in an Austrian clinic determined that he had ingested a massive amount of dioxin, with the doctor who treated him saying the levels in his body were 1,000 times higher than normal. Although he survived, Yushchenko's face was left bloated and pockmarked, and he had to undergo regular treatment in Switzerland to flush the toxin from his body. He later claimed that he believed the dioxin had come from a Russian factory.

### Palestinian poisoned

Posing as Canadian tourists, agents from Israeli secret service Mossad targeted Khaled Meshal, then head of the Hamas political bureau, by injecting a mysterious poison into his ear on a street in Jordan's capital Amman. As Meshal slipped into a coma, Jordanian police captured two of the attackers and a furious King Hussein demanded that Israel hand over an antidote if it wanted its agents back. A red-faced Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu eventually provided the antidote and also released Hamas spiritual leader Sheikh Ahmad Yassin from an Israeli prison. — AFP

## North and South Korea to hold historic summit

SEOUL: The leaders of North and South Korea will hold a historic summit in the Demilitarized Zone next month after Pyongyang offered to give up its nuclear weapons in exchange for security guarantees, Seoul said yesterday. The North is subject to multiple rounds of UN Security Council sanctions over its atomic and ballistic missile programs, and has long insisted that its "treasured sword" is not up for negotiation.

But it is willing to halt the program if its national security—and that of its leadership—is guaranteed, the South's national security adviser Chung Eui-yong told a briefing after returning from the North where he met leader Kim Jong Un. That remains a high threshold—Pyongyang has considered itself at risk of invasion by the United States since the Korean War ended in a ceasefire in 1953, leaving the two sides technically still at war. But, Chung said, Kim is willing to discuss denuclearization in talks with Washington—which could be the crucial concession needed to enable a dialogue to happen.

The US has long insisted that Pyongyang take concrete steps towards denuclearization as a precondition. Yesterday's developments are the latest steps in a rapid Olympics-driven rapprochement on the peninsula, and come after a year of high tensions during which Pyongyang carried out its most powerful nuclear test to date, along with multiple missile launches, including rockets capable of reaching the US mainland.

## South Korea presidential hopeful quits after rape accusation

SEOUL: A former South Korean presidential contender stepped down as a provincial governor and announced his retirement from politics yesterday in a stunning political fall after a female aide accused him of multiple rapes. Ahn Hee-jung—who came second to current President Moon Jae-in in the contest for the Democratic Party's presidential nomination last year—is the most prominent figure to face abuse allegations during a swirling #MeToo movement in what is still a male-dominated society.

Kim Ji-eun, who was Ahn's personal assistant before becoming an aide in civil affairs, told a television interviewer on Monday that Ahn had raped her four times since she was hired in June. One of the violations took place in Geneva, Kim told JTBC, where Ahn was attending a UN Human Rights Council panel discussion in September. The last straw

came when Ahn called her into his office on the night of February 25 and apologized for having hurt her, talking about the country's #MeToo movement, Kim said.

"And then he raped me again," she said, holding back tears. She also accused Ahn of sexually assaulting others. "He always told me not to express my thoughts or opinion and to live like a shadow behind him... I couldn't say no to him because I knew how much power he had," Kim said. Following the TV interview, the ruling Democratic Party held an emergency meeting and expelled Ahn with immediate effect. Hours later the 52-year-old announced his resignation as governor of South Chungcheong province and his retirement from public life.

"I apologize to everyone, especially to Miss Kim Ji-eun," Ahn said in a Facebook post. "I ask for forgiveness for my stupid action... it was all my fault," he said. It was an astonishing turnaround for Ahn, who enjoyed huge popularity among young liberal voters thanks to his wholesome image and good looks, which helped him earn the nickname "South Chungcheong's EXO"—after a K-pop boy band. Ahn was relatively young in the South's ageing political scene, and likened by many to former US President Barack Obama during his bid for the presidential nomination. — AFP



PYONGYANG: North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un (right) shakes hands with South Korean chief delegate Chung Eui-yong after their meeting in Pyongyang. — AFP

Kim and US President Donald Trump traded personal insults and threats of war, sending fears of conflict spiraling.

But the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics in the South triggered an apparent transformation, with Kim sending his sister to the opening ceremony and sparking a flurry of cross-border trips as South Korean president Moon Jae-in tries to broker talks between Pyongyang and Washington. North and South agreed to hold a summit in late April in Panmunjom, the truce village in the DMZ, Chung said after leading the most senior delegation to travel North for more than a decade.

It will be the third meeting between the leaders of North and South, after summits in Pyongyang in 2000 and 2007. The North "made clear that there is no reason to own nuclear (weapons) if

military threats towards the North are cleared and the safety of its regime is guaranteed", Chung said. Pyongyang "expressed willingness to have frank dialogue with the US to discuss the denuclearization issue and to normalize North-US relations" he added, and said there would be no provocations such as nuclear or ballistic missile tests while dialogue was under way.

"Also, the North promised not to use atomic weapons or conventional weapons towards the South," he told reporters, adding that Seoul and Pyongyang would set up a hotline between the leaders. Six party talks, grouping the two Koreas, Russia, China, Japan and the US, and offering the North security and economic benefits in exchange for denuclearization, broke down almost a decade ago. — AFP

## China's economic planner sure of 6.5% annual growth

BEIJING: China's economic planner yesterday expressed confidence in achieving the 6.5 percent annual growth target as domestic consumption is expected to become a stronger force driving economic development. The 6.5 percent growth target set in this year's government work report is "attainable" through hard works, said He Lifeng, head of the National Development and Reform Commission, citing China's economic momentum, resilience, sustainability and market potential. With further development in emerging industries and modern services, consumption is likely to contribute around 60 percent to economic growth in 2018. He told a press conference on the sidelines of the ongoing annual session of the 13th National People's Congress, China's top legislature. In 2017, consumption contributed 58.8 percent to growth, nearly four percentage points higher than five years ago.

Investment will contribute one third to this year's growth as China will also push forward investment, especially on the real economy, he said. For foreign trade, he said it will grow steadily and support 8 to 9 percent of economic growth as long as the world economy keeps a stable growth. Through efforts like hosting the first China International Import Expo this year, China is determined to open wider to the world and increase consumption of its fast-growing middle-income group, he said. He also expected further progress in the supply-side structural reform on basis of sound achievements in tasks like capacity reduction. Industries including plate glass, cement and electrolytic aluminum will be target of the country's next stage of capacity cuts. The country's economy expanded 6.9 percent year on year in 2017, picking up for the first time in seven years and well above the government target of around 6.5 percent. (Article provided by the Embassy of China)



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## Analysis

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## Trump's trade tariffs: Long on rhetoric, short on impact?

From Bush-era steel duties to the European Union's "bra wars" skirmish with China, global trade wars have often threatened but never quite gotten off the ground and President Donald Trump's planned steel and aluminum tariffs will likely play out the same way. The steel tariffs were ruled illegal by the World Trade Organization in 2003 and the 2005 spat over Chinese brassiere exports, dubbed a "storm in a D-Cup" by Britain's media, was resolved in emergency talks between Brussels and Beijing. That is a pattern that could be repeated now, economists say.

While Trump has talked tough on trade since taking office in January 2017, he has little to show so far from his aggressive rhetoric. He abandoned on his first day in office a 14-nation Pacific trade pact that stood no chance of passing Congress. Six months of talks to redraft the North American Free Trade Agreement have so far come to nothing despite frequent tweets that Trump would pull the trigger on the deal with Canada and Mexico that the president has dubbed a jobs killer.

That leaves steel and aluminum tariffs, quotas and levies on washing machines and duties on solar cells - small areas of the overall US economy and its trade. Investment bank Morgan Stanley calculates that taken together, steel, aluminum, washing machines and solar panels account for just 4.1 percent of US imports. In terms of global trade, they are just 0.6 percent, the bank said. Trump himself has gone from saying that "trade wars are good, and easy to win" on Friday, to a more soothing "I don't think you are going to have a trade war" by Monday.

Prospects of a global trade war hit financial markets hard last week, although by Monday, stock markets had recovered their poise. "We don't think that the most severe scenario, (a) protectionist push becomes the most likely one," Morgan Stanley strategists Michael Zezas and Meredith Pickett said in a research note. So far, reaction has been muted, with the European Union saying it will target politically sensitive goods in response. Those include Harley Davidson motorcycles, made in Wisconsin, the home state of Republican House of Representatives Speaker Paul Ryan.

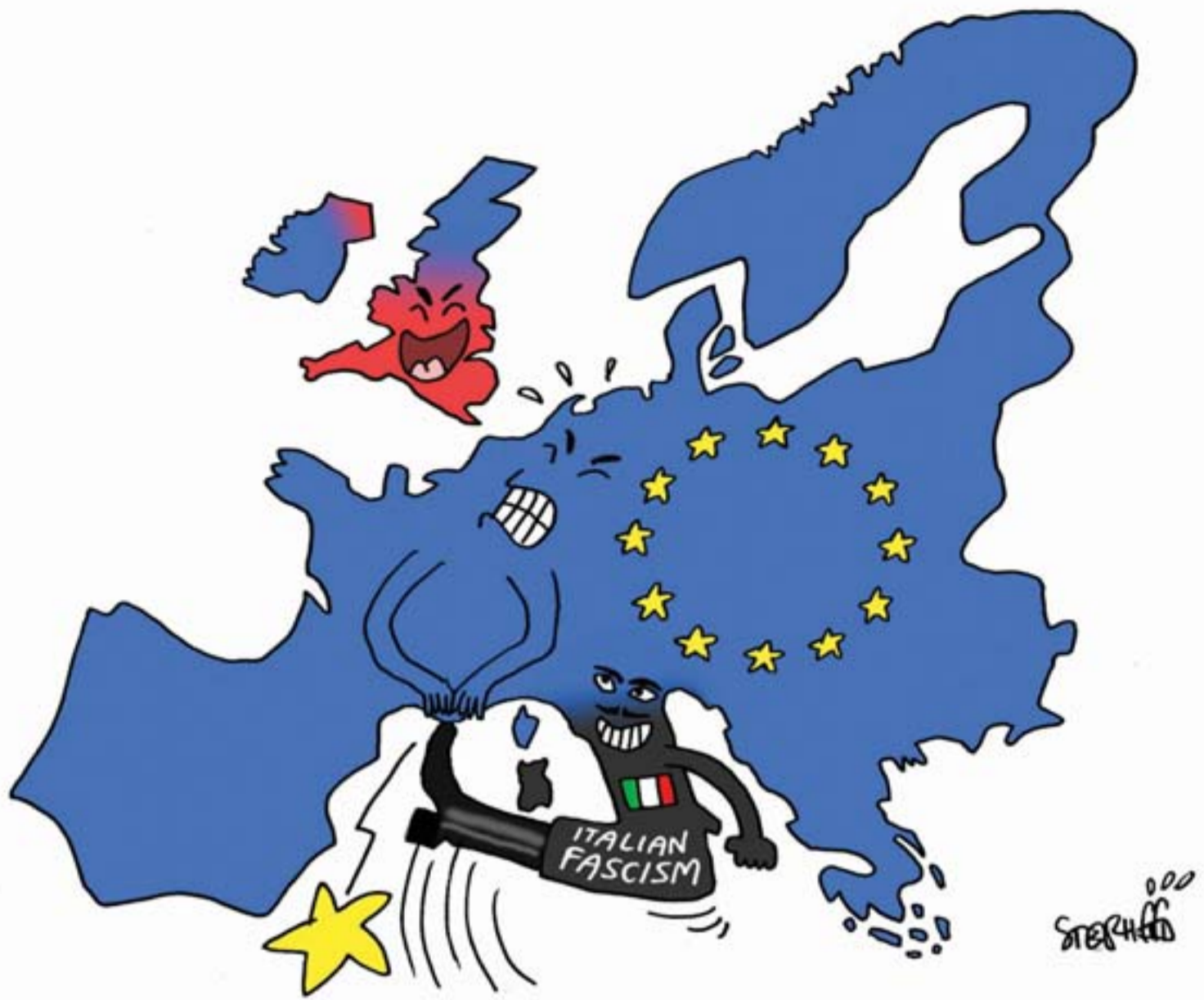
Canada and Mexico, which would be among the countries hardest hit by Trump's proposed tariffs, have both said they will respond with counter-measures if necessary. Inside the White House, there appeared to be room to modify the proposals, despite Trump's tough talk. "The one thing that is very clear in this is that there is no language, there is no final language. There is no final plan," said one outside Trump adviser, who spoke on condition of anonymity and said formal action was unlikely this week. "It's far from settled, it's far from done."

## China remains the target

Even though China accounts for a tiny proportion of US steel imports, it was viewed as the target for the tariffs. China's and India's industrial expansions have fueled massive overcapacity, hitting margins in the United States and Europe. Under the administration of former Democratic US President Barack Obama, action was taken in tandem with other partners to try to stem imports that undercut prices unfairly.

It is China's huge trade surplus with the United States that has attracted most of the Trump administration's ire. China ran a record \$375.2 billion trade surplus with the United States in 2017 as the overall US trade deficit surged 12 percent to \$566 billion. The very fact that the proposed steel and aluminum tariffs could be imposed on a global basis rather than specifically targeting one country means that the response across the globe is likely to be diffuse.

By contrast measures aimed directly at China could have a more damaging impact, specifically an investigation into intellectual property theft. Trump has threatened a fine in dollars of "numbers that you hadn't even thought about" for China over the issue in a Reuters interview earlier this year, although the parameters of the investigation have not been disclosed and no date has been set for a decision. US industry charges that there have been losses worth hundreds of billions of dollars from stolen ideas and from being forced to turn over intellectual property as a cost of doing business in China. "Separating China out from the crowd that is affected by current trade efforts could be taken as a material escalation," Zezas and Pickett said. —Reuters



## 5-Star heading for date with establishment?

The anti-establishment 5-Star Movement has emerged as the big winner in Italian elections, but now it faces very tough choices which will probably involve tying the knot with the establishment. The election could hardly have gone better for the maverick party founded nine years ago by comedian Beppe Grillo. It identifies with neither left nor right and draws disgruntled voters from across the political spectrum.

Not only did a powerful, four-party center-right coalition fall well short of a parliamentary majority, but 5-Star emerged as the largest single party by some 13 points, meaning it will be very hard, if not impossible, to keep it out of government. "There can be no government without 5-Star, everyone will have to come and talk to us," said lawmaker Alessandro Di Battista, one of the party's most popular politicians.

Parliamentary arithmetic suggests he is right. The only way to keep 5-Star out would be a coalition of virtually all the other parties, going from the far-right Northern League to the ruling Democratic Party (PD), the biggest loser at the election. But 5-Star does not have the seats to govern on its own, so now it will have to do what until recently it had ruled out: Come to terms with the parties it has always lambasted as corrupt and responsible for Italy's economic decline.

The party's 31-year-old leader, Luigi Di Maio, seems to have three options on the table, and each one has potential pitfalls. He could govern with the far-right League - which under its leader Matteo Salvini made big gains at the election and will be the second largest party in parliament - or with the center-left PD, or as the leading partner in a broad, multi-party alliance. For months, political opponents have presented 5-Star and the League as natural bedfellows, pointing to a common hostility to Europe's fiscal rules, big business and the euro.

## Italy's populist surge reveals north-south split

The Italian election was a rejection of traditional left and right parties in both the north and south of the country - but for different reasons, experts said. The far-right League party conquered the north, worried about the rise in immigration, while the anti-establishment Five Star Movement (M5S) took the south where concerns about the economy dominate.

"In the south, the Five Star vote was a protest of a part of the country that feels neglected as the economic recovery is only being felt in the north," said Roberto D'Alimonte, politics professor at Rome's Luiss university. "We can't be surprised that southern regions, where youth unemployment has spiked and traditional parties have failed to resolve the problem, voted massively in favor of a movement that expresses resentment and anger."

Disillusionment had already made itself felt in a constitutional referendum in 2016 in which southern Italy voted massively against both the proposed reform and then prime minister Matteo Renzi's center-left government. Political expert Giovanni Orsina said the election represented a "transition" between the old political order and a new one, delivering "a clear message".

"It is clear that the two weak links in this phase were the (centre-left) Democratic Party and Forza Italia (Go Italy), Silvio Berlusconi's centre-right party, which have been in power for decades." A right-wing coalition including the League and Forza Italia came first in Sunday's vote with 37 percent, but Berlusconi's party was unexpectedly

beaten into second place by the League within the alliance.

## 'Feeling abandoned'

League leader Matteo Salvini, 45, has positioned himself as "a proud populist". "Italy is fed up with champagne socialists," he said. With 17 percent of the vote, the party has done particularly well in relatively wealthy areas of northern Italy where concerns about security and immigration are high and euroscepticism is rife. "The most important thing that Salvini says is 'Italians first'. I'm not racist but I think that people who come to Italy should come here to work and not commit crimes or violence like rapes," Evaristo Bellu, a 56-year-old supporter of the League, told AFP.

Sebastien Maillard, head of the Jacques Delors Institute, said Italians were traditionally europhile. But opinion polls showed "they are very disappointed because they expected a lot more from Europe, particularly a strong immigration policy," Maillard said. "There is a strong feeling of being abandoned, a feeling that Europe has left them to their sorry fate on immigration."

For many commentators of Italian politics, the result of the election is a snapshot of a country in the grip of fears about immigration and the economy. The M5S has proposed a universal basic income and a tax cut, while the League wants to help Italian businesses and deport hundreds of thousands of migrants. In an interview with Swiss weekly Die Weltwoche, former White House adviser Steve Bannon hailed an "earthquake" in Italian politics.

"There are definitely policy differences between the Five Star Movement and the Lega (League) and also some of the other populist movements on the right," he said. But he added their gains were "a strong signal to the permanent political class in Europe that people, and particularly people in Italy, want change and they want change now." —AFP

## Towards the mainstream

Yet 5-Star has always been a very different political animal from the League and the differences have widened in recent months as Di Maio has shifted the party towards the mainstream and away from previously eurosceptic positions. He describes himself as "pro-Europe" and under his leadership 5-Star has dropped its pledge to hold a referendum on the euro. On the campaign trail, he vowed to



## Moderate leader eager for power, but needs partner

"defeat the friends of (Viktor) Orban, the AfD and (Marine) Le Pen," referring to the League's far-right allies in Hungary, Germany and France.

Moreover, a tie-up with the League may upset many of 5-Star's voters in its main electoral base in the poor south. The League, whose heartland is at the other end of Italy's boot, until recently called itself the "Northern League" and its leaders and voters derided southerners as dirty and lazy. Patrizia Calcaterra, a 52-year-old teacher and 5-Star voter in Sicily, where 5-Star took almost 50 percent of the vote, said her joy about 5-Star's performance was tempered with concern about the rise of the League. "Don't

you understand that a prime minister like Salvini would be a victory for racism in Italy?" she said.

However, 5-Star voters have proved loyal to Di Maio through several policy U-turns and a grass-roots revolt seems unlikely. Most comments from supporters on the party's website on Monday expressed a desire to govern with whomever may be necessary. A tie-up with the PD, Italy's most establishment party, may be scarcely more palatable for 5-Star's voters, but it would be far more acceptable to the person who will actually pick the next prime minister: president Sergio Mattarella.

Mattarella, for whom Italy's image abroad is of paramount concern, will be a key player in coalition talks. He will be loath to act as midwife for the birth of a government of anti-establishment forces which investors flagged as the "nightmare scenario" before the election. The PD, decimated in Sunday's election, may also be a more docile coalition partner. After Di Maio's policy shifts, the positions of the two parties are now not far apart on Europe, welfare and taxation.

The option of a government supported by a broad coalition of parties would probably be most favored by both Di Maio and Mattarella. With an ample majority in parliament, it may also have most chance of passing a pre-agreed set of reforms. In his first comments after the election on Monday, Di Maio said he would be willing to talk to all the political forces, stressing that negotiations should be about "policies, not ideology."

He hopes to reach a deal whereby the other parties agree on a common policy platform and recognize that, as the party that won the election, he and his ministers should implement it. That may be wishful thinking, and negotiations will be long and hard, but it now seems that one way or another 5-Star's spell in opposition could be about to end. —Reuters

## Vote heralds tougher stance on migration

The failure of Italy's neighbors to help out more with a huge influx of migrants boosted the anti-immigrant vote and contributed to the resounding defeat of its ruling party in last weekend's election, European officials acknowledge. But given the difficulty of persuading all EU states to take their share of new arrivals, officials in Brussels now believe the bloc will have to take a harsher line on immigration. "The message we hear is: Continue being very, very tough on asylum. Be tough as you can on immigration. And then get even tougher," said a senior European Union diplomat.

Italy's center-left Democratic Party won less than a fifth of the votes, losing to anti-establishment and right-wing parties that campaigned hard against immigration. Under pressure from eurosceptic rivals, mainstream EU politicians read it as meaning they must take a hard line on immigration or risk losing power. "Italy has, it's undeniable, suffered for months and months under the pressure of migration. This very strong migration pressure is a context we should keep in mind," said French President Emmanuel Macron.

About 170,000 refugees and migrants crossed the Mediterranean to Italy in 2014, according to UN figures. In the next two years arrivals were 154,000 and 181,500, before falling to 119,000 in 2017. Italy and Greece bore the brunt of the influx as the EU struggled to manage a crisis that delivers daily reminders of its urgency. African immigrants marched through Florence on Monday chanting "no more racism" after an Italian man shot dead a Senegalese street vendor earlier in the day.

Yesterday, officials said 21 migrants were missing and feared drowned when a rubber

dinghy and a wooden boat had to be rescued after setting off from Libya for Italy. The crisis that reached a head in 2015, when more than a million people arrived in Europe from the Middle East and Africa, has shaken the EU and fuelled a wave of anti-immigration and eurosceptic sentiment. The EU has since agreed deals - criticized by rights groups with countries such as Turkey and Libya, offering them money and other help to keep people away from its shores.

The bloc has tightened its external borders and asylum laws and is spending more in distant countries to stop people from heading for Europe. The Italian vote means the EU will stay on this course, officials in Brussels say, turning itself into what rights groups call "Fortress Europe". In Austria, a government official said the vote was "another wake-up call" in support of the tougher migration policies advocated by Chancellor Sebastian Kurz.

## Blame game

But behind the EU's unity on the need to stop refugees and migrants arriving in the first place lies a more intractable problem. While frontline states on the Mediterranean bore the immediate impact of the jump in immigration, and wealthy countries such as Germany and Sweden also took in large numbers, post-communist governments in the east refused to accept their share. Rome and Berlin blamed nationalist governments in Poland and Hungary for failing to show solidarity when it was needed, while they still accepted the development money western nations send to the bloc's poorer members.

"There is a problem with solidarity in Europe," Luxembourg's Prime Minister Xavier Bettel said in Dublin on Monday. "We are all part of the responsibility," he said, referring to the eastern Europeans. Irish Prime Minister Leo Varadkar agreed that the whole EU must assist those most in need. Italy and Greece feel they have been left to manage on their own, while Germany, the Netherlands and France have pressed hard, if in vain, to break the resistance in the east. —Reuters



DUBAI: (Left) Gamers wearing virtual reality (VR) goggles play with plastic shotguns while sitting in wheelchairs at a newly-opened VR park at The Dubai Mall yesterday. (Right) A giant replica of Burj Khalifa hangs upside-down at the VR park. — AFP

## UK warns Russia over spy's illness...

Continued from Page 1

of ministers or dignitaries. Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said Johnson's comments were "wild".

A previous British inquiry said President Vladimir Putin probably approved the 2006 murder of ex-KGB agent Alexander Litvinenko with radioactive polonium-210 in London. The Kremlin has repeatedly denied any involvement in Litvinenko's killing. Litvinenko, 43, an outspoken critic of Putin who fled Russia for Britain six years before he was poisoned, died after drinking green tea laced with the rare and very potent radioactive isotope at London's Millennium Hotel.

It took weeks for British doctors to discern the cause of Litvinenko's illness. His murder sent Britain's ties with Russia to what was then a post-Cold War low. Relations suffered further from Russia's annexation of Crimea and its military backing for Syrian President Bashar al-Assad against rebels trying to topple him.

British authorities said there was no known risk to the

public from the unidentified substance, but they sealed off the area where Skripal was found, which included a pizza restaurant and a pub, in the center of Salisbury. Counter-terrorism police are now leading the investigation though they said they believe there no risk to the public. Samples from the scene are being tested at Porton Down, Britain's military research laboratory, the BBC said.

Skripal, who passed the identity of dozens of spies to the MI6 foreign intelligence agency, was given refuge in Britain after being exchanged in 2010 for Russian spies caught in the West as part of a Cold War-style spy swap at Vienna airport. The Kremlin said it was ready to cooperate if Britain asked it for help investigating the incident with Skripal. Calling it a "tragic situation," Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov said the Kremlin had no information about the incident. Asked to respond to British media speculation that Russia had poisoned Skripal, Peskov said: "It didn't take them long."

Russia's embassy in London said the incident was being used to demonize Russia and that it was seriously concerned by British media reporting of the Skripal incident. Russia's foreign spy service, the SVR, said it had no comment to make. Russia's foreign ministry and its counter-intelligence service, the Federal Security Service (FSB), did not immediately respond to questions submitted by Reuters about the case. — Reuters

## Assembly passes law to accept bedoons...

Continued from Page 1

He reiterated that Ghanem should have turned down any such request. Ghanem said no decision had been made on the request, but Muwaziri accused the speaker of treating the Assembly like the council of ministers. MP Saleh Ashour also criticized the government's move on the issue and said lawmakers should not be questioned for whatever they said in the Assembly chamber.

The assembly then approved a motion asking its human rights committee to investigate the circumstances of a bedoon man who set himself on fire. Ashour criticized the interior ministry for publishing the criminal record of the man. MP Khalif Al-Saleh called on authorities to naturalize the 34,000 bedoons the government has admitted qualify for consideration for citizenship.

Opposition MPs Jamaan Al-Harbash, Waleed Al-

Tabtabaei and Mohammad Al-Mutair, who were in prison over storming the Assembly, strongly criticized the treatment they and other prisoners have received, and also criticized the Assembly office for not taking any action on their case. They insisted that no lawmaker should have been jailed before a final court verdict and before their parliamentary immunity is lifted.

They also complained about the extremely inhuman situation in the central jail. Interior Minister Sheikh Khalid Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah said that the capacity of the prison is 2,500 inmates and currently it is home to 6,000 people, adding that "the whole of Kuwait will not be able to resolve this problem". He also announced a plan to build a new prison and deport foreign inmates to their countries to tackle overcrowding at the central prison. On MPs' queries about installment of devices at the central prison to jam inmates' phone communications, Sheikh Khalid affirmed that such jammers have been removed.

Meanwhile, MP Mutair said that expatriate employees working at power plants have not received their salaries for several months, adding this is one of the main causes for the rift with the Philippines and called on the prime minister to intervene.

## Saudi women will drive but face...

Continued from Page 1

with the hashtag "Saudi women don't work at gas stations". Bukhari, previously employed in a junior role by the same parent company, was forced to go on the defensive, telling critics she was in a managerial position and not physically handling fuel nozzles. "I am a supervisor. I don't fill gas myself," she reasoned, seeking to win a modicum of respectability for a job that class-conscious Saudi men disdain. "Women today have the right to do any work."

Prince Mohammed's Vision 2030 reform plan for a post-oil era seeks to elevate women to nearly one-third of the workforce, up from about 22 percent now. Government statistics also put more than one million Saudi women as currently looking to enter the workforce. The reforms have seen the Saudi labor market slowly open up to women, introducing them to jobs that were once firmly the preserve of men.

The social change, catalyzed in large measure by what experts characterize as economic pain owing to a protracted oil slump, has introduced a series of firsts. Saudi media has championed in recent months the first woman restaurant chef, first woman veterinarian and even the first woman tour guide. But women face sobering realities - despite often being better qualified than men.

"Saudi women are better educated, but less mobile, less employed and vastly underpaid," Karen Young, a scholar at the Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington, told AFP. Average monthly salaries in the private sector are close to 8,000 Saudi riyals (\$2,134) for men, and only 5,000 riyals for women, according to research firm Jadwa.

Saudi Arabia ranked a low of 138 out of 144 countries in the 2017 Global Gender Gap Report by the World Economic Forum on gender parity. But Riyadh is seeking to change that through what appears to be social engineering. The decision to allow women to drive after a decades-long ban could give women the much-needed mobility to join the workforce.

For the first time, women are seen alongside men in

jazz music concerts and in mixed-gender restaurants, as the influence of the once-feared religious police - notorious for enforcing gender segregation - appears to be waning. "The well-known expression: 'You are a woman, cover your face' seems to be disappearing from our society," human rights lawyer Abdulrahman Al-Lahim wrote recently in the pro-government Okaz newspaper.

The reforms have had an unwitting consequence, observers note - competition with arch-nemesis Iran to be more liberal over women's rights. Tehran recently relaxed its crackdown on women failing to wear the compulsory headscarf. But Saudi activists say social change will only be cosmetic without dismantling the kingdom's rigid guardianship system, which requires that women seek permission from a male relative to study, travel and other activities.

That leaves many vulnerable to the whims of a controlling father, a violent husband or a vengeful son. Horror stories have regularly surfaced. Women inmates are often reported to be stuck in prisons after completing their terms because they were not claimed by their guardians. One Saudi woman told AFP how she was stuck in limbo, unable to even renew her passport, when her father, her only male guardian, slipped into a coma after an accident. "If I could choose between the right to drive or the right to end guardianship, I would choose the latter," a women's activist said on the condition of anonymity.

Authorities appear to be slowly dismantling the many injustices against women ingrained in the law. Saudi women now no longer need male permission to start business. Saudi Arabia also recently annulled the "house of obedience" article in the marriage law, which grants a husband the right to summon his wife to his home against her will. The reform introduces a novel concept in married life: Mutual consent. "This is not a revolution, this is evolution," Hoda Al-Helaissi, a member of the advisory Shura Council, told AFP, referring to newfound social liberties. "It's a rite of passage for women."

Back at Bukhari's home in neighboring Dammam city, she embraced her youngest son Mohammed - who stood by her even as her brothers decried her gas station job as a shocking breach of tradition. But the 16-year-old prefers to hide his mother's job from his peers, hoping to protect her from even more insults. "Maybe five years from now it will be normal to see women at gas stations," he said, kissing his mother's hand. — AFP

Kuwait Times

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Sports

# Schultz hero as Pittsburgh Penguins beat Calgary Flames 4-3 in overtime

## Canucks come back to beat Islanders 4-3

**PITTSBURGH:** Justin Schultz was the hero and Evgeni Malkin netted one goal and two assists as the Pittsburgh Penguins beat the Calgary Flames 4-3 in overtime in NHL action Monday night at PPG Paints Arena in Pittsburgh. With the goalie slightly out of position anticipating him to shoot, Phil Kessel passed over to Schultz, and he buried the winner at 2:36 of overtime. Not only was it a tough ending, but it was a tough start for the Flames and rookie goalie Jon Gillies, who was victimized on two of the first three shots on goal. Chad Ruhwedel opened the scoring at the 2:10 mark when his long wrister made its way past Gillies, who got a piece of the puck. Things went from bad to worse for Gillies at 3:05 when he attempted to pass the puck from behind his own net, only to see Malkin knock it out of the air. The puck bounced toward the front of the net, where Malkin was on the spot to slip it into an open cage to give the Pens a 2-0 lead. To their credit, the Flames drew even by the end of the first period.



### Klefbon scores his first goal in 34 games

**SENATORS 3, STARS 2 (OT)**  
Erik Karlsson scored the game-winning goal on a breakaway with 2:19 remaining in overtime as Ottawa defeated host Dallas. Karlsson's winning rush began with a great defensive play on the opposite end of the ice by Bobby Ryan that barely denied the Stars. Karlsson outraced Dallas' Tyler Pitlick and found a small hole between the legs of Stars goaltender Kari Lehtonen for the goal. Tyler Seguin scored twice for the Stars, who currently hold the first wild card from the Western Conference and are fourth in the Central Division, one point behind Minnesota.

**SABRES 5, MAPLE LEAFS 3**  
Sam Reinhart, Ryan O'Reilly, Johan Larsson and Jason Pominville each had a goal and an assist while Chad Johnson made 38 saves as Buffalo dumped struggling Toronto in Buffalo, N.Y. In the first of four meetings between division rivals in the season's last five weeks, Buffalo scored two goals before the game was four minutes old.



**BUFFALO:** Chad Johnson #31 of the Buffalo Sabres makes a save against Zach Hyman #11 of the Toronto Maple Leafs during the third period at KeyBank Center on Monday in Buffalo, New York. — AFP

Reinhart bagged his 16th at 1:53, and Pominville made it 2-0 at 3:43 with his 11th tally. Leo Komarov brought the Maple Leafs even with an unexpected display of offense. After going 13 games without a goal, the one-time All-Star bagged two goals in an 11-minute span bridging the periods before the Sabres went on to regain the lead for good.

**OILERS 4, COYOTES 3 (OT)**  
Oscar Klefbon scored his first goal in 34 games, and Edmonton regrouped after blowing a two-goal, third-period lead to beat visiting Arizona in overtime. Klefbon was set up by Connor McDavid for a chance and buried the shot just 50 seconds into the extra period to cap a see-saw tilt. Cam Talbot made 32 saves for the Oilers to snap a three-game losing skid, while Darcy Kuemper stopped 32 shots for Arizona.

**CANUCKS 4, ISLANDERS 3 (OT)**  
Brendan Leipsic scored two goals, including the overtime winner, and added an assist as host Vancouver came back to beat New York. Leipsic gave the Canucks the win 2:47 into overtime as he stole the puck from the Isles' Anthony Beauvillier in the New York zone and went around goaltender Jaroslav Halak, who inexplicably came way out of his net and left it open for an easy goal. With the tally, Leipsic made up for taking a penalty with just over a minute left in the third period and enabling the Islanders to force overtime. John Tavares scored a goal and added an assist for the Islanders while Josh Bailey and Jordan Eberle also tallied. Rookie Matthew Barzal, a native of the Vancouver suburb of Coquitlam, British Columbia, produced two assists. The Canucks suffered a potentially major blow in the closing seconds of regulation time as star rookie Brock Boeser was hurt in a collision near the benches. — Reuters

### NHL results/standings

Pittsburgh 4, Calgary 3 (OT); Buffalo 5, Toronto 3; Ottawa 3, Dallas 2 (OT); Edmonton 4, Arizona 3 (OT).

	Eastern Conference						Western Conference						
	W	L	OTL	GF	GA	PTS	Central Division						
Tampa Bay	45	17	4	240	182	94	Nashville	42	14	9	214	168	93
Boston	40	15	8	209	158	88	Winnipeg	39	17	9	220	175	87
Toronto	39	22	7	223	195	85	Minnesota	37	22	7	204	190	81
Florida	32	25	6	189	199	70	Dallas	37	23	6	195	174	80
Detroit	26	29	10	170	193	62	Colorado	35	24	6	205	193	76
Montreal	25	29	11	167	200	61	St. Louis	35	26	5	180	176	75
Ottawa	23	32	10	177	227	56	Chicago	28	30	8	188	195	64
Buffalo	21	34	11	159	214	53	Pacific Division						
Washington	37	21	7	203	193	81	Las Vegas	42	18	5	225	180	89
Pittsburgh	38	25	4	219	203	80	San Jose	35	22	9	196	184	79
Philadelphia	34	21	11	197	193	79	Anaheim	33	21	12	186	183	78
New Jersey	33	25	8	193	199	74	Los Angeles	36	25	5	192	165	77
Columbus	33	28	5	176	186	71	Calgary	32	25	10	188	199	74
Carolina	29	26	11	176	198	69	Edmonton	28	34	4	187	219	60
NY Islanders	29	29	9	216	241	67	Vancouver	25	32	9	180	217	59
NY Rangers	30	30	6	189	209	66	Arizona	20	34	11	158	213	51

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

## 26th Duty Free Tennis Open 2018

**KUWAIT:** President of Arab and Kuwait Tennis Associations, Honorary President of Asian Tennis Association Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Abdallah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah attended the final match and closing ceremony of the 26th Duty Free Tennis open 2018, at the invitation of UAE Tennis Association President Sheikh Hashar Al-Maktoom. The match was won by Spain's Roberto Bautista Agut who defeated France's Lucas Pouille with the score of 6-3, 6-4. Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber lauded the major role this tournament is playing along with Qatar Open in spreading the game in the region over many years by attracting many top tennis

stars from around the world. He also lauded the tournament's organization, particularly the closing ceremony which saw a large number of fans in attendance, and hoped Kuwait will join Dubai and Qatar in a series of tournaments in the coming years when Sheikh Jaber Al-Abdallah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah compound is ready. Sheikh Ahmad lauded the efforts of tournament organizers led by Sheikh Ahmad bin Saeed Al-Maktoom, the head of Dubai Civil Aviation and President of Dubai Duty Free Market Establishment, the tournament sponsor. Meanwhile, Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber praised the continued success achieved by the 9th Kuwait Tennis Open which started lately at the Kuwait Tennis Association in Yarmouk. He thanked the main sponsor of the tournament Burgan Bank and the permanent supporter over the years Behbehani Group.

## Serena ready for long awaited return

**INDIANA WELLS:** Serena Williams believes now is the "perfect time" to return to the WTA Tour in order to gauge her progress ahead of the year's remaining grand slam tournaments. Williams, who claimed a 23rd grand slam title at last year's Australian Open before hanging up her racket for the season upon discovering she was pregnant with her first child, also skipped this year's tournament in Melbourne. After using the time to work on her fitness, Williams featured in a Fed Cup doubles match for the United States last month and is scheduled to play at the BNP Paribas Open in Indian Wells which starts this week. "My expectations, I don't know what they are," the 36-year-old American told the BBC. "I can't go and say I expect to lose because that is something I will never say. It's just a little different. I'm just expecting to see where I am more than anything. "This is a good time to start for the summer. If I want to play in those grand slams (the French Open, Wimbledon and the U.S.



Serena Williams

Open) and play well, I think now is the perfect time to start." Williams remains motivated to chase down Margaret Court's all-time record of 24 grand slam singles titles but is also hoping to give her now six-month-old daughter a chance to have some memories of watching her mother in action. "I've always been an extremely motivated person, but my main thing is that I would love for my daughter to be around with me doing great, and playing amazing, so that definitely gives me some motivation," she added. "I would have thought I would have retired six years ago, but I'm still here and I'm playing great, and I think I'll still be playing good." Unseeded Williams is scheduled to open her Indian Wells campaign with a first round tie against Zarina Diyas of Kazakhstan tomorrow. — Reuters

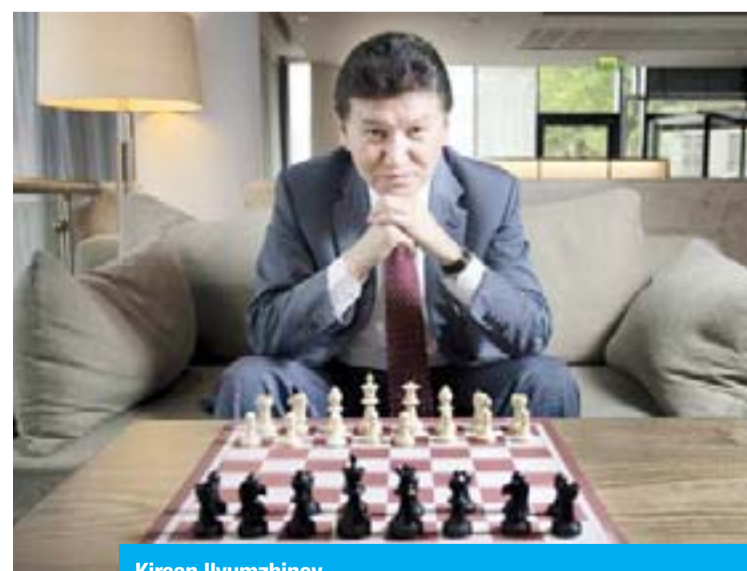
## Athletics maintains Russia ban over doping

**BIRMINGHAM:** The governing body of world athletics said yesterday it was maintaining Russia's ban from the sport over mass doping, saying Moscow had failed to provide evidence it was adequately testing Russian competitors. Despite Russian athletes being allowed back into Olympic competition, the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) said the country's anti-doping body RUSADA had met some requirements for reinstatement, but not all. The IAAF's medical expert Rune Andersen said the sport's anti-doping task force had "recommended to the IAAF Council and the Council accepted that RUSAF (the Russian athletics federation) not be reinstated". "Because while many reinstatement

conditions had been met, there are several that still have not been satisfied," Andersen told a press conference in the English city of Birmingham. "For example, RUSAF and RUSADA have still not provided a test distribution plan for 2018 that shows an adequate amount of testing of Russian athletes." Andersen added that RUSAF "has still not demonstrated that it has fixed previous legal issues that meant it was unable to enforce provisional doping bans." The International Olympic Committee lifted its ban on Russia at the end of the Pyeongchang Winter Games last month. Russia had been banned from the Olympic movement over allegations it put in place a system of state-sponsored doping at the 2014 Russian-hosted Sochi Winter Games. A team of 168 Russians competed in Pyeongchang under the banner of Olympic Athletes from Russia. Several Russian athletes also took part in last week's World Indoor Championships in Birmingham competing as neutrals, including the winners of the women's and men's high jump competitions, Mariya Lasitskenskaya and Danil Lysenko. — AFP

## FIDE says Swiss bank accounts to be frozen over Syria sanctions

**ATHENS:** The World Chess Federation (FIDE) says its Swiss bank announced that the federation's accounts would be immediately frozen because its president - with whom the FIDE secretariat is embroiled in a power struggle - is under US sanctions for alleged dealings with the Syrian government. Kirsan Ilyumzhinov, a Russian who has headed FIDE for over two decades, was placed under US sanctions in November 2015, accused of aiding the Syrian government. Ilyumzhinov, a millionaire businessman and ex-politician, has denied the accusations. "Mr Kirsan Ilyumzhinov denies the outrageous and false allegations made against him and is not aware that FIDE's bank accounts have been frozen by UBS," his London solicitor Nigel Kushner said in a statement. "Mr Ilyumzhinov believes that the allegations form part of an ongoing smear campaign related to a power struggle at FIDE in advance of elections taking place this year." UBS said it could not comment on whether individuals or organisations were clients of the bank. "We can't comment on whether individuals or organizations are clients of UBS. We follow all laws and regulations that are applicable to us," UBS said. Last March, Ilyumzhinov accused FIDE of an



Kirsan Ilyumzhinov

attempted "revolution" to oust him by falsely announcing his resignation. He said he intended to serve his full term and would decide this year whether to run for re-election in September. FIDE, whose secretariat is based in Athens, says it transferred presidential powers to Ilyumzhinov's deputy in December 2015 though its website still lists Ilyumzhinov as president. — Reuters

## Sports

# Gayle leads Windies past UAE, Afghanistan collapse

## Chris struck 11 sixes in blistering 91-ball 123

**HARARE:** Chris Gayle hammered his 23rd one-day international hundred to lead the West Indies to victory in their opening World Cup qualifier against the United Arab Emirates yesterday, while Afghanistan collapsed to defeat by Zimbabwe.

Windies opening batsman Gayle struck 11 sixes in a blistering 91-ball 123 in Harare as the two-time World Cup winners racked up 357-4 in their Group A clash, with the UAE falling 60 runs short.

Afghanistan's hopes of taking one of the last two places for next year's tournament in England and Wales are hanging by a thread, after following Sunday's shock loss to Scotland with an agonising two-run defeat by the hosts. Elsewhere, Ireland and Scotland both made it two wins from two by seeing off Papua New Guinea and Hong Kong respectively. The 38-year-old Gayle became only the third batsman in ODI history after Hashim Amla and Sachin Tendulkar to score hundreds against 11 different countries.

After captain Jason Holder elected to bat first, Gayle quickly got into his stride alongside big-hitting youngster Evin Lewis in an opening partnership of 88. Lewis fell for 31, but Shimron Hetmyer outdied even Gayle, plundering 127 to score his maiden international ton.

The UAE, who had beaten Papua New Guinea in their opening match, never threatened a famous run chase after slipping to 69-3, but an excellent unbeaten

112 from Rameez Shahzad carried them to a respectable 297-6. Windies skipper Holder ensured his side got off to a winning start, taking 5-53 after fast bowler Sheldon Cottrell's day was cut short by injury.

### AFGHANISTAN DREAM IN TATTERS

Afghanistan came into the qualifiers as favourites to qualify alongside the West Indies, but will now probably need five consecutive wins to have any chance of reaching a second straight World Cup. With the defeats against Scotland and Zimbabwe set to count in the Super Six stage, should Afghanistan get there, their chances are all but over. Rashid Khan and co put in a much-improved display with the ball as they limited Zimbabwe to 196 all out in Bulawayo.

Teenage stand-in captain Khan took 3-38 to reach 90 wickets in ODIs, while 16-year-old fellow leg-spinner Mujeeb Ur Rahman finished with 3-49. But Brendan Taylor's 89 and 60 from Sikandar Raza proved crucial as Zimbabwe won in dramatic fashion.

At 156-3 with almost 17 overs remaining, Afghanistan were cruising to victory, but the pressure proved too much as they lost six wickets for only 21 runs. Last-wicket pair Dawlat Zadran and Shapoor Zadran dragged the Asian outfit to within four runs of their target heading into the final over, but the latter



Chris Gayle

was caught behind off Brian Vitori to secure Zimbabwe's second win. Ireland and Scotland look set to challenge the West Indies and Zimbabwe for qualification, after both moved to the top of their groups. Captain William Porterfield's 111 steered Ireland to a

four-wicket win over Papua New Guinea, who had managed 235 thanks to a stunning 151 from opener Tony Ura. Scotland survived a middle-order collapse to successfully chase down 92 to beat Hong Kong, with skipper Kyle Coetzer making 41 not out. — AFP

## Perera leads Sri Lanka to big T20 win against India

**COLOMBO:** Kusal Perera hit a blazing half-century to power Sri Lanka to a five-wicket win over India in the opening Twenty20 international of the tri-nation tournament yesterday. Chasing 175 for victory, the hosts rode on Perera's 37-ball 66 to achieve their target with nine balls to spare at Colombo's R Premadasa Stadium. The left-handed Perera, who hit 6 fours and 4 sixes, overshadowed Indian opener Shikhar Dhawan's career-best 90 that saw the visitors post 174-5 after being put into bat first.

Spinners Yuzvendra Chahal and Washington Sundar hurt Sri Lanka's chase by picking up two wickets each but Perera's fiery start made sure the hosts stand tall. The islanders lost an early wicket but a 58-run second-wicket partnership between Perera, who notched up his eighth T20 fifty, and Danushka Gunathilaka put their innings back on track.

Perera, who hit paceman Shardul Thakur for 27 runs with 5 fours and a six in the third over of the innings, took the steam out of the inexperienced Indian bowling attack. Perera though faltered after getting stumped to Sundar's off spin as the Sri Lankan chase wobbled with the Indian bowlers coming back with some disciplined effort.

Thisara Perera, on 22, and Dasun Shanaka, on 15, then put on an unbeaten 39-run stand to keep up the spirits of a raucous home crowd. Earlier Dhawan's 49-ball blitz, laced with 6 fours and 6 sixes, lifted India from a precarious 9-2 to put up a respectable total. Dhawan put on a crucial 95-run third-wicket stand with Manish Pandey, who made 37, to test the Sri Lanka bowling but missed out on a ton after falling to Gunathilaka's off-spin.

Pace spearhead Dushmantha Chameera claimed two wickets including the prized scalp of India skipper Rohit Sharma for nought in the first over of the innings. India will take on Bangladesh in the next match of the tournament, which is timed to commemorate Sri Lanka's 70 years of independence, tomorrow. — AFP



**COLOMBO:** Sri Lanka's cricketer Kusal Perera (R) plays a shot as India's wicketkeeper Dinesh Karthik looks on during the opening Twenty20 international cricket match between Sri Lanka and India of the Nidahas Trophy tri-nation Twenty20 tournament at the R Premadasa stadium in Colombo yesterday. — AFP

### SCOREBOARD

**COLOMBO:** Scoreboard of tri-nation Twenty20 international between Sri Lanka and India in Colombo yesterday:

India		Sri Lanka (target 175)	
R. Sharma c Mendis b Chameera	0	D. Gunathilaka c Pant b Unadkat	19
S. Dhawan c Perera b Gunathilaka	90	K. Mendis c Dhawan b Sundar	11
S. Raina b Pradeep	1	K. Perera st Karthik b Sundar	66
M. Pandey c Gunathilaka b Mendis	37	D. Chandimal b Chahal	14
R. Pant c Pradeep b Chameera	23	U. Tharanga b Chahal	17
D. Karthik not out	13	D. Shanaka not out	15
Extras (lb, lb3, w6)	10	T. Perera not out	22
Total (5 wickets, 20 overs)	174	Extras (lb4, nb1, w6)	11
Fall of wickets: 1-1 (Sharma), 2-9 (Raina), 3-104 (Pandey), 4-153 (Dhawan), 5-174 (Pant)		Total (5 wickets, 18.3 overs)	175
Did not bat: W. Sundar, V. Shankar, S. Thakur, J. Unadkat, Y. Chahal		Fall of wickets: 1-12 (Mendis), 2-70 (Gunathilaka), 3-98 (Chandimal), 4-127 (Perera), 5-136 (Tharanga)	
Bowling: Chameera 4-0-33-2 (w1), Pradeep 3-0-38-1 (w2), Dananjaya 4-0-37-0 (w1), Perera 3-0-25-0, Mendis 3-0-21-1 (w2), Gunathilaka 3-0-16-1.		Did not bat: J. Mendis, A. Dananjaya, D. Chameera, N. Pradeep	
		Bowling: Unadkat 3-0-35-1 (w2), Sundar 4-0-28-2 (w1), Thakur 3.3-0-42-0 (nb1, w1), Chahal 4-0-37-2 (w1), Shankar 2-0-15-0 (w1), Raina 2-0-14-0.	
		Result: Sri Lanka won by five wickets	

## Australia calls 'Bull' on Warner tantrum

**MELBOURNE:** Footage of David Warner being restrained by team mates in an off-field fracas with South Africa's Quinton de Kock has been viewed dimly in Australia, where former players have urged the vice-captain to rein in the raging 'Bull'.

The opening batsman could face an ICC sanction for his part in the ugly stairwell incident at Kingsmead on Sunday which shattered cricket's unofficial rule of 'what happens on the field, stays on the field.' His captain Steve Smith suggested De Kock had enraged the hot-headed lefthander by getting personal in his sledging, the nature of which focused on Warner's wife, according to local media reports.

The South African camp retorted that whatever was said was payback for Warner's own aggressive sledging of De Kock and other Proteas players out on the field. Warner was nicknamed 'Bull' early in his career, a moniker that fittingly captured his rampaging batting and tendency to rack up violations for ill-tempered episodes during play. But his 2015 marriage to iron-woman athlete Candice and fatherhood seemed to mellow Warner to the point that his team mates re-branded

him 'the Reverend' for his quieter demeanour. Warner shed his 'Reverend' persona prior to the recent Ashes series, however, as he called on team mates to summon "hatred" for the visiting English.

If there is a comfortable middle ground between the 'the Reverend' and the 'Bull', Warner has yet to find it, noted former Australia wicketkeeper Adam Gilchrist. "It was really extreme the opposite way, and now he's come back again saying 'old Davey's back' and all his teammates are saying 'the Reverend's gone, Bull's back,'" Gilchrist told local radio.

"It's always a worry in any situation when someone is so extreme on one direction or the other. "I think Davey's got to find somewhere in between that. "Once the emotion and the aggression is taken away from it, David has to be a little bit disappointed that he's done that and allowed this whole discussion to start up."

Warner was involved in another unsightly incident on the field during the opening Test in Durban, when he unleashed a withering verbal spray at Aiden Markram after the rookie opening batsman was culpable in running out AB de Villiers in the South Africa's second innings.

Warner shook hands with De Kock after Australia quickly closed out their 118-run victory on Monday, to take a 1-0 lead in the four-match series. It was described by Australian media as a moment of reconciliation between the teams but Warner can expect little relief from the niggles by Proteas players for the rest of the series, according to former test all-rounder Brad Hogg. "They'll be trying to nag him in the next



David Warner

three Test matches about his wife now," Hogg told local broadcaster Fox Sports. "To be frank, South Africa have found a little sweet spot with David Warner." — Reuters

## ICC suspends Indian curator over tainted pitch approach

**NEW DELHI:** Cricket's world governing body yesterday banned a leading Indian groundsman for six months for failing to report a corruption approach before a one-day international last year.

Pandurang Salgaonkar, who looks after the ground at Pune, was the subject of an undercover sting by the India Today TV channel, which alleged he agreed to doctor the surface before a one-day international between India and New Zealand in October 2017.

"Salgaonkar was charged with a failure to report an approach but no evidence was found of him actually having been engaged in corruption and therefore no charges were laid against him on that basis," said an International Cricket Council statement. The ICC decision said there was no evidence that the 68-year-old former player had agreed to accept a bribe when he met the journalists. ICC anti-corruption manager Alex Marshall said, "I am satisfied that Salgaonkar has no case to answer on the broad allegations of corruption made by India Today."

"Mr Salgaonkar has accepted that he has committed the offence and has received a six-month suspension." The ban was backdated to October 25, meaning he will be free to work again on April 24. The Board of Control for Cricket in India suspended Salgaonkar after the TV channel showed him promising a favourable wicket for New Zealand to reporters who posed as bookmakers. — AFP

## Steyn eyes return in third Test

**CAPE TOWN:** South Africa fast bowler Dale Steyn is targeting a return to Test cricket in the third match of the series against Australia this month, he said yesterday.

The 34-year-old, plagued by injury over the last two years, is three wickets away from becoming South Africa's leading Test wicket taker. "I'm looking at trying to get into the third Test, get back with the boys. It's been a long time - shoulder, foot, all that kind of stuff. Watching the cricket and seeing some of the things that are happening on the field, I just want to get out there," Steyn told local radio.

Steyn made a comeback after 13 months out due to shoulder problems when he opened the bowling in January's first Test victory over India at Newlands, only to hurt his heel. "I've had a bit of an unlucky one with my foot. It seems like every injury I get is really bad. I'm probably another two or three weeks away," Steyn said.

"I have to play one or two warm-up games. So hopefully everything goes according to plan, and by the end of next week, I should be back on the cricket field," he added. Steyn's shoulder problems began in December 2015 and about a year later he broke his right shoulder and tore three major muscles during the first Test against Australia in Perth.

He went home to Cape Town for surgery, followed by lengthy rehabilitation before he was gently eased back in Twenty20 action in November.

Steyn was due to return in the one-off test against Zimbabwe in December but on the opening morning of the day-night match he was ruled out with flu.

Steyn, whose test average is an impressive 22.32, can point to a prolific record at Newlands with 67 wickets in 14 tests. His tally of 419 test victims is just shy of Shaun Pollock's record 421 wickets for South Africa.

South Africa take on Australia at Newlands from March 22-26. Australia won the opening match of the four-test series in Durban by 118 runs on Monday and the second Test starts in Port Elizabeth on Friday. — Reuters

## Sports

# Kuwait Cricket concludes AGM in spectacular ceremony

## Haider Farman appoints Gibbs as national coach



**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Cricket, the official governing body for Cricket in Kuwait, conducted their AGM in a spectacular ceremony at Al Divvan ball room on 18th February. The glamorous event saw the unveiling of South African superstar Herschelle Gibbs as the national coach for the senior men's team and the appointment of Sajid Ashraf to the post of Director General by the President of Kuwait Cricket, Haider Farman.

The evening was chaired by President Haider Farman and had the valuable presence of all the board members including Vice President & in-charge of development Faisal Al Marzouq, General Secretary Emad Aljassam and Head of Council Mahmoud Bastaki as well as Sajid Ashraf along with fellow Executive Council Directors Rishi Jayan, Robert D'Souza, Sudhakar Shetty, Harshith Vora, Naveen Dhananjayan and Mehboob Khan.

The AGM kicked off with the recitation of Holy Quran by Zahid Usman and was followed by the National Anthem of Kuwait. Farman opened the ceremony and spoke eloquently of the need to continue to progress and adapt to the ever changing nature of the global game and shared his vision of having more Kuwait nationals being roped into the game. He also paid special thanks to Touristic Enterprises Company & principal sponsors Ashraf Group, MGA and IDP Education, as well as the new exclusive sponsors of the KC premier league, KGL along with all the banks league sponsors. The president emphasized on the significance of such a grand AGM that brings the entire fraternity together under one roof and gives an opportunity to all the stakeholders (sponsors, teams, players, umpires & coaches etc) to give valuable feedback by asking questions that will help KC improve its overall administration, management and development. The president also thanked the various media partners and sports equipment sponsors along with the host of volunteers who play a special role in the functioning of cricket in Kuwait as without their voluntary support, such heights of success and accomplishment will be

hard to achieve. Sajid Ashraf who has been serving KC as Director Domestic & Marketing also spoke of the progress which has been made over the past year and the plans already in place to continue Kuwait cricket's inevitable growth over the coming season. He also paid special tribute to all the sponsors over the past few years including telecommunication giants Huawei, Western Union, McDonalds and Mitsubishi before moving on to the current principal and major sponsors as well as key partners including Ashraf Group, MGA, IDP, KGL, Kuwait Swedish, Al Hafiz Printing, Gulf Consult, NBK, Boubyan Bank, AUB, KBC and Channels Media who all received mementos of appreciation from the board.

Director of Seniors and IT Rishi Jayan then presented updates on the growth of the domestic game over the last season and how over 4,000 players and 250 teams now participate in official tournaments. He also demonstrated the staggering progress of Kuwait Cricket's state of the art website and laid out plans for the domestic game as well as the international teams preparation for the upcoming ICC World Twenty20 qualifiers in April 2018.

Rishi D Jayan called up the top performers of the previous season to receive special awards from the board led by the president. The awards for 2016-2017 seasons in categories of best batsman (Ali Zaheer), best bowler (Ahsan Naseer) and best all rounder (Ali Zaheer) were given by the board and captured by all the media channels present at the AGM. 2016-2017 season was a dream run for young talent Ali Zaheer and would hope to close 2017-2018 with similar match winning performances.

Harshith Vora, the Director of Juniors Cricket then spoke about the previous domestic season and intense



preparation conducted by KC which enabled both their Under 19 (Malaysia) and Under 16 teams (UAE) to progress to the finals of their respective international events, showing tremendous progress to exceed expectations. This has resulted in several juniors now playing senior Division A cricket and; more impressively, 2 young members (Abdul Haseeb and Abdul Sadiq) being selected for the senior men's national probables squad. He also paid special tribute to the work done by coaches Tahir Khan, Ghayour Ahmed and Jude D'Silva who have worked tirelessly over the past 8 months to achieve these outstanding results.

This was followed by a presentation by Mehboob Khan who is the Director of Women's Cricket and was well supported by Maryam Omar who has been the captain of Kuwait women's team for many years. Both spoke of the increasing opportunities available to women cricketers and thanked the board for their support, which included sending the team to take part in a bilateral series against the Thailand national women's teams in Bangkok. Both Mehboob & Maryam hope to see increased participation by women cricketers in domestic championships and are aiming to attract more talented girls and women to join their current set of players.

Director Technical Sudhakar Shetty & Director Match officials Naveen Dhananjayan then took centre stage to give away mementos of appreciation to the instructors of the recently and successfully concluded intermediate course felicitated by the Board. Kuwaiti National Tariq Beidas who is a Level 2 ACC certified match official led the contingent along with Imran Haji Mustafa, Syed Nadeem, Irfan Adil, & Naresh D'Souza and spoke confidently of the current set of umpires and

scorers under the Kuwait Cricket umbrella and how the course will help them improve their basic skills before KC goes on to organize level 1 and level 2 match official courses in the near future.

Finally, Kuwait Cricket President Haider Farman declared Vice President Faisal Al Marzouq as in charge of Development who then took centre stage to announce the official appointment of Sajid Ashraf as Director General of Kuwait Cricket and the appointment of super star Herschelle Gibbs as the national team coach of Kuwait.

The mood of AGM took new heights with a spectacular entry of Herschelle Gibbs that had the entire audience on its feet with loud rounds of applause accompanied with whistles and much excitement from the crowd. Gibbs was greeted on stage by the board led by the President Haider Farman who gave Gibbs an elegant plaque as a gesture to officially appoint the superstar from South Africa as the national coach of Kuwait men's team. Speaking to the newly appointed Director General Sajid Ashraf on stage, Gibbs discussed his excitement at the appointment whilst also stressing on the importance of fitness, teamwork and hard work in order to achieve short term and long term success. He was later greeted on stage by the complete delegation of Kuwait national probables including Kuwaiti National cricketers namely Fahad Bastaki, Mohammed Bastaki, Abdullah Bastaki, Abdul Rehman Kandari, Ebrahim Dhabyan, Tariq Beidas, Mohammad Al Otaibi, Abdul Rehman Dashti, Hussein Dashti, Mohammed Kandari, Abdul Razzak Kandari, Fawaz Tawfiqi & Faisal Tawfiqi; before being joined on stage by Kuwait juniors, seniors and women's cricketers for an official photo shoot. The evening concluded with all guests being treated to a sumptuous banquet as what was a fantastic and eventful AGM that came to a close. The staging and conduction of the event showed just how much progress has been made by Kuwait Cricket both on and off the field, a trend which looks set to continue over the coming years.

“Farman wants more nationals being roped into the game”



## James, Nance power Cavs past Pistons, Celtics tame Bulls

**CLEVELAND:** LeBron James racked up 31 points, seven rebounds and seven assists in three quarters, and Cleveland pounded struggling Detroit in Cleveland. Larry Nance Jr. supplied 22 points and 15 rebounds after being inserted into the starting lineup. He replaced starting center Tristan Thompson, who suffered an ankle sprain against Denver on Saturday that will sideline him for multiple games. Blake Griffin led the Pistons, who have lost three straight and nine of their last 11 games, with 25 points, eight rebounds and five assists. Andre Drummond contributed 15 points and nine rebounds, and Reggie Bullock tossed in 11 points for Detroit.

### SAN ANTONIO 100, MEMPHIS 98

Tony Parker scored a season-high 23 points off the bench as the San Antonio reserves over the difference in a taut 100-98 Spurs' victory over the Memphis Grizzlies on Monday at the AT&T Center in San Antonio, Texas. San Antonio got 67 points from its bench, including 17 from Davis Bertans and 15 points from Danny Green. The Spurs ended a two-game losing streak but won for just the second time in eight games. Kyle Anderson, with 11 points, was the only Spurs starter in double figures. LaMarcus Aldridge returned to the lineup for San Antonio after missing a game and a half with a sprained right ankle and was largely ineffective, scoring seven points and grabbing eight rebounds in more than 31 minutes of court time.

Marc Gasol, originally listed as out in the pregame

injury report, led the Grizzlies with 23 points and took 10 rebounds. Memphis, who owns the NBA's worst record, has lost 14 games in a row and 12 straight contests on the road, dating back to December.

### CELTICS 105, BULLS 89

Jaylen Brown scored 21 points, and Boston thrived despite the absence of Kyrie Irving to notch a victory over host Chicago. Jayson Tatum added 14 points, Al Horford and Terry Rozier scored 13 apiece and Greg Monroe contributed 10 points and nine rebounds as Boston won for the fifth time in the past six games. Irving was held out due to a sore left knee, but the Celtics built a 26-point halftime lead and were never threatened by the Bulls. Denzel Valentine matched his career best of 20 points for Chicago, which lost for the sixth time in the past seven games. Lauri Markkanen added 12 points, and David Nwaba and Cameron Payne scored 10 apiece.

### PACERS 92, BUCKS 89

Bojan Bogdanovic matched a season high with 29 points to help Indiana hang on for a victory against Milwaukee in Indianapolis. Victor Oladipo added 14 points, both Lance Stephenson and Domantas Sabonis had 11 and Thaddeus Young totaled 10 and seven rebounds as the Pacers won for the third straight game and the seventh time in nine contests. Eric Bledsoe scored 26 points and Giannis Antetokounmpo had 18 with 12 rebounds for Milwaukee, which fell back to the loss column after Sunday's come-from-behind win against Philadelphia snapped a season-high-tying four-game skid.

### TRAIL BLAZERS 108, LAKERS 103

Damian Lillard scored 19 of his 39 points in the fourth quarter as visiting Portland came from behind to defeat Los Angeles. Lillard knocked down four straight



LOS ANGELES: Damian Lillard #0 of the Portland Trail Blazers goes to the basket against the Los Angeles Lakers on Monday at STAPLES Center in Los Angeles, California. —AFP

3-point shots, as the Trail Blazers rallied from an 11-point deficit in the final 5:26 to win their seventh game in a row. CJ McCollum added 22 points and Jusuf Nurkic collected 16 points and 16 rebounds, as Portland beat the Lakers for the 15th consecutive time dating to March 2014. Julius Randle had 21 points and nine rebounds and Isaiah Thomas chipped in 19 points despite a 5-for-21 shooting performance for the Lakers, who saw the end to a five-game win streak.

### HEAT 125, SUNS 103

Hassan Whiteside scored 24 points, grabbed 14 rebounds and blocked three shots as host Miami defeated Phoenix. Suns star guard Devin Booker scored a game-high 31 points. It was his eighth straight game scoring at least 20 points. It was also his 21st game this season scoring at least 30 points. Point guard

Goran Dragic, a former Suns star, scored 17 points as Miami tied the Milwaukee Bucks for seventh place in the Eastern Conference. Miami has the tiebreaker over Milwaukee, having won the season series.

### JAZZ 94, MAGIC 80

Rudy Gobert scored 21 points and collected 17 rebounds for his third straight double-double to help lead Utah past Orlando in Salt Lake City. Donovan Mitchell tallied 19 points, five rebounds and four assists for the Jazz. Joe Ingles added 18 points, eight assists and seven rebounds. Utah won its third straight game. Nikola Vucevic scored 15 points and collected 12 rebounds while Aaron Gordon chipped in 13 points to lead Orlando. The loss snapped a two-game winning streak for the Magic, who shot just 29-of-85 (34.1 percent) from the field. — Reuters

Sports

# Four-goal Goulart gives Cannavaro first AFC Champions League win

## Kashiwa Reysol register their first win in this year's competition

**HONG KONG:** Fabio Cannavaro's Guangzhou Evergrande roared back from 2-0 down yesterday with four second-half goals from Ricardo Goulart completing a sensational AFC Champions League victory 5-3 over Jeju United.

On a night when it rained goals, Cannavaro's former club Tianjin Quanjian were thumped 6-3 at 2016 winners Jeonbuk Motors, whose giant striker Kim Shin-wook bagged his first Champions League hat-trick.

Evergrande, the club who have declared they want to field an all-Chinese side by 2020, had to thank their two prolific Brazilian forwards for the victory over their Korean visitors. The Chinese champions found themselves 2-0 down after 29 minutes at the Tianhe Stadium to goals from Jin Seong-uk and Magno Cruz. But Goulart's goal spree thrilled the raucous home crowd after fellow Brazilian Alan's opener deep into first-half stoppage time had given Guangzhou a lifeline. The 2006 World Cup-winning captain Cannavaro had endured a stuttering start at the southern Chinese city club since taking over from Luiz Felipe Scolari, who led Evergrande to a seventh successive Chinese Super League (CSL) title last year.

Evergrande drew both their previous Group G matches and lost their CSL opener 5-4 to derby rivals Guangzhou R&F on Friday. But they now lead Group G by a point from Thailand's Buriram United, who enjoyed

a 2-0 home win over Japan's Cerezo Osaka courtesy of goals from Andres Tunes and Edgar Silva.

Last season Italian Cannavaro led Tianjin Quanjian to Champions League qualification and his former charges took a shock lead in the 10th minute in Jeonju when a partially cleared corner was volleyed home sweetly by right-back Zhang Cheng.

The towering Kim saw one header disallowed before the 6ft 6in (1.98m) target man rose in 24th minute to head the equaliser. Three minutes before half-time

Jeonbuk were ahead courtesy of Han Kyo-won. Brazilian Ricardo Lopes swept home before Kim bagged two more to complete his hat-trick in the 64th minute and captain Choi Bo-kyung then found the net to make it 6-1. A late Zhao Xuri header and an Alexandre Pato penalty were only consolations for the visitors

as Jeonbuk made it three wins from three matches to go five points clear at the top of Group E.

Kashiwa Reysol registered a first win in this year's competition and join Tianjin on four points after labouring past Hong Kong's Kitchee 1-0 in Japan thanks to Junya Ito's 66th-minute winner. Kitchee remain rock bottom of Group E without a goal or a point so far in their debut AFC Champions League campaign but will have another chance when they host Kashiwa at Hong Kong Stadium next week. — AFP



**GUANGZHOU:** Guangzhou Evergrande's Zheng Zhi (R) fights for the ball with Jeju United's Ryu Seungwoo during the AFC Champions League group stage football match between China's Guangzhou Evergrande and South Korea's Jeju United in Guangzhou yesterday. — AFP

### Towering Kim's header disallowed



## United fight back to beat Palace 3-2

**LONDON:** Manchester United's Nemanja Matic volleyed a stunning added-time winner as they fought back from two goals down to beat Crystal Palace 3-2 at Selhurst Park and climbed to second place in the Premier League on Monday. Palace, who have never beaten United in the Premier League, took the lead after 11 minutes when Andros Townsend ran onto Christian Benteke's square ball and struck a left-foot shot that deflected off Victor Lindelof past goalkeeper David de Gea.

The hosts went 2-0 in front three minutes into the second half when Jeffrey Schlupp took a quick free kick after a foul on Benteke and left back Patrick van Aanholt raced at goal before firing past De Gea to put Palace in the driving seat.

United pulled a goal back seven minutes later when the unmarked Chris Smalling headed in Antonio Valencia's cross and equalised in the 76th when Alexis Sanchez's effort came back off the bar and Romelu Lukaku turned two defenders to fire home.

Matic then snatched the points when his volley from 25 metres curled away from diving keeper Wayne Hennessey into the top corner to put United back into second spot on 62 points, 16 behind Manchester City, and left Palace in the relegation zone.

"It was a nice goal," said Matic. "I am happy for the team, not because I scored but because we won and picked up the three points. We showed character after going 2-0 down and they had the crowd behind them."

"We are delighted to have turned it around. Every point matters and it's so important to win games like this." United's win put them nine points ahead of fifth-placed champions Chelsea in the battle for the top four which brings a place in next season's Champions League group stage. It also took Jose Mourinho's team back above Liverpool, who are two points behind before the pair clash at Old Trafford on Saturday, with Tottenham Hotspur a fur-



**LONDON:** Manchester United's Serbian midfielder Nemanja Matic (L) watches as Crystal Palace's Dutch defender Patrick van Aanholt crosses the ball during the English Premier League football match between Crystal Palace and Manchester United at Selhurst Park in south London on Monday. — AFP

ther two points behind. With nine games left, Palace are third from bottom with 27 points but only a point outside the safety zone.

#### RASPING DRIVE

When Townsend struck the opening goal it was the first time Palace had led United in the Premier League and the home fans could hardly believe their eyes when their Dutch international Van Aanholt beat De Gea at his near post with a rasping drive.

However, Palace's second goal stung United into life and they were soon back in the match when Valencia clipped a cross to the far post where Smalling was lurking on his own to direct a header back across Hennessey's goal into the far corner.

The game was then an absorbing end-to-end battle as both sides attacked but United found the equaliser when Sanchez's shot was deflected onto the bar and came back for Lukaku who managed to find some space inside the area and fired home.

The game was still on a knife edge but United started to pile on the pressure and the almost inevitable breakthrough came when the ball fell to the visitors' Serbia midfielder Matic who instinctively struck a superb shot into the top corner.

It was the first time United had come from two goals down to win a Premier League game since December 2013 while Palace, who have failed to beat United in 18 Premier League meetings, had never lost in the competition with at least a two-goal lead. — Reuters

## Brave Tottenham must play free against Juve

**LONDON:** Mauricio Pochettino says his brave Tottenham Hotspur team must play with freedom against Juventus today as they seek to book their place in the Champions League quarter-finals.

Tottenham battled back from 2-0 down with goals from Harry Kane and Christian Eriksen to earn them a 2-2 draw in Turin last month - a result that means they are favourites to progress.

"We need to feel free. If we do that and enjoy the game we will perform nearly at our best or at our best and if we do then we will have the chance to win," the Argentine told a news conference yesterday.

Tottenham's progression since former Espanyol coach Pochettino arrived in 2014 has been impressive. They finished third in the Premier League in 2015-16 and second last season, although they are yet to win any silverware and flopped in last season's Champions League. Pochettino resents the suggestion that success can only be measured in trophies, saying he is part of a project to establish Tottenham as one of the strongest clubs in Europe. They have beaten European champions Real Madrid and former winners Borussia Dortmund home and away this season and the clash with an experienced Juve side offers another chance to move the club a step closer to that goal. Asked what he could ultimately achieve at the north London club, Pochettino refused to be drawn. "We can't set a limit. I don't do that. I am a dreamer. I don't set minimums," the



**LONDON:** Tottenham Hotspur's Belgian defender Jan Vertonghen (C) takes part in a training session at Tottenham Hotspur's Enfield Training Centre, north-east of London, yesterday on the eve of their UEFA Champions League round of sixteen second leg football match against Juventus.— AFP

46-year-old said. "We improved a lot from two seasons ago. You can see that the team is more mature and more competitive every season." Tottenham are on a 17-match unbeaten run in all competitions, sit fourth in the Premier League, have an FA Cup quarter-final ahead and are within touching distance of the business end of the Champions League. There is a feeling that Pochettino is on the cusp of something special, but he urges caution, preferring to concentrate solely on the job in hand against a club who have reached two of the

last three Champions League finals. "I think we have a very good opportunity but in football you need to earn things," he said. "Tomorrow we are going to face one of the best teams in the world and in history."

"But we are a brave team, very positive people that love the challenge, and tomorrow is a massive challenge. "We are going to compete, and at the same time try to enjoy, because it's a game to enjoy. We need to think we can win, then what happens will be a consequence of our performance." — Reuters

## Putin plays football with Infantino 100 days before WCup

**MOSCOW:** President Vladimir Putin played football with FIFA boss Gianni Infantino in the Kremlin yesterday as a festive Russia marked 100 days before the start of the World Cup. The footage from Putin's reception office was released by football's world governing body in a tweet featuring legends of the beautiful game juggling the ball and doing tricks.

The clip ended with Putin heading one back to Infantino after a heavily edited kickabout set to Rimsky-Korsakov's Flight of the Bumblebee. "Some people just can't wait for the greatest show on earth," FIFA said in the tweet.

Others playing around with the official Telstar 18 World Cup ball included ex-England midfielder Wayne Rooney and Argentina's Diego Maradona. Brazil's Ronaldo juggled by the beach while Sweden's Thomas Brodin had his fun in the snow.

Putin is known for his sporting prowess, taking part in Judo matches, skating, diving and playing ice hockey. A judo black belt and all round sports fan he is hoping to use the World Cup to showcase Russia and boost its image at a time of frayed relations with the West.

Russia is hosting its first World Cup on June 14-July 15 in 11 host cities stretching from its western exclave of Kaliningrad near Poland to Yekaterinburg in the Urals.

Numerous Russian cities are planning events to commemorate 100 days before the start of the 32 team tournament. Moscow is staging an open air concert for 6,000 volunteers while Russia's northern capital Saint Petersburg is unveiling a countdown clock. "It is important to show Russia the way it really is: open, hospitable and modern," Sports Minister Pavel Kolobkov was quoted as saying yesterday by RIA Novosti.

Russia's preparations for the showpiece event are going largely according to schedule but still being clouded by scandal and global disputes. Fan violence that made Russians infamous at the Euro 2016 in France returned last month during a Europa League match in Spain between Spartak Moscow and Athletic Bilbao.— Reuters

### Matches on TV (Local Timings)

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE		
Manchester City v FC Basel 1893	22:45	beIN SPORTS HD 2
Tottenham Hotspur v Juventus	22:45	beIN SPORTS HD 1
ASIAN CHAMPIONS LEAGUE		
Sydney v Kashima Antlers	11:30	beIN SPORTS HD 1
Kawasaki Frontale v Melbourne Victory	13:00	beIN SPORTS HD 3
Suwon Bluewings v Shanghai Shenhua	13:00	beIN SPORTS HD 2
Shanghai SIPG v Ulsan Hyundai	15:00	beIN SPORTS HD 1

**12** Serena Williams ready for long awaited return



**13** Perera leads Sri Lanka to big T20 win against India



**15** Four-goal Goulart gives Cannavaro first AFC Champions League win



## Real dump PSG out of Europe

Ronaldo does it again to secure q-finals berth



PARIS: Paris Saint-Germain's Uruguayan forward Edinson Cavani (L) vies for the ball with Real Madrid's Spanish defender Dani Carvajal (2R) during the UEFA Champions League round of 16 second leg football match between Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) and Real Madrid yesterday, at the Parc des Princes stadium in Paris. — AFP

PARIS: Cristiano Ronaldo and Casemiro got the goals for Real Madrid as the holders won 2-1 away to a Paris Saint-Germain side missing Neymar to secure their place in the Champions League quarter-finals yesterday. Ronaldo had scored twice—including his 100th goal for Real in the competition—as they won 3-1 in the first leg in Spain last month, and his header early in the second half at the Parc des Princes effectively ended the French club's hopes of progressing.

Edinson Cavani equalised on the night for PSG, but only after they had Marco Verratti sent off, and Casemiro's late goal secured an ultimately comprehensive 5-2 aggregate victory for Zinedine Zidane's side.

PSG never looked like turning the tie around in the absence of the injured Neymar, and it was a horribly flat way for them to exit the competition. As they limp

out, Real's dream of becoming the first team in more than 40 years to win three successive European Cups remains alive. A year after their spectacular collapse against Barcelona in the last 16, when they were humiliated 6-1 away in the return after a stunning 4-0 win at home, PSG had hoped to produce a memorable comeback themselves this time.

Yet, shorn of the world's most expensive player, who is back in Brazil recuperating from a foot operation, they struggled to create chances, and the night will be remembered just as much for the stupidity of a section of their supporters. Flares were lit en masse on several occasions at one end of the ground, once even leading to a brief stoppage in play, and PSG will face punishment from UEFA as a result.

Without Neymar, this was Angel Di Maria's big

chance to shine after he was left on the bench for the entirety of the first leg, but nothing came off for the Argentine against his former side, his performance symbolic of a wider malaise in the home ranks.

They had only made Real goalkeeper Keylor Navas work once in the first half, from Kylian Mbappe's shot in the 43rd minute. In contrast, Alphonse Areola had kept the home side in the game with two fine saves to deny Sergio Ramos and Karim Benzema before the interval.

That just delayed the inevitable. Having come close with a header moments earlier, Ronaldo broke the deadlock in the 51st minute, heading in a Lucas Vazquez cross for his third goal in the tie.

The goal had come from an error by Dani Alves initially, and it completely punctured PSG and the atmosphere. The tie had escaped them before Verratti was

sent off midway through the second half, picking up a second yellow card for dissent.

Substitute Javier Pastore's header deflected into the net off Cavani in the 71st minute to level the scores on the night, but more poor defending allowed Real to make it 2-1 with 10 minutes left.

Unable to clear their lines in their own area, PSG saw Casemiro's shot go in via a Marquinhos deflection. With Marco Asensio and Isco both hitting the post in the second half for Real, the visitors more than deserved their win on the night, as well as in the tie.

That rubbed more salt into the wounds for PSG, who had not lost any of their previous 51 home games in all competitions, a run going back two years to before the start of Unai Emery's reign as coach. This defeat is likely to hasten the end of his time in charge. — AFP

## Porto draw eases Liverpool into Champions League quarters

LIVERPOOL: Liverpool cruised into the Champions League quarter-finals for the first time in nine years 5-0 on aggregate over Porto, despite settling for a goalless draw in an uninspiring last 16, second leg at Anfield yesterday.

Sadio Mane inflicted most of the first-leg damage on the Portuguese league leaders with a hat-trick and came closest to breaking the deadlock with a first-half effort that came back off the post.

With the job done three weeks ago, Liverpool boss Jurgen Klopp could even afford the luxury of starting top-scorer Mohamed Salah and club-record signing Virgil van Dijk on the bench with one eye on

Saturday's vital visit to Manchester United in the Premier League.

Klopp's men have made a habit of fast starts in Europe this season, but took time to warm to their task with the German having made five changes in all from the side that beat Newcastle at the weekend.

It took 17 minutes for the hosts to threaten when Joe Gomez's cross was acrobatically flicked towards goal by Mane, but looped just over the bar. Porto coach Sergio Conceicao made 10 changes from the first leg, but top-scorer Vincent Aboubakar was one of those to come back into the side having missed the first leg through injury.

And the Cameroonian showed what Porto missed in their heaviest-ever European home defeat as he got in behind the Liverpool defence only to be denied by Loris Karius rushing off his line to mop up the danger.

Mane was inches away from his fourth goal of the tie on the half-hour mark when he controlled James Milner's lofted pass on his chest before smashing the inside of Iker Casillas's far post. Dejan Lovren then headed narrowly over as Liverpool threatened to raise the pulse of an understandably more subdued

Anfield than is customary on a European night. Casillas was given a standing ovation by the Liverpool fans in the Kop end as he took to the field after the break on his record 167th and possible farewell appearance in the Champions League.

However, that was one of few moments that got the home fans off their feet as Liverpool settled on their substantial lead. Milner sliced a good opening wide just two minutes into the second half, whilst at the other end Karius was stretched to turn Majeed Waris's shot behind.

Roberto Firmino had one clear chance to add to his seven Champions League goals this season when his shot was blocked by Porto captain Felipe before the Brazilian was protected by Klopp for the weekend as Danny Ings was introduced for the final half hour. Salah was given 15 minutes to find the winner when he replaced Mane. The Egyptian had one opportunity to extend his scoring streak to eight straight games, but Casillas smothered his low effort. And the Spanish veteran made his best stop of the night two minutes from time to deny Ings and hold onto his clean sheet. — AFP



LIVERPOOL: Liverpool's Dutch defender Joel Matip (2R) heads towards goal during the UEFA Champions League round of sixteen second leg football match between Liverpool and FC Porto at Anfield in Liverpool, north-west England yesterday. — AFP



## Business

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## Zain enters MoU with Huawei

Zain to continue investing in talent development, digital transformation



BARCELONA: Zain Vice Chairman and Group CEO, Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi and Guo Ping, rotating CEO of Huawei, sign the MoU during MWC 2018 in Barcelona.

BARCELONA: Zain, a leading telecommunications provider in the Middle East and Africa, vowed to further expand focus on digital transformation and talent development, through signing a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Huawei Technologies. The signing took place during MWC 2018 in Barcelona in the presence of Zain Vice Chairman and Group CEO, Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi and Guo Ping, rotating CEO of Huawei.

Under the terms of the agreement, Huawei and Zain will establish a Joint Innovation Team to explore collaboration opportunities in digital transformation. Both companies are committed to combine their expertise to advance in the field of testing and deploying 5G technologies. In addition, Zain will work closely with Huawei to roll-out exciting and compelling innovative solutions to enrich the enterprise market, e.g. Smart Cities and digital services. Also, the cooperation will see both entities focus

on exploiting the vast opportunities in cloud services and gaming, both key growth areas for Zain.

The MoU also has an element of corporate social responsibility; Zain and Huawei will collaborate to achieve a plan for the development of youth talented workforce, a key focus area as new technologies continue to develop across the Middle East.

Bader Al-Kharafi commented, "Our goal at Zain Group is to ensure that our clients enjoy a world-class user experience and benefit from the most cutting-edge products and solutions. We believe that our strategic partnership with Huawei will help us continue to deliver outstanding services to our customers and further bolster our transformation to be a leading digital lifestyle operator."

Guo Ping added, "Once again, we are proud of our strategic partnership with Zain Group. It is vital for people and organization to have access to intelligent and

agile telecommunication infrastructure in order to stay competitive in an increasingly digital world. By partnering with Zain, we hope to deliver the most technologically innovative infrastructure to the Middle East as well as develop the digital skillsets of the region's future leaders."

This is not the first instance of collaboration between Huawei and Zain. Throughout the Middle East, Huawei and Zain have been strengthening their strategic partnership across various technology initiatives. In 2016, the two companies signed a strategic agreement to enhance the efficiency of the telco networks through NFV/SDN solutions by the year 2020. In May 2017, Zain and Huawei held the fourth annual Zain-Huawei MBB Summit under the theme of "4G Evolution Towards 5G". The summit resulted in another strategic MoU between Zain and Huawei promising further collaboration in the field of 5G.

## Canada, Mexico exempt from tariffs once NAFTA deal signed: US official

WASHINGTON: Canada and Mexico will be exempt from the steel and aluminum tariffs President Donald Trump will unveil this week once a new North American Free Trade Agreement is reached, US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said yesterday. Acknowledging the fears that Trump's surprise announcement last week could spark a trade war, Mnuchin also hinted that the final implementation may address some of the issues.

In testimony before a House appropriations subcommittee, the Treasury secretary said he has been in contact with his counterparts on the specifics of the tariff proposals and "we're trying to deal with this on a case by case basis". The president "does understand the potential impact it has on the economy, and I think we have a way of managing through this." Trump last week announced that he would be imposing tariffs of 25 percent on all imported steel and 10 percent on aluminum to protect domestic industries, citing a rarely-invoked national security section of US trade law.

That sparked global outrage and

threats of retaliation, including from the European Union, and NAFTA-partner Canada which has the most to lose as the main provider of steel to the US market. Trump said he would not back down, even for the closest US neighbors, unless and until a deal to revamp NAFTA that is "fair" for US business and workers was signed.

Many observers read that as a softening of his stance to have no exemptions, and that sent global financial markets roaring back yesterday. Mnuchin was even more definitive saying that with Canada and Mexico "our objective is to have a new NAFTA and once we do that - which I'm cautiously optimistic on - the tariffs won't apply to them". However, with the sanctions due out this week and the latest round of NAFTA talks ending Monday with no agreement imminent, the two countries will face tariffs on their metals exports at least for some time. The NAFTA talks are complicated by coming presidential elections in Mexico in July as well as crucial midterm elections in the United States in November.— AFP



WASHINGTON: Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin testifies during a House Appropriations Committee hearing on Capitol Hill yesterday. — AFP

## 11 Pacific trade pact countries go it alone without US

SANTIAGO: A year after an abrupt US withdrawal left a fledgling 12-nation Pacific trade pact dead, the 11 remaining states will sign a re-vamped deal tomorrow aimed at slashing tariffs. The agreement—rebranded as the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP)—has been championed as an antidote to growing US protectionism under President Donald Trump.

"We are not going to be derailed by Trump's decision" to withdraw the US, said Felipe Lopeandia, Chile's top trade negotiator, ahead of the ratification ceremony in Santiago. After years of negotiations, the original deal—the Trans-Pacific Partnership, or TPP—was signed in February 2016 by 12 countries that border the Pacific Ocean. But it fell victim to Trump's "America First" policy, when he removed the pact's major linchpin before the deal could get under way.

The CPTPP aims to slash tariffs between the 11 members and foster trade to boost growth.

It will "send a political signal to the world and to the United States itself, that this is a global agreement," said Lopeandia.

## Blow against protectionism

Coming in the same week that Trump risked a trade war over his decision to introduce tariffs on imported steel and

aluminum, the deal is seen by some members as striking a blow against protectionism. Washington's exit meant a drastic downsizing of the original agreement—which with US involvement represented 40 percent of the global economy. But the pact—though a diminished one involving 13.5 percent of global GDP—remains hugely significant, according to Ignacio Bartsaghi of the Catholic University of Uruguay's business school.

"There is no trade agreement involving that number of countries, and one that has 30 chapters which deal with all the most modern topics of international trade," Bartsaghi told AFP.

Last month, Trump told the World Economic Forum in Davos that the US might return if it got a better deal. "Little by little, his advisors have managed to make Trump realize the role that the United States plays in Asia Pacific and the role played by the TPP in that region, not only in economic and trade terms, but in geopolitical terms," said Bartsaghi. But Japan, a key driver behind the revised pact, is skeptical. "If the United States returns to a more positive attitude toward the TPP, it is something we will welcome (but) it would not be so easy" to change the agreement again, said Tokyo's chief negotiator Kazuyoshi Umemoto.

## More balanced

More than 20 provisions were suspended or changed in the new agreement, mostly rules over intellectual property originally inserted at the demand of US negotiators. Analysts noted these provisions were not canceled, however, with some suggesting the door is being left ajar for the US.

Chilean authorities say the new chapter on intellectual property protection is now "more balanced." "The CPTPP will establish a new standard for other regional economic integration agreements, and even for future negotiations in the WTO (World Trade Organization) and in APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation)," said Chile's foreign min-



MEXICO CITY: A man holds a sign reading "Stop deportations" during a protest against US President Donald Trump outside the US Embassy in Mexico City on Monday as the seventh round of NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) talks took place in the city.— AFP

istry, which is hosting Thursday's landmark signing.

Chile said membership of the new pact will improve access to markets currently responsible for 17 percent of its total exports. The other two Latin American countries, Mexico and Peru, will also improve their access to countries on the other side of the Pacific, such as Vietnam and Malaysia. "It means an increase in our potential market and the possibility that our people can

access more products," said Mario Mongilardi, head of Lima's chamber of commerce.

The 11 states represent a market of 500 million people, greater than that of the European Union's single market. The pact will come into force 60 days after it is fully ratified by six of the 11 members. The 11 TPP countries are Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore and Vietnam. — AFP



## Business

# Limak signs KD 28.990m contract for South Abdullah Al-Mubarak project

## Plans to complete construction on its fourth project in Kuwait in 2022



Group photo of the signing ceremony



Melek Guvener, Limak Holding Tendering and Cost Control Director with Jenan Bushehri.

**KUWAIT:** Limak Holding, one of the world's leading conglomerates constructing landmark projects worldwide including the new terminal at Kuwait International Airport, has signed an infrastructure contract with the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) for the construction, completion and maintenance of 3,260 plots of land for the South Abdullah Al-Mubarak Housing project during a signing ceremony held on March 5, 2018.

The contract was signed by Limak Holding Tendering and Cost Control Director Melek Guvener and Kuwait Minister of State for Housing and Minister of State for Services, Jenan Bushehri. In

attendance at the signing ceremony were PAHW Director General Engineer Bader Al-Wuqayyan, Chairman of the Housing Committee MP Faisal Al-Kandari, and Limak Insaat Kuwait S.P.C. General Manager Kayihan Bagdatli, in addition to VIPs from the government and business sector in Kuwait and the company's senior management.

Under the agreement Limak will construct 3,260 plots of land in 730 days, which will include road networks, parking lots, sewage systems, rainwater drainages, a telephone network, power stations, road lighting, a 250-gallon irrigation tank, and placement of power cables.

Melek Guvener, Limak Holding Tendering and Cost Control Director said: "We are honored to have been selected by the Public Authority for Housing Welfare to implement the South Abdullah Al-Mubarak housing project, and are proud to continue to play a prominent role as a trusted contractor in the community, and have a role in the growth and advancement of Kuwait through various development megaprojects."

Kayihan Bagdatli, Limak Insaat Kuwait S.P.C. General Manager said: "Utilizing our extensive experience in construction, renewable energy, and management, we are proud to have a role in Kuwait's development plan and help the country achieve its Vision 2035

goals. Representing our continued interest towards the community we established a local presence under the Foreign Direct Investment Law, Limak Insaat Kuwait, and recently increased our capital to 10 million, and will continue to seek ways to contribute and invest in Kuwait for decades to come."

Limak began contributing to Kuwait's development projects in 2009 with the company's first project, the Infectious Diseases Hospital, followed by the West Abdullah Al-Mubarak Housing project, and then most notably the New Terminal Project at Kuwait International Airport (Terminal 2).

Working previously with the PAHW, in September 2017 Limak Insaat successfully

completed and delivered the first phase of the West Abdullah Al-Mubarak infrastructure project two months ahead of schedule. The KD 45.9 million project is one of the largest residential areas in Kuwait with 5,201 units, and the first phase alone includes 2,346 units.

Established in 1976, Limak is one of the leading conglomerates in Turkey with major interests in construction, energy, cement, and tourism. The Group operates in over 17 countries with more than 55,000 employees and across various sectors, including tourism, cement, energy, infrastructure, airport management and operations, port management, food and aviation.

## Aramco IPO venue in the balance as Saudi prince embarks on trip

**DUBAI/LONDON/WASHINGTON:** Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's upcoming trip to Britain and the United States could shape the decision on where to list oil giant Aramco, at a time when sources say the chances of London and New York hosting the IPO appear to be receding. The two leading financial centers have long been the clear frontrunners to host the international leg of the flotation, alongside a Riyadh listing.

Yet this may no longer be the case as Hong Kong is emerging as an increasingly likely compromise because Riyadh wants to help Asian nations that are expected to become "cornerstone" investors, including China and Japan, according to two sources familiar with the matter.

To be sure, both London and New York are still in the running, but their requirement for greater disclosure of sensitive information on Aramco than the Hong Kong exchange is viewed as a drawback by some Saudi officials and advisers, the sources said. A final decision has yet to be made by Prince Mohammed, who oversees the kingdom's economic and oil policies, the sources said. The complexity of the listing, legal worries and conflicting recommendations of the different advisers have delayed decision-making, they added.

Saudi Aramco said it was still reviewing its international listing options, and that no decision had been made, but declined to comment further. Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing, the city's exchange operator, said: "Hong Kong is well positioned for the listing of Aramco. We have not received any indication of how the company is likely to proceed with its international listing plan."

The London Stock Exchange declined to comment, while the New York Stock Exchange did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Prince Mohammed will arrive in London today for talks with British Prime Minister Theresa May and other senior ministers in his first trip to Britain since being named heir to the throne last summer. He is expected to travel to the United States from March 19 to the first week of April, where he will meet U.S. President Donald Trump, and make stops in New York, Boston, Houston and San Francisco among other cities. Both May and Trump want to attract the IPO, which could be the largest in history. Senior Saudi officials, including Energy Minister Khalid Al-Falih and Aramco CEO Amin



**ISMAILIA:** A handout picture made available yesterday, by the Egyptian Presidency shows Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi (center), Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (right) and the Chairman of the Suez Canal Authority Mohab Memesh, visiting the Suez Canal in the city of Ismailia on Monday, east of the capital Cairo. —AFP

Nasser, are likely to accompany the crown prince on his foreign tour. Britain has proposed loosening rules on listing state companies by creating a new category for such firms to accommodate Aramco. "The British want a strategic partner post-Brexit," said a third source familiar with the crown prince's trip. In November, Trump publicly appealed for Saudi Arabia to list Aramco's shares in the United States, describing the listing as a priority for Washington.

The U.S. visit will give the Saudis a chance to discuss the IPO on a senior level, according to two separate sources familiar with the trip.

### \$2 trillion valuation

Prince Mohammed has said Aramco is worth \$2 trillion, meaning the listing of about 5 percent of the company could raise \$100 billion. He himself favors New York for Aramco's main foreign listing for political reasons, given the longstanding ties between Riyadh and Washington and also because it gives the company access to a larger pool of capital, the first two sources said.

However, as well as the high disclosure requirements, the company's advisers have warned about litigation risks associated with the US Justice Against Sponsors of Terrorism Act, or JASTA, the sources added. The law allowed lawsuits to proceed against the Saudi government claiming it had helped to plan the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks. Riyadh denies the allegations. In Britain, meanwhile, the moves by regulators to loosen rules on listing state com-

panies have been met with resistance from some politicians. The head of an influential parliamentary committee said on Monday that such efforts could cost London its reputation for good corporate governance.

Saudi authorities have said they intend to list Aramco in Riyadh and on one or more foreign exchanges. The IPO is the centerpiece of a Saudi economic reform plan, known as Vision 2030 and championed by Prince Mohammed, to diversify the economy beyond oil. But the IPO plan has caused misgivings among some Saudi officials and Aramco employees who believe Riyadh is relinquishing its crown jewels to foreigners and would like the whole idea to be shelved, sources have previously said. Bankers and analysts say Riyadh needs to list Aramco on either New York or London to show it is serious about its economic reforms and a willingness to attract foreign investment after an anti-corruption crackdown last November that led to the detention of several businessmen unnerved some investors. "If the Aramco deal is going to have any credibility a listing on either New York or London has to happen," said a senior Gulf-based banker familiar with the IPO process.

"Anything else will not cut it for international investors, in terms of transparency and corporate governance." The decision on the listing venue must be taken by March or April at latest if the IPO is to be carried out in October or November, otherwise it could be delayed until 2019, sources familiar with the IPO discussions have said. —Reuters

firms controlled by Choksi have been accused of defrauding the bank of 61.38 billion rupees.

India's federal police, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), has told a Mumbai court that the amount involving Modi's companies was likely to go up, according to the source and court filings, copies of which have been reviewed by Reuters. The CBI told the court that its investigation found that the fraudulent issuance of letters of undertaking (LoUs), or guarantees, through a Mumbai branch of the bank had been going on since 2010. In papers filed on Monday, the CBI also said PNB did not have all the documents related to the LoUs, since those were returned to the borrower. "Most of these documents are not yet recovered. The size of the fraud has now gone (up)...and the same is likely to go even higher," the CBI said in the court filing. —Reuters

## Blue-collar women find hope in #MeToo movement

**CHICAGO:** The #MeToo movement may be changing work cultures from entertainment to politics, but Guadalupe Hinojosa will still be stepping into a tough world for women when she completes her training as a welder. On the third floor of a sprawling red-brick building in Chicago, where mason jars were once manufactured, the 35-year-old moved in a welding helmet between pieces of heavy industrial equipment.

A few weeks into her training at Chicago Women in Trades—an organization that prepares women for construction jobs—the single mother of four and survivor of domestic abuse hopes to land a job that could double her current income. But that job will come with hardships. What awaits Hinojosa is a male-dominated work environment where women are often treated with outright hostility.

"I already am familiar with... the possibility of what I could be facing," Hinojosa said. "I've just kind of been putting the armor on, trying to prepare myself for the worst." On construction sites and in manufacturing plants, blue-collar working women have endured harassment and abuse for decades. Hinojosa's teacher Scarlet Burmeister believes all of her students "will face some sort of harassment or gender based discrimination on the job." "A lot of them will be the first woman on the shop floor. A lot of them will get stared at and call names, and some of them will end up losing their jobs," Burmeister told AFP. As the #MeToo movement against sexual harassment has toppled powerful men in high-profile industries—from movies and media to fashion, the arts and politics—many blue-collar women have remained silent, afraid of destroying careers on which they heavily depend.

Others have spoken out with varying degrees of success. But the wave has raised cautious hopes for change, said Jayne Vellinga, head of Chicago Women in Trades. "For them to be getting wider attention for these issues that they live with every day... is heartening and makes people hopeful," she told AFP.

### 'He scared me'

For one female electrician, who asked that her identity be kept secret, harassment on a skyscraper construction site lasted for months. It began as inappropriate flirtations from a male co-worker and escalated into angry, threatening behavior. "I would turn around and there he is, for no reason," the 26-year-old recounted to AFP. "I didn't want to be near him, because he scared me." She was hesitant to speak out, worried about being blacklisted as a problem employee.

"I waited months before I said anything," she said. "I was waiting to get physically hurt so that it would be unde-



**HOLLYWOOD:** This file photo shows victims of sexual harassment during a #MeToo march in Hollywood. —AFP

niable." Eventually, the woman did speak out, complaining to her supervisor who was sympathetic—but he did not know how to help, and allowed the perpetrator to keep working on the site. The male co-worker's threats escalated into physical violence in which he struck the woman on the head with a heavy tool bag and threatened her life. He was finally fired.

### 'They flexed their power'

Women in construction are far from alone among American blue-collar workers in battling sexual harassment on the job. In one of the most high-profile examples to come to light, the auto giant Ford is facing lawsuits from women who say they were afraid to show up to work at two assembly plants in Chicago. Miyoshi Morris, one of three female workers suing the firm who testified at a Chicago city government hearing in February, said that male supervisors demanded sex for job security and advancement. "They flexed their power, threatened my career and suggested if I wanted to continue to provide for my family, I had to engage in sexual acts or favors," Morris said.

Christie Van said she was physically assaulted. A male coworker threw her against a window and groped her. Another showed her a photo of his penis. When she complained, a supervisor said: "Loosen up... You want to see mine, too?"

Ford settled two class-action lawsuits 20 years ago over harassment at the very same Chicago assembly plants. Back then, the company promised training programs to change the abusive culture. Ford admitted last year that its efforts have fallen short. "This has been a learning experience about how difficult it can be to root out bad behavior," said Ford CEO Jim Hackett.

### 'Not expecting any real change'

Abusive behavior on blue-collar work sites has been a known problem in the United States dating back to 1965. That was the year President Lyndon B. Johnson signed an executive order requiring non-discrimination policies among government contractors, including those constructing government buildings.

The decree triggered a surge in women entering traditionally male-dominated professions, breaking down barriers. "There were pickets. There were lawsuits," says Vellinga, of Chicago Women in Trades. And as construction crews and assembly plants diversified, harassment increased. Blue-collar women have been trying to improve their conditions ever since. —AFP

## India's PNB bank fraud likely to swell beyond \$2 billion mark

**MUMBAI:** The extent of the unravelling fraud at India's state-run Punjab National Bank could rise beyond the nearly \$2 billion mark so far outlined by the lender, according to a source involved in the probe and court documents reviewed by Reuters. The source, who asked not to be named, said investigators had not yet

recovered all the papers and loan guarantees allegedly issued by rogue employees of the bank, and consequently believed the bank's exposure could be greater than revealed so far.

In what has been dubbed as the biggest fraud in India's banking history, Punjab National (PNB) and police have accused two jewelry groups — one controlled by diamond tycoon Nirav Modi and the other by his uncle Mehul Choksi — of colluding with bank employees to get credit from overseas banks using fraudulent guarantees. Both Choksi and Modi have denied the allegations and lawyers for the two key accused PNB employees in the case have also said they are innocent.

According to court filings, the exposure to three companies controlled by Modi has been estimated at 64.98 billion rupees (\$999 million), while

Business

Markets rebound on easing trade war fears

LONDON: World stock markets roared higher yesterday as fears eased over US President Donald Trump's planned trade tariffs and over tension in the Korean peninsula, dealers said.

will hold a historic summit in the Demilitarized Zone next month after Pyongyang expressed willingness to give up its nuclear weapons.

"Risk appetite has improved on headlines North Korea has expressed a willingness to talk about denuclearization, according to South Korea," analyst Fawad Razaqada of Forex said.

Lukman Otunuga, research analyst at FXTM, described as "remarkable and somewhat alarming" the risk-off sentiment last Friday was swiftly replaced with a risk-on mood today.

"European stocks were elevated by the renewed appetite for risk," he added. Republican Trump had sparked fears of a global trade war late last week when he unveiled plans to slap levies on imports of steel and aluminium, sending share prices tumbling.

Automakers accelerate

European automakers revved higher, after losing speed on worries that a trade war could hurt valuable exports into the United States. In Frankfurt, carmakers Volkswagen and Daimler jumped by more than three

percent and 1.4 percent respectively.

"A strategic target-and standing to lose the most from any possible trade war-the German auto sector is rebounding sharply, helping lift the DAX higher," noted Interactive Investor analyst Rebecca O'Keefe.

In Paris, Renault and Peugeot were also sharply higher. And Milan's benchmark FTSE MIB shares index wiped out the previous day's losses seen after Italy's inconclusive election outcome, and added hefty gains, outperforming its European peers.

Tokyo stocks snapped a four-day losing streak yesterday, boosted by a rebound on Wall Street and a fall in the yen's value against the dollar. The benchmark Nikkei 225 index climbed 1.79 percent or 375.67 points to 21,417.76 while the broader Topix index was up 1.27 percent or 21.51 points at 1,716.30.

"It's buybacks that boosted the market today," said Makoto Sengoku, market analyst at Tokai Tokyo Research Centre. "US stocks rebounded and the (dollar) rate bounced back into the 106 yen range," improving investor sentiment, he said. But investors were unwilling to go on a major buying spree ahead of key US jobs data

on Friday, he added. All three major indices on Wall Street rose on Monday, with investors seemingly persuaded President Donald Trump's recent threats to launch a trade war were actually a bargaining tactic.

The president on Monday indicated he might consider exempting Canada and Mexico from steel and aluminium import tariffs if he likes the outcome of pending trade talks. The yen stayed weak after falling on Monday, with the dollar trading at 106.19 yen yesterday against 106.18 yen in New York on Monday afternoon and the 105-yen range in Tokyo earlier.

A lower yen is positive for Japanese exporters as it makes exported goods cheaper and inflates overseas profits when repatriated. Carmakers were broadly higher. Honda jumped 1.60 percent to 3,666 yen and Toyota rose 0.99 percent to 6,882 yen. Steelmakers also bounced back with Nippon Steel and Sumitomo Metal rising 0.96 percent to 2,399.5 yen.

Kobe Steel closed up a fractional 0.09 percent at 1,110 yen moments before its chief executive Hiroya Kawasaki announced he was stepping down to take responsibility for a data-faking scandal. — AFP

Daily Kuwait Stock Exchange Report. Tuesday, March 06, 2018. Includes sections for Global Stock Exchange Report, Trades, and various market indices like Price Index, Weighted Index, and KSEX 15.

National Bank of Kuwait Financial Markets Daily Report. At 02:00 PM Previous Day. Includes sections for Global Stock Indices, MENA Stock Indices, Global Currencies Exchange Rate, MENA Currencies Exchange Rate, Global Interest Rates, Global Bond Yields, and Commodities.

Business

# Panasonic organizes 9th Technical Olympic for ME service partners

Panasonic underscores importance of well-trained personnel



DUBAI: Panasonic Marketing Middle East & Africa (PMMAF) 'Technical Olympics.'



Ryuji Nakatani

DUBAI: Panasonic Marketing Middle East & Africa (PMMAF) continues to strengthen its aim to provide unmatched customer satisfaction with the recent staging in Dubai of the 'Technical Olympics', a repair skill competition conducted for the service technicians representing Panasonic's Middle East Service Partner Companies.

Now on its ninth edition, the competition involved four product categories - air conditioners, washing machines, televisions and telecom - and drew partici-

pants from UAE, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman, Bahrain, Pakistan and Iran. The judging panel, comprised four senior members from Panasonic's Customer Service Department, evaluated the contestants based on their ability to implement their technical skills and knowledge in assessing, maintaining and repairing various electronics products and appliances to their optimal operating levels.

In addition to completing the contest's technical tasks, the participants also took the test for "Customer Care Manners

During Home Service" to further evaluate their customer care skills. Through these activities, PMMAF not only aims to strengthen technical capabilities but customer service management skills as well of partners who are responsible for front-line operations of each country.

Ryuji Nakatani, Director of PMMAF's Customer Service Division, who also delivered the opening remarks, said "Panasonic's commitment goes beyond offering ground-breaking products and technologies. Our core philosophy is to

continuously improve the quality of the company's products, with a perspective that puts the customer first. We continuously strive to provide the best customer experience and this includes top-notch after-sales service. This is where initiatives, like the Technical Olympics, play a major role, since training and competitions are vital to improving quality by creating more skillful and technically proficient service personnel."

John Hardy, Director, Consumer Sales, PMMAF, added, "The service employees

play a major role in strengthening customer touch-points that our company is aiming for. Service employees can maximize customer satisfaction through good repair skills and customer service manners, which will contribute to the overall success of our business".

Concluding the event was an awards ceremony wherein PMMAF honored the winning engineers for each product category: Saudi Arabia (Air conditioner & Television), Oman (Washing machine) and Kuwait (Telecom).

## Gulf Bank offers its priority banking customers discounts from Al-Ostoura

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank announced the launch of a special campaign for its Priority Banking Customers where they can enjoy up to 20 percent discounts at all Al-Ostoura outlets and showrooms in Kuwait from 1 March to 31 May 2018.

A leading retailer of designer brands in Kuwait and the Middle East, Al-Ostoura operates a growing retail group of high profile, monobrand and multi-brand stores that offer clothing and accessories for the luxury and contemporary lifestyle markets.

Gulf Bank's Priority Banking customers can indulge in a wide selection of international renowned luxury brands at Al-Ostoura outlets in Al-Thuraya Mall, The Avenues, Salhiya Complex, Zahra Complex and Gate Mall. Priority Banking Customers should use their Gulf Bank credit cards including Visa Infinite, MasterCard World or Visa Signature, to benefit from the privileges.

Gulf Bank is committed to providing Priority Banking Customers with exceptional value and exciting offers that meet their needs, in



addition to presenting them with one of the widest selections of financial products and banking services currently available in Kuwait.

With Gulf Bank Priority Banking, customers enjoy a personalized and preferential treatment coupled with a suite of Banking and investment products and services designed to meet their financial goals. A dedicated Relationship Manager is assigned to manage customers banking requirements in the comfort of dedicated private floors. In addition, they will receive a branded ATM card that recognizes their status across Gulf Bank Network, premium credit cards with exclusive privileges, discounted fees and waivers on banking transactions and added value benefits through our premium partner merchants.

## ECB to underline bright outlook for eurozone

FRANKFURT AM MAIN: The European Central Bank could signal greater optimism for the eurozone at a meeting tomorrow, but will remain tight-lipped about plans for winding down its massive support to the economy, analysts predict.

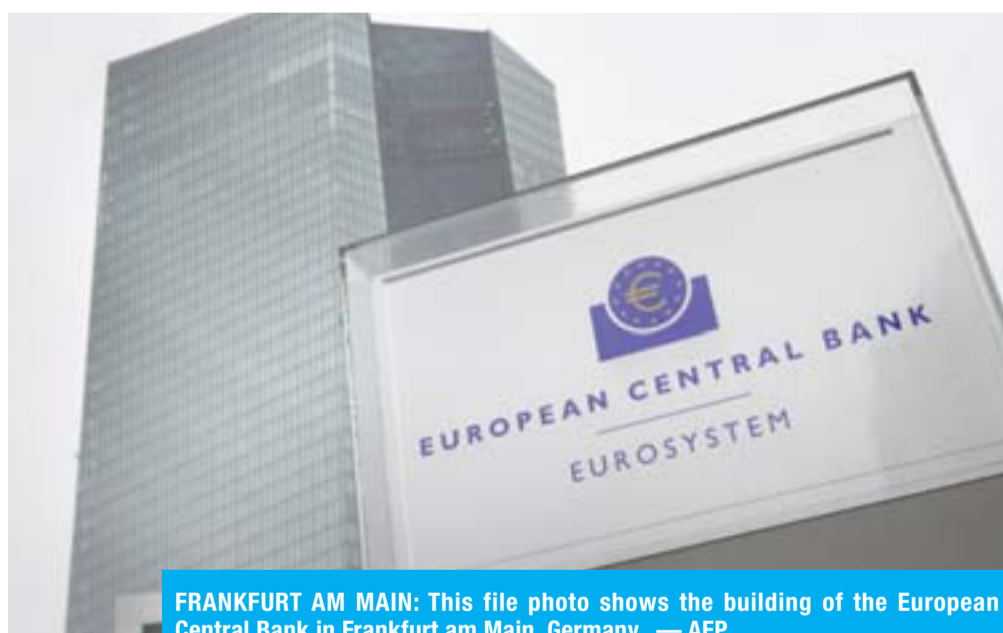
With a transatlantic trade war looming and a populist surge in Italy's Sunday elections that shadowed the major eurozone economy with uncertainty, ECB President Mario Draghi is unlikely to rock the boat with talk of higher interest rates or cuts to its "quantitative easing" bond-buying program. Observers see the ECB on the way out of its mass bond-buying scheme, after it decided to halve purchases of government and corporate debt to some 30 billion euros (\$37 billion) per month from January this year. Combined with historic low interest rates, bond-buying was designed to stoke economic growth in the eurozone by pumping cash through the financial system, helping boost inflation to the ECB's target of just below 2.0 percent seen as most favorable for long-term growth. But while GDP expansion in the 19-nation single currency area surged to 2.5 percent last year, price growth has not picked up in step.

In December, ECB forecasts called for inflation to hit 1.7 percent by 2020 still slightly short of its goal. Indicators like business confidence, unemployment and credit growth "have been consistent with the ECB's positive assessment" for future expansion of 2.3 percent this year and 1.9 percent in 2019, economist Frederik Ducrozet of Pictet bank noted.

Nevertheless, "notwithstanding the ECB's rising confidence, the staff projections for inflation are likely to remain stable in March," Ducrozet added.

### Boardroom battle

A stable set of forecasts will not quell dis-



FRANKFURT AM MAIN: This file photo shows the building of the European Central Bank in Frankfurt am Main, Germany. — AFP

cord on the ECB's 25-strong governing council, made up of the executive board and governors from the 19 member states' central banks. Minutes from January's meeting showed policymakers who favor a faster dismantling of bond-buying in light of stronger growth are increasingly vocal. They were boosted last month when executive board member Benoit Coeure judged that "in future, the eurosysteem (of the ECB plus the national central banks) can retreat as a buyer" without unravelling easier financing conditions.

"The end of QE is getting closer. The risk of deflation is clearly behind us and the only question is how to moderate and implement this exit," analyst Carsten Brzeski of ING Diba bank said.

But the so-called "hawks" remain outvoted by "doves"; governors who think the ECB should keep fuelling the recovery until it is certain of reaching its inflation goal.

Compromise between the two sides to achieve a unanimous decision could produce "another cautious and very subtle step towards the QE exit," Brzeski predicted. The ECB may not risk removing language that promises more bond-buying if the economy

takes a turn for the worse from its "forward guidance" policy statement. Instead, it could stress its ability to respond to shocks with a range of different tools.

### Italian conundrum

A slump in global stock markets in recent weeks "should not have impacted the ECB's assessment" of the economy, Brzeski judged, noting it had a "small impact" on confidence in the eurozone. And just last week, President Donald Trump's vow to slap tariffs on steel and aluminium imports into the United States threatens a tit-for-tat escalation with major trade partners like the European Union. Taken to extremes, a border tax duel could threaten growth and undermine inflation.

Meanwhile, Sunday's elections in Italy produced an unclear result that will make forming a government for the eurozone's third-largest economy difficult, with the parties that made the biggest gains promising lower taxes and higher social benefits. That makes it less likely they will heed Draghi's longstanding call on all euro countries to launch structural reforms, build fiscal buffers or reduce debt levels while the sun shines. — AFP

## Kobe Steel CEO to quit over data fraud scandal

TOKYO: Kobe Steel Ltd said yesterday its CEO will step down to take responsibility for a widespread data fraud scandal, although doubts remain over a corporate culture mired in malfeasance and the possibility of future fines. Japan's third-largest steelmaker, which supplies steel parts to manufacturers of cars, planes and trains around the world, admitted last year to supplying products with falsified specifications to about 500 customers, throwing global supply chains into turmoil.

Kobe Steel, in announcing the results from a four-month-long investigation by an external committee, said it found a new case of impropriety affecting a total of more than 600 clients.

Hiroya Kawasaki will resign as CEO and Chairman on April 1, with his successor to be decided at a board meeting to be held soon, the company said. "We discovered that inappropriate actions were widespread, and were carried out with the knowledge and involvement of many, including management," it said. "Considering the multiple compliance issues that we've had in the past, we must say that there are deep-rooted problems, not only in terms of compliance but also in the corporate culture and mindset of employees and management."

It also announced the resignation of Executive Vice President Akira Kaneko and temporary pay cuts of up to 80 percent for all internal executive officers.

The case was one of the country's

biggest industrial scandals in recent memory, which set off a rash of malfeasance revelations by other Japanese heavyweights, hitting the country's reputation for manufacturing excellence.

In the past several months, Mitsubishi Materials Corp. Toray Industries and Ube Industries have also admitted to product data fabrication while automakers Nissan Motor and Subaru Corp have revealed incorrect final inspection procedures.

### Entrenched problems

Kobe Steel said the data cheating started in the 1970s, and those who know the 112-year-old company say its problems are entrenched. "What you see is a pattern, a culture," said Steven Bleistein, CEO of Tokyo-based consultancy Relansa. "Company culture is something that a leader creates, so the very least you have to do is to remove the leader and the people who were complicit, from the CEO downwards."

Kobe Steel admitted earlier to taking part in bid-rigging for a bridge project in 2005, and failing to report income to tax authorities in 2008, 2011 and 2013.

In 2006, it also exceeded established limits for ground and water pollution, and admitted to falsifying soot-emissions data from blast furnaces at Kobe Works and Kakogawa Works. Illegal political funding to candidates in local assembly elections in 2009 prompted the resignations of the then CEO and chairman. For now, the data fraud scandal appears to have left Kobe Steel's finances unscathed. In February, the company reinstated a forecast for its first annual profit in three years for the year ending March 31, backed by strong profits in steel and machinery.

But the company is also undergoing a US Justice Department probe, meaning it still faces legal and financial risk. A Japanese government-sanctioned seal of quality has been revoked on some of its product as well. — Reuters



TOKYO: Kobe Steel President Hiroya Kawasaki (R) bows at the end of a press conference in Tokyo yesterday. The head of scandal-hit Japanese steelmaker Kobe Steel announced his resignation after the firm submitted false strength and quality data for products shipped to hundreds of clients worldwide. — AFP

## Technology

# Big switch: Electric cars put China on automobile map

## More than 30 new companies in the electric car market

GENEVA: The rise of electric cars heralds not only a major technology switch but also promises massive disruption to today's auto giants as Tesla and a group of powerful Chinese rivals take over the fast lane. The diesel scandal in 2015 in which Volkswagen admitted manipulating 11 million diesel vehicles worldwide to fool pollution tests only briefly dented the firm's profits.

However industry insiders say it may have spurred the shift away from conventional internal combustion engines. "Dieselgate" is becoming a catastrophe because it has accelerated the transition to electric motors and "that puts Chinese competitors into play", said one European automaker executive on condition of anonymity.

The extent to which the trend towards electric cars is gaining traction will be visible this week at the Geneva motor show. The switch to electric motors threatens to eliminate an advantage that today's carmakers enjoy. They invested billions in research into developing and refining internal combustion engines, both to provide the performance drivers expect but also to meet increasingly demanding pollution regulations.

Experts said this constituted a virtually insurmountable "market barrier to entry" for new competitors. "Clearly, an electric powertrain is much simpler" to manufacture, said Eric Kirstetter, an auto sector expert at the Roland Berger consulting firm. "The best indicator of market openness this is creating is what is happening in China at the moment," he added.

**New motors, new competitors**  
Roland Berger has identified more than 30 new companies in the electric car market. Among those start-ups he cited were Lynk & Co (a joint venture between Geely and Volvo); NIO, backed by Chinese tech giants; FMC, run by former BMW and Tesla staffers, as well as Chehejia, whose founder is nicknamed "China's Elon Musk", the founder of Tesla. A look at the top sellers of electric cars

ZD, BYD, Zotye, JAC, Geely. They all profit from measures the Chinese government has put in place to encourage the development and purchase of electric vehicles, as Beijing seeks to limit air pollution in the face of growing demand for private vehicles.

### Germans behind

On that list are no German carmakers, which have dominated both the mass and luxury segments in recent years. In the United States, Tesla already sells as many cars as Porsche, part of the Volkswagen group. German carmakers, which pioneered the development of diesel motors for automobiles, bet on refining the engines to meet ever stricter air pollution restrictions, before the VW scandal prompted a regulatory rethink and prodded consumers to choose alternatives as cities begin cracking down on dirty cars.

Led by VW, German carmakers have announced billions in additional investment to bring out hybrid and electric vehicles. Electric vehicles account for only 1 percent of the market currently. But with a 50 percent growth rate they are expected to rapidly become a significant segment in the market. According to forecasts by Roland Berger, electric vehicles will account for 15 percent of sales in Europe and 17 percent in China—the world's largest car market—in 2025.

### Building know-how

Today's big carmakers have one advantage to help them catch up with the start-ups



**'Dieselgate' is becoming a catastrophe**

shows that traditional carmakers are in for a shock.

With around 75,000 cars sold, Tesla, which started mass producing cars only a decade ago, is keeping pace with the Renault-Nissan alliance, according to figures from automotive industry research firm Jato Dynamics. However it was China's BAIC that stormed to first place with 78,000 sales for its EC series. The only other traditional carmaker in the top ten is US carmaker Chevrolet (part of General Motors) thanks to the Chevy Bolt. All the others are Chinese:



GENEVA: In this file photo taken on March 4, 2015 visitors are seen at the booth of US electric carmaker Tesla Motors, during the press day of the Geneva Car Show. — AFP

in addition to their deep pockets—manufacturing experience. Tesla has learned this the hard way with the difficulties it has experienced with ramping up production of its mass market Model 3. "You can't compare at all manufacturing 500,000 cars with making 5,000," said Meissa Tal, an automobile analyst at Deloitte.

"A vehicle is more than 10,000 pieces that are coming from thousands of suppliers, you

have to know how to assemble in volumes that are in the millions, that is where the know-how of the manufacturers is," she added. "It's not so difficult to do one perhaps, but mass producing electric vehicles, not many manufacturers (have had) a big success on that so far," said Gareth Dunsmore, who heads up electric vehicles for Nissan in Europe, which has just launched its second-generation Leaf electric vehicle. — AFP

## SpaceX carries out 50th launch of Falcon 9 rocket

MIAMI: SpaceX carried out the 50th launch of its signature Falcon 9 rocket early yesterday, a swift ascent to a milestone which many aerospace giants take far longer to attain. The launch of the Falcon 9 carrying a Hispasat Spanish-language telecommunications and broadband satellite took place on schedule at 12:33 am from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station in Florida.

About 33 minutes into the flight, the satellite was deployed into geo-stationary orbit, SpaceX said in a webcast. The satellite weighs six tons and is almost the size of a city bus, making it the largest geostationary satellite that SpaceX has

taken into space. The satellite aims to expand television, broadband and telecommunications service in Europe and Northwest Africa. The Falcon 9 first flew in 2010, and since then has become the California-based company's workhorse for sending supplies to the International Space Station, as well as launching both commercial satellites and secretive government payloads.

Powered by nine Merlin engines, the Falcon 9's first stage has also mastered the art of landing upright on solid ground or on floating platforms in the ocean after launch. These "recycled" rocket launches are part of SpaceX's goal to cut the cost of space flight and re-use expensive rocket parts instead of tossing them in the ocean after each launch. But SpaceX did not attempt to land Falcon 9's booster Tuesday due to unfavorable weather in the recovery area off Florida's Atlantic coast, said a company statement. — AFP

## Microsoft launches new Surface laptop in Kuwait

KUWAIT: Microsoft yesterday announced the general availability of the Surface Laptop across Kuwait. The perfect productivity companion for everyone, from students to boardroom executives, the Surface Laptop is the optimal blend of all the features that Microsoft customers have been asking - combining form and function, power and portability, security and performance. Powered by Windows 10, the Surface Laptop weighs in at just 2.76lbs, measures 14.47mm at its thickest point and comes with a 7th-generation Intel(r) Core(tm) processor and more battery power allowing 14.5 continuous hours of video playback. Memory options extend to 16GB RAM and 1TB SSD storage.

The Surface Laptop brings together the best innovations from across the Surface family. Battery life, display quality, storage capacity and mobility take central roles in the device designed for a range of lifestyles. It is an ideal choice for students, whether in school or college. For business users, eager to compete in the nation's growing economic climate, the Surface Laptop can play a key role in the intelligent edge of a computing environment.

"We are excited to bring the Surface Laptop to Kuwait for customers who are



seeking a differentiated experience to do more on their own terms" said Onur Altintas, Senior Product Marketing Manager - Surface, Microsoft Middle East & Africa "We have spent years perfecting our popular and award-winning Surface family, listening to customers and learning from them. We poured all that experience into the Surface Laptop, to deliver a meticulously crafted device - thinner, quieter, more powerful and more personal - bringing the best of Windows and Office together for users to unleash their creative potential and achieve more."

With a brilliant 13.5-inch Pixel Sense(tm) Display and composed of edge-to-edge Corning(r) Gorilla(r) Glass 3, Surface laptop

has the market's thinnest LCD touch screen display, with 3.4m pixels, each color-calibrated to give a vibrant, immersive canvas. And the Alcantara(r)-coated keyboard with soft palm rest gives a new level of typing comfort during the school or a work day. The device comes in an array of striking colors and finishes including Platinum, Graphite Gold, Cobalt Blue and Burgundy.

Beginning 15 March with prices starting at KD 349, the Surface Laptop can be found at all major electronic retail stores and with commercial resellers across Kuwait. Consumers can also order online from here, while commercial customers can buy from here.

## Indonesia blocks Tumblr

JAKARTA: Indonesia has blocked microblogging site Tumblr after complaints about pornographic content on hundreds of accounts, the communications ministry said yesterday. The world's most populous Muslim-majority country has stepped up efforts to police online content after a rise in hoax stories and hate speech, and because of anti-pornography laws pushed by Islamic parties.

The ministry sent an email to Tumblr on Feb. 28 asking it to "clean its platform" of pornographic content within two days. Noor Iza, a spokesman for the ministry, said in a text message. It then blocked eight Tumblr domain

names on Monday after he said it had not received a response. Indonesia has tough anti-pornography laws and the ministry said it had received complaints about pornographic contents on more than 360 accounts. Tumblr, which is part of Verizon's Oath business, which also includes Yahoo and AOL, did not immediately respond to an emailed request for comment.

According to the site's community guidelines, any sexual or adult-oriented content should be flagged as "Not Suitable for Work" to warn users of the material. Indonesia blocked more than 70,000 sites displaying "negative" content such as pornography or militant ideology in January with a system using 44 computer servers to help purge the internet of material deemed harmful, the communications minister said in an interview last month. — Reuters

## Zagat on menu for restaurant review site Infatuation

SAN FRANCISCO: Restaurant review new-comer The Infatuation announced Monday a deal to buy veteran Zagat from Google for an undisclosed amount. Since Google bought Zagat a little more than six years ago for a reported \$151 million, the long-established service for evaluating dining experiences has seen appetites turn to internet age services such as Yelp.

"Zagat has helped us provide useful and relevant dining results for users across our various products," Google vice president of product Jen Fitzpatrick said in a joint statement. "The Infatuation is an

innovative company that will be a terrific home for the Zagat brand." The Infatuation planned to cook the Zagat brand into its website and mobile application as part of a stated mission to become an influential global restaurant discovery platform. "Iconic brands don't become available very often, and Zagat is about as iconic as it gets," Infatuation co-founder and chief executive Chris Stang said.

Zagat will remain a separate platform, working in tandem with The Information, according to the company. Zagat was founded in 1979 by Tim and Nina Zagat, serving restaurant ratings in printing guides and online. The team of reviewers grew, as did the types of industries covered in guides. "Iconic brands don't become available very often, and Zagat is about as iconic as it gets," Infatuation co-founder and chief executive Chris Stang said.

## China's WeChat crosses 1 billion account mark

BEIJING: China's ubiquitous WeChat social media platform has crossed the one billion accounts mark as its messaging, game and shopping services attract more and more users. The symbolic threshold was announced by Pony Ma, the chief executive of its parent company Tencent, on the sidelines of China's parliamentary session on Monday.

The all-in-one app, known as Weixin in China, is a daily necessity for most Chinese, bringing together messaging, social media, mobile payment, games, news and other services. Half of WeChat users spend more than 90 minutes a day on the app. In its last company results in September, Tencent had reported that WeChat users had opened 980 million accounts, a 16 percent increase from the previous year.

"WeChat's worldwide monthly active users have surpassed the critical one billion mark," said Ma, who is a delegate at the two-week session of the Communist Party-controlled National People's Congress. "In the future we hope to use technological innovation to push forward the next developmental step of reform and opening," Ma said. He was referring to China's economic liberalisation policy that has fuelled four decades of breakneck economic growth.



Although Ma said WeChat's monthly active users had crossed the one billion threshold, a company spokesman told AFP he was referring to its total number of accounts. Still, the one billion figure indicates the huge user base which Tencent has built up both inside and outside China for the app. It compares with 2.1 billion monthly active users on Facebook and 1.5 billion on its messaging app WhatsApp.

### Privacy concerns

The popularity of WeChat—and profits from its addictive mobile games—have pushed Tencent's earnings and share price sharply upwards. The company surpassed Facebook

in market value last year as it became the first Asian firm to break into the \$500 billion league, while the 47-year-old Ma has rocketed to near the apex of China's rich list. He is the wealthiest delegate to the parliamentary session, according to Shanghai-based luxury magazine publisher Hurun Report, which estimated his fortune at \$47 billion.

Another popular feature of WeChat is its payment service, which allows people to pay at restaurants, buy goods from shops or even send money to friends. Chinese tourists visiting Paris have been able to pay for their purchases in two of the city's famous department stores using the app on their smartphones since last year. — AFP

Health

# Measles outbreak as Philippines reels from dengue vaccine row

Govt actively seeking out children who had missed out on immunization

**MANILA:** A health scare over a pioneering dengue vaccine is partly to blame for a decline in child immunization and a deadly measles outbreak in the Philippines, a senior health official said yesterday. The government has reported four outbreaks of measles, one of the world's leading killers of children, since December, a period coinciding with the row over the dengue vaccine which some parents blamed for child deaths.

Manila suspended the Dengvaxia vaccine last December and threatened to sue Sanofi shortly after the French pharmaceutical firm disclosed that it could worsen symptoms for people not previously infected by the dengue virus. Government programs against other deadly but preventable diseases became collateral damage, with immunization rates down below 60 percent in January, Health Undersecretary Enrique Domingo said. This compares to at least 80-85 percent last year, he said.

"We have eradicated measles like 10 years ago but it's

coming back due to the low rates of vaccination within the communities," he told reporters, adding this vaccine is given at the age of nine months. Asked if lower immunization rates this year were due to the Dengvaxia scare, he said "partly", with insurgencies also blocking delivery of medical services in some southern areas. "Before, they (children) would come to our health centers for their scheduled vaccines. Now we have to seek them (parents) out and convince them," he added. "As long as we can control it (measles), the mortalities are very low. But we (also) have like polio for example, diphtheria pertussis, which are more debilitating or more fatal."

**Preventing spread**

Domingo said 17 people contracted measles in a Manila district in January but none of them died. Three died in larger outbreaks in at least two areas on the southern island of Mindanao in December. Meanwhile, he said a suspected measles outbreak was underway in two cities and

five towns on the central island of Negros. Domingo said the health department was actively seeking out children who had missed out on immunization to prevent the further spread of measles.

"We always tell them (parents) these are tried and tested vaccines and they save millions of lives every year around the world," he said. The Philippine health department injected some 870,000 people, all but 33,000 of them school-children, with Dengvaxia in four of the country's most populous regions in 2016 and 2017. Sanofi's belated disclosure sparked a nationwide panic, with some parents alleging the vaccine killed their children. The government suspended the drug and ordered an inquiry which so far failed to establish a link between the vaccine and 14 child deaths including three from dengue. A total of 49 children who were given the vaccine had now died, nine of them from dengue, Domingo said. The underlying cause of these later deaths was still being investigated. —AFP



**MANILA:** Philippine Department of Health (DOH) secretary Francisco Duque (R) answers a question during a press conference at the DOH headquarters. —AFP

## India's endangered lion population increases to 600

**AHMEDABAD:** The endangered Asiatic lion, which only lives in one forest in India, has fought back from the verge of extinction, with its population increasing to more than 600, a minister said yesterday hailing a major conservation campaign. The lion, which once roamed across southwest Asia but is now restricted to the 1,400 square kilometer Gir sanctuary in Gujarat state, was listed as critically endangered in 2000, with its population under threat due to hunting and human encroachment on its habitat.

A recent unofficial count found more than 600 lions in the area, up from 523 in a 2015 census, Gujarat's chief minister Vijay Rupani said. "Our efforts for lion conservation with support of local people have yielded good results. The number of lions now in Gujarat has reached the 600 mark," Rupani said. In the late 1960s only

about 180 Asiatic lions were thought to survive but an improvement in numbers prompted conservationists to raise their assessment to endangered in 2008.

The population is currently growing at about two percent a year, according to AP Singh, a state forest and wildlife conservationist. The cats are cousins of the African lion—they are believed to have split away 100,000 years ago—but are slightly smaller and have a distinctive fold of skin along their bellies. They are a major tourist attraction in Gujarat where in the past they were the target of poachers. Priyavrat Gadhvi, a member of Gujarat's wildlife board, credited conservation schemes, well-trained staff and vets as well as help from farmers for the recovery in numbers.

"There is tremendous support from the local population in Gujarat who are tolerant despite lions attacking their cattle. This is coupled with effective conservation management and skilled staff at ground level," he said. Gadhvi predicted a "steady growth" in numbers in coming years. The next official census will be in 2020. Conservationists have suggested relocating some of the cats to another sanctuary, to reduce human-animal conflict and avoid the risk of the Asiatic lion being wiped out by disease or a natural disaster. —AFP



**AHMEDABAD:** In this file photo taken on May 23, 2016, an Asiatic Lion 'Ambar' strolls in the open enclosure at the Kamla Nehru Zoological Garden. —AFP

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

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## What's On

# Al Sayer holds road safety campaign for children



**A**l Sayer Holding as part of its Corporate Sustainability & Social Responsibility - 'Live the Moment' campaign continued to educate the younger generation about road safety habits and inform the consequences of not complying with road safety. Corporate Excellence Department, Toyota Technical Training Centre, Car Rental division, and Lexus unit of ALSAYER Holding collaborated with the NGO partner SAHI (@9aa7y) for the campaign on road safety at Reborn Academy for Early Education, Al Sadiq and at Al Najat School Salmiya.

Increasing road accidents in Kuwait continues to be a major cause of concern to the society and statistics indicate that nearly all traffic accidents and violations recorded are related to crossing of red signals, excessive speeding, use of mobile phones and reckless driving.

The program engaged 250+ students from different age groups including KG2 and High schools grade, their teachers along with ALSAYER volunteers and SAHI Team for spreading awareness about orderly driving practices for safer roads. Children also watched interactive animated road

safety videos and participated in an on-stage play with SAHI Team to experience 'Learn through Fun'. The High School students of Al Najat School Salmiya received demonstration on the functioning of seat belts, air bags during accidents along with the industry leading safety options featured in Lexus LS 350.

Nehad AlHaj Ali Deputy Group Manager Corporate Excellence said "Our aim is to spread awareness to reduce accidents caused due to negligence. ALSAYER delivers cars equipped with advanced technology functions and innovative vehi-

cle safety features, to contribute to reducing fatalities. We are continuously working together with our partners to build highly effective and responsible automobile society who respect safe driving."

At Reborn Academy children experienced Toyota Prius Hybrid car world's first mass produced hybrid car that runs both on gasoline and battery operated electric engine with minimum carbon footprint. ALSAYER Toyota Technical Training Centre Team held a demonstration to highlight the benefits of Prius Hybrid which included touch and feel of tools specially designed for Hybrid cars.



## Jumeirah to operate Al Wathba Desert Resort

**J**umeirah, the global luxury hospitality company and a member of Dubai Holding, announced it has signed an agreement with Abu Dhabi United Hospitality LLC to develop Jumeirah Al Wathba Desert Resort in Abu Dhabi. Expected to welcome guests from September 2018, Al Wathba Desert Resort will be developed by leading hospitality company, Abu Dhabi United Hospitality and operated by Jumeirah.

A luxurious, quintessential Arabian-style hotel set in the desert 50 km to the south east of Abu Dhabi in the Al Wathba District, Jumeirah Al Wathba Desert Resort will be a key addition to Abu Dhabi's and UAE's luxury hospitality offering. Spread over an area of more than 20,000 meters square, it will comprise of 90 hotel rooms and 13 villas, with complementary premium facilities including all-day-dining, pool and rooftop bars, Talise spa and an offsite desert camp along with other leisure options as well as conference and meeting facilities. Set against a backdrop of pristine sand, the Jumeirah Al Wathba Desert Resort aims to provide a luxurious and holistic experience of the Arabian hospitality set within a classic

Arabian ambience. Marc Dardenne, Jumeirah's Chief Operating Officer, said: "Growing the Jumeirah portfolio is one of our strategic priorities, and we are very pleased to partner with Abu Dhabi United Hospitality on this development initiative, aligned with the UAE Vision 2021. Jumeirah Al Wathba Desert Resort will be the 12th luxury Jumeirah hotel in the UAE and this innovative project offers Jumeirah a wonderful opportunity to showcase our truly Arabian hospitality. We are confident the Resort will be an outstanding destination and will further boost tourism in the emirate."

His Excellency Sultan Al Hemeiri, Managing Director, Abu Dhabi United Hospitality, commented: "We are excited about developing Jumeirah Al Wathba Desert Resort, which we believe will draw international attention, bolstering UAE's tourism potential. The Resort will leverage the scenic and calm desert landscape providing a rich and luxurious experience to tourists and residents alike. We are pleased to work with a home-grown global hospitality brand with a strong track record such as Jumeirah Group, and we look forward to a fruitful partnership to support Abu Dhabi's Leadership on establishing a key tourist destination."

With this strategic addition, Jumeirah will expand its luxury portfolio, which currently extends to 20 luxurious hotels and resorts around the world. Jumeirah has a strong pipeline with 18 hotel management agreements signed for its luxury Jumeirah hotels and resorts, and a further five agreements in place for its recently launched second brand, Zabeel House by Jumeirah.



## GUST partners with George Washington

**G**ulf University for Science and Technology's (GUST) Gulf Financial Center (GFC) collaborated with George Washington University (GW) PhD researcher, Nawaf Al-Abduljader, on a study to compare Kuwaiti undergraduates' entrepreneurial intentions against their contemporaries in the United States. The goal is to provide the necessary information to understand and develop the entrepreneurship and small business ecosystem in Kuwait.

Dean of the College of Business Administration, Professor Antonis Simintiras, said: "The collaboration was brought about to portray the value of partnerships between academic institutions, and both public and private sectors, in order to contribute towards the development of Kuwait's strategic plan and vision of 2035. We hope this initiative brings about a much needed meaningful data on the current landscape of the SME community and those who are considering entering the field." PhD researcher, Nawaf Al-Abduljader, from GW was able to obtain funding from the Kuwait Ministry of State for Youth Affairs to conduct the research. A partnership with GUST's GFC,



and its strategic partner Boubyan Bank, was brought about to survey 460 students and assist in the data collection process and analysis.

GW PhD Researcher, Nawaf Al-Abduljader, said: "I would like to thank the Kuwait Ministry of State for Youth Affairs, GW, and GUST, for their support and cooperation throughout this study. Our goal is to understand the Kuwaiti entrepreneur. Most of the studies of this nature focus on the administrative and economic aspects, while this study focuses on a vital aspect - which is the individuals themselves, their motivation and their concerns. This is the first study of

its kind in the region, and I hope that its results will yield beneficial and necessary change in the policies governing entrepreneurs and their businesses." The study was conducted through a series of extensive surveys fielded from 460 undergraduate students in business in Kuwait. The sample was compared with 264 U.S. graduate students, and the initial revelation was that 83% of the respondents in Kuwait intend to become entrepreneurs in the future. When looking at the data more closely, one sees that only 18% expressed they never want to start a business, compared to 40% in the US.

## ICSK Amman blesses outgoing students

**T**he farewell and blessing ceremony "AMANTRYA" was organized on Thursday, 22nd February 2018 to bid a warm farewell to the outgoing students of Class X of The Indian Community School Kuwait, Amman. It was a unique farewell as students from classes VI to IX joined hands in organizing the cultural show. Teachers who taught the outgoing students during their KG, Primary and Middle School days were also present on the occasion to bless them.

The auspicious occasion began with the lighting of the lamp and an invocation dance. The Senate Advisor Jaya Nirmal welcomed the gathering. The Senate President Bhavna John shared the reminiscences of her days in alma mater. Principal Rajesh Nair addressed the outgoing students and cherished his association with them and wished them a very bright and



successful future.

The truly exceptional students were honored with the best awards by the Principal Mr. Rajesh Nair and Vice Principal Dr. Mary Isaac for their remarkable achievements in academics, arts & sports. Students who had 100% attendance during the academic year were also honored. On behalf of all the staff, KG supervisor Julie Anthony and Class IX & X supervisor Sumitra Nandakumar addressed the students. As a token of love and appreciation a memento was

also presented to them by the school. Vice President of the Senate Noah Mathew Kingdon proposed the vote of thanks. The solemn function culminated with the blessing ceremony. Vice Principal Dr. Mary Isaac briefed the students about the significance of the ceremony which was followed by the staff members forming the corridor of blessings as the choir rendered the time honored "Showers of Blessings" and the outgoing students seeking the blessings of the Principal and all their teachers.









## Lifestyle | Gossip

LIBERTINES SET FOR **MELTDOWN FESTIVAL'S** 25<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

**M**eltdown Festival have announced the likes of Nine Inch Nails, The Libertines and Placebo as part of their huge 25th anniversary event. For the milestone year, the line-up - which has been curated by a different musician each time - has been pulled together by The Cure front man Robert Smith. In an announcement made this week, it was confirmed that Nine Inch Nails, The Libertines and Placebo will join the likes of Manic Street Preachers, Deftones and My Bloody Valentine on the bill. Speaking about his work choosing the acts for such an important event, Robert said in a statement: "Curating this 25th Meltdown festival is a dream come true, a fantastic experience ... albeit getting 60 wonderful artists, including many of my all-time favorites, to come together for 10 days in June is not without its challenges - as one of my predecessors noted, it is akin to figuring

out a giant psychedelic puzzle..." "But as each invitee confirms, as each shimmering piece falls into place, I pinch myself - this is really happening ... And the complete picture will undoubtedly be out of this world!" The lineup Robert has pulled together will see some of the most influential acts of the last four decades performing across the Southbank Centre, London from June 15-24. The arts complex includes venues like the Royal Festival Hall, the Queen Elizabeth Hall and The Hayward. Over the years, the festival has been curated by iconic figures in the music industry, including John Peel (1998), David Bowie (2002) and Yoko Ono (2013), while last year's event was put together by rapped M.I.A..

UB40's **Ali Campbell** knew time was right for **A Real Labor of Love** album

**A**li Campbell admits he told people to "get off" for 20 years when they asked him when he was going to make a new 'Labour of Love' album. The 59-year-old singer's UB40 line-up - comprised of him and other original members Astro and Mikey Virtue - have just released 'A Real Labour of Love' comprised of covers of songs that defined reggae in the 1980s. The record was preceded by three other 'Labour of Love' covers records which sold over 21 million copies combined, with the last LP coming out in 1998. Ali - who quit the group he formed in January 2008 before going on to create a new version - admits there has always been a clamor for another collection of classics but he resisted until the time was right. Speaking exclusively to BANG Showbiz, he said: "We were very successful with the three 'Labour of Love' albums, they sold 21 million copies between them, so we've always been asked when are you doing another 'Labour of Love', I used to go, 'get off!' But now it's been 30 years since Beres Hammond did 'She Loves Me Now', the time is right." Ali admits he finds it a scary prospect to cover songs that he loves - tracks like 'Making Love', 'Strive' and 'How Could I Leave' - but he hopes by re-working tracks he loves that a new audience will seek



out the originals. He said: "It's terrifying for me to cover these songs. Someone like Beres Hammond, to me, is like Otis Redding, he's one of the greatest singers of all-time, to have to cover him is terrifying but it's something I've got to do if I want people to go and listen to the original. That's what I love about the 'Labour of Love' series, once they were so popular then people went back and found the originals and fell in love with them like me. That was always my strategy to promote reggae." The 'Red Red Wine' hitmaker has teased that 'A Real Labour of Love' won't be the last covers

record UB40 bring out, because there are so many other songs he'd love to re-work. He said: "We could do volumes four, five, six, seven, eight and nine! This new album is chronological for us. With the first 'Labour of Love' album we were coming out with songs from the 60s when we were too young to be in a band and these are the songs that made us continue to love reggae. In the 80s the electronic reggae movement happened, reggae music where keyboards were used instead of a bass. That was a revolution at the time and we wanted to include that on the new record. Reggae moves on like any other genre of music." 'A Real Labour of Love' is out now and according to The Official Charts Company it is on course to be the highest new entry in this week's UK album chart, and will become the legendary reggae band's highest charting new album since their 1993 number one 'Promises And Lies'. UB40 Featuring Ali, Astro & Mickey are headlining The Royal Albert Hall on March 19 as part of the Teenage Cancer Trust series of gigs. For 'An Evening Celebrating The Very Best In British Reggae' they will be joined by Hollie Cook, Three The Hard Way - Brinsley Forde MBE (Aswad), David Hinds (Steel Pulse), Dennis Bovell (Matumbi) - and special guest David Rodigan MBE.



## Queen and Adam Lambert headlining TRNSMT 2018

**Q**ueen and Adam Lambert will headline this year's TRNSMT Festival alongside the likes of Liam Gallagher and The Killers. The 'We Are The Champions' rockers - who have been fronted by the former 'American Idol' star since 2011 - have been announced for the Glasgow Green event, which takes place over two weeks in June and July. Brian May and Roger Taylor will be joined by the charismatic singer on July 6, as they bring the main stage to a close on a bill also featuring The Temperance Movement, The Darkness and Texas. Also topping the bill over the two weekends will be Stereophonics (June 29), Liam Gallagher (June 30), Arctic Monkeys (July 1) and The Killers (July 8). Tickets for the festival will be available at trnsmtfest.com on Friday (09.03.18) from 9am. The latest announcement comes after Queen and Adam Lambert confirmed new European and UK shows this summer due to demand. The group performed 25 shows across Europe and the UK at the end of last year, but on Monday (05.02.18) they surprised fans with the news that the band are set to return to London's The O2 on

July 2, and Italy and Germany, with other concerts due to be announced for Portugal, Spain, Denmark, Norway, the Netherlands and Belgium. The rock legends - who were fronted by the late Freddie Mercury until his death from HIV/AIDS in 1991 - already sold out two shows at the 20,000-capacity venue in the British capital in December. Describing the new dates as "one more around the block", Queen's guitar maestro Brian May said: "The almost unanimous reaction to our last round of dates in Europe was this is absolutely the best production we've ever mounted. There has been a great demand for us to go back and cover the cities we missed! So, while we're still physically able to perform at those high energy levels on this massive scale, we thought ... 'YES!! One more around the block!' It's live, it's dangerous, and it takes every ounce of fitness we can muster. But it's still fun!" And Lambert added: "I enjoyed every second of the recent European tour and really felt the love in every city. I can't wait for us to get back there again in the spring!"



## Top Gun: Maverick to start shooting this summer

**T**op Gun: Maverick is set to start shooting this summer. The highly-anticipated sequel - which will see Tom Cruise reprise his role as fighter pilot Pete 'Maverick' Mitchell - has signed Joseph Kosinski up as director and will be hitting cinemas 33 years after the original movie was released. Last year, it was announced that the movie is slated for a 2019 release with producer Jerry Bruckheimer writing on Twitter: "Excited to make it official. Joe Kosinski is on board to direct. And Top Gun is coming to theaters July 12, 2019. #TopGun #Maverick (sic)" Now, ScreenRant report that the sequel is set to start shooting this summer and Cruise previously explained the movie will be similar in tone to the first 'Top Gun' film. He said: "Aviators are back, the need for speed. We're going to have big, fast machines. It's going to be a competition film, like the first one ... but a progression for Maverick." The original 'Top Gun' movie was directed by the late Tony Scott - who died in 2012 - and also starred Kelly McGillis, Val Kilmer, Anthony Edwards, and Tom Skerritt. Although Cruise is the only cast member to be announced,

Kilmer recently revealed he is keen to reprise his role as cocky fighter pilot Tom 'Iceman' Kazanski. Kilmer shared a photo of himself on Instagram, in which he was wearing a t-shirt featuring an illustration of his character and the slogan 'Cool As Ice' and wrote: "Friends said it's official - #TOPGUN2 was announced today. I'm ready Tom - still got my top gun plaque! Still got the moves! Still got it! (sic)" In the movie, Cruise played a cocky aspiring pilot who falls in love with the beautiful instructor Charlie Blackwood, played by McGillis. Kosinski - who previously worked with Cruise on the 2013 action movie 'Oblivion' - was favourite to take the director's job after he recently met with the actor and impressed him with his vision for the film. Speculation about a follow-up to the classic movie have been circulating since 2008, when it was reported Hollywood bosses were keen to resurrect the feature. A source said at the time: "The idea is Maverick is at the 'Top Gun' school as an instructor - and this time it is he who has to deal with a cocky new female pilot."

## Hardy says The Nun has something new to add to Conjuring universe



**C**oryn Hardy said his 'Conjuring' spin-off 'The Nun' has "something new". The 43-year-old filmmaker - who made his directorial debut with the 2015 horror 'The Hallow' - was hired to helm the upcoming spin-off movie based around the ghostly character in the 'Conjuring' sequel. While speaking to Adam Green and Joe Lynch on The Movie Crypt podcast, Hardy admitted making the movie - which is slated for release this September - didn't feel like making a sequel or remake. He said: "I can't obviously talk too much about what happens. But it was really exciting, when I read the script, that it was something new. "So, it's part of this universe that's been established, with a character that appeared in a movie, but it wasn't like doing a sequel or a remake." Not much is known about the new movie except that Demian Bichir is starring as a priest in the paranormal film with Taissa Farmiga as a nun and Bonnie Aarons will be reprising her role as the evil entity from 'The Conjuring 2'. New Line Cinema announced last

year it is working on a number of spin-offs based in the 'Conjuring' universe which already include 'Annabelle', 'Annabelle: Creation', 'The Nun' and the upcoming 'The Crooked Man' movie. Being part of a popular and successful franchise, Hardy admitted there is a lot of pressure because of the "incredible success" the movies have had. He said: "There's a lot of pressure because of the incredible success of these movies. "But then, you're so focused on what you're doing, you don't really think about that. You're just making a movie as good as possible. "Maybe that will hit when it's starting to come out, but really there's too much to do to be worried about that. "You're just wanting to make sure you're hitting a level of quality, and originality, and making sure you love what you're doing, and it goes down well. "If you think about the pressure then it's a little scary." Hardy's next project is a reboot of the horror movie 'The Crow' starring Jason Momoa as the titular character. — Bangshowbiz

## Guy Ritchie's Aladdin to feature new songs by Greatest Showman lyricists

**G**uy Ritchie's live-action remake of Disney's 'Aladdin' will feature two new songs written by 'The Greatest Showman' songwriters. Benj Pasek and Justin Paul are receiving continual praise for their Academy Award nominated song 'This Is Me' from the Hugh Jackman-starring original musical. But despite failing to win the Original Song category on Sunday they revealed they have collaborated with long-time Disney composer Alan Menken for the upcoming new movie. Pasek told Variety: "We're really thrilled that we got to collaborate with one of our heroes Alan Menken. "We collaborated with him and wrote the lyrics for two new songs for 'Aladdin' that's coming out next year. "We're really excited for that, and really thrilled to be a part of the Disney family." The new movie stars Will Smith as The Genie, Mena Massoud as the titular character, Naomi Scott as Princess Jasmine and Marwan Kazari as the villain Jafar. The impressive cast also includes 'Homeland' star Numan Acar who is reportedly set to play Hakim - head of the guards and right hand man to the feature's villain Jafar. Former 'Saturday Night Live' star Nasim Pedrad has been chosen to play new character Mara, a handmaiden and friend to Jasmine along with Billy Magnussen as Prince Anders. 'Charlie and The Chocolate Factory' writer John August penned the script for the musical movie, which is believed to be non-linear in its structure, something that is a hallmark of Ritchie's early work on movies like cult British crime



romps 'Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels' and 'Snatch'. The story is based on the Middle Eastern folk tale of Aladdin who is granted three wishes by a genie who is captive inside a magic lamp. The 1992 original animated feature - which saw the late great Robin Williams voice The Genie - won two Oscars, Best Music and Original Song for 'A Whole New World'. 'Aladdin' has also been turned into a hit stage show playing at theatres all over the world. The movie is just one of the many films that Disney are rebooting, as new versions of 'Dumbo', 'Mulan', 'Peter Pan', 'The Lion King', 'Pocahontas' and 'The Little Mermaid' are also in the works.

Lifestyle | Feature



This photo shows sheep waiting to be sheared on a station outside the town of Trangie in western New South Wales. — AFP photos



This photo shows 28-year-old Australian sheep shearer Emma Billet carrying a sheep on a station outside the town of Trangie in western New South Wales.



A 37-year-old Australian wool presser Catherine Carter funneling sheep to be sheared on a station outside the town of Trangie in western New South Wales.



Emma Billet (right) and wool presser Catherine Carter (left) on a station outside the town of Trangie in western New South Wales.



Emma Billet shearing a sheep on a station outside the town of Trangie in western New South Wales.

# Shear success: Women being drawn to sheep farms in Australia

In a sweltering shed on an Australian farm near the rural town of Trangie, Emma Billet drags a nervous sheep from a waiting pen to her shearing station. She is the only female in her crew of five shearers, but attitudes on Australian farms are changing and training approaches are encouraging a gender rethink, with more women entering the profession Down Under. "It is a physical job which I enjoy, I like to work hard," 28-year-old Billet, who can fleece 130 sheep daily, told AFP during her break.

"It is like a sense of accomplishment at the end of the day." The number of skilled women working with farm animals—including animal trainers, veterinary nurses and shearers and shearing hands—has grown from close to 11,700 in 2006 to almost 19,200 a decade later, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics. "It comes back to women being on the land as well," Billet said of the rise

of women in the industry. "It has become more and more common now just to see women owning farms and running businesses and I guess times have just changed. It is good to see." Although there are still fewer than 100 female shearers, experts say there has been significant growth in the past few years.

"There have been women in the shed for a long time, that have just been roustabouts (shed hands that collect the wool from the ground)," Glenn Haynes, a shearing program coordinator at TAFE South Australia, a leading vocational training school, told AFP. There was resistance in the past, however, with a "pretty negative attitude towards women" from the older generation when it came to their ability to shear, Haynes added. But this is changing and new approaches to training are being introduced, including female-only programs, as demand among women grows, he said.

### 'Not for faint hearted'

Haynes held a workshop in 2016 targeting women, in which just a few pursued a shearing career, but the annual event has recently seen close to 25 enter the trade. Australia is one of the world's largest wool exporters, producing around 25 percent of greasy wool sold on the global market, in a multi-billion dollar industry. More than 70 million sheep are shorn each year. Jim Murray, shearing development manager at industry group Australian Wool Innovation, said professional shearing sheds were much more inclusive now than they used to be. "There has been an increase in female shearers for various reasons—better training, modern technologies and a more professional industry is part of the reason," he said. "Women are much easier to teach to shear as they often do not come with pre-conceived ideas," he added. "The advent of social media has also helped to celebrate the

gender and ethnic diversity in shearing sheds."

Back on the farm, some 450 kilometers (300 miles) inland from Sydney, Billet, an industry veteran of 10 years, said improving facilities, like toilets and showers, remains an issue for all in the industry. And upgrading farming equipment was critical, she added, after a friend was scalped in a horrific accident in a shed by decades-old machinery late last year. Regardless of gender, shearing is "not for the faint hearted", said Billet, who will shear up to 130 sheep a day, but she welcomes more women into the shed. "You will feel like you have never felt before, but if you want to be a shearer, if you want to be good at your job... no one or nothing will stand in your way," she said. — AFP

## Daniela Vega, the transgender Chilean who conquered Hollywood



Paz Vega arrives for the 90th Annual Academy Awards in Hollywood, California. — AFP

Everything seems to make Daniela Vega smile: her transition from male to female, her family's unwavering support, and her rise from hairdresser to actress with the backing of Chilean director Sebastian Lelio, who won the Oscar for best foreign film. As Maria in the film "A Fantastic Woman"—her fifth movie role—Vega plays a transgender woman confronting discrimination and rejection by the family of her deceased partner. The role has thrust her into the international spotlight and made her a Hollywood darling.

And at Sunday's Oscar ceremony, she became the first transgender person ever to present a performance at the movie industry's most important event. The 28-year-old's dignity and poise have caught the attention of media across the world, from Spain's El Pais to The Guardian in Britain and Vanity Fair and The New York Times in the United States. The US magazine W included her in its list of top 10 performances of 2017, featuring her in a photo alongside heartthrob Robert Pattinson.

The New York Times said Vega evinced "a charisma that defies pity and a sense of poise that can be both intimidating and heartbreaking." The Guardian called Vega's performance "passionate, intelligent and with a certain understated dignity." Friends and acquaintances describe Vega as an ambitious woman, determined to go far in her career, and one who throws herself fully into her work.

### From hairdresser to actress

Vega was born into a middle-class Santiago family and began her acting career in theatre plays such as "Migrants" and "The Butterfly Woman" and by taking singing lessons. Her aptitude for poetry led her into the arts world and she appeared in a video for the song "Maria" by Chilean musician Manuel Garcia and made her cinematic debut in the movie "The Visit" by Mauricio Lopez Fernandez, in which she also played a transgender woman.

But until Lelio—an Argentinian-born Chilean director who initially hired her as a "cultural advisor"—cast her in his

Oscar-winning movie, Vega was earning her living as a hairdresser in a salon in Santiago.

### Seeking an answer online

Vega's mother Sandra Hernandez told El Mercurio newspaper that when she was pregnant, doctors told her she was going to have a girl, and so she had bought earrings and pink girls' clothing in preparation. Vega was bullied at school and under pressure from her mother. When she was 15, she turned to the internet to explore why she felt the way she did about her adolescent body, and her attraction to men. That's when she realized she was transsexual.

Those were hard times to face up to such a realization in conservative Chile, still struggling to escape the legacy of the dictator Augusto Pinochet, who ruled from 1973 to 1990, and shocked by charges of child sex abuse in the powerful Catholic church. But shielded by her parents and her younger brother Nicolas, she began her transition to her new sexual identity. It took three years. "I have known the love of my family, of a partner, I have been surrounded by a great amount of love," Vega told AFP.

### Transgender symbol

Vega has not changed identity or gender on her passport because this is barred under Chilean law. The team that made the movie will be received yesterday by Chile's outgoing President Michelle Bachelet, who in August sent to congress a bill to authorize gay marriages and adoptions. Chilean rights groups have expressed hope that the Oscar for "A Fantastic Woman" and the mounting global recognition for Vega will help the bill's passage. But the new government of conservative Sebastian Pineru, who takes over the reins from Bachelet on Sunday, have not made encouraging statements in favor of the legislation. — AFP

## Mexicans hail Oscars as sign of cultural sway despite Trump

Mexican director Guillermo del Toro's Oscars triumph and a win by animated film "Coco" were hailed by Mexicans on Monday as a sign of their nation's cultural sway in the United States despite growing tensions under US President Donald Trump. Del Toro's best director win for his "The Shape of Water," a fable about the mistreatment of the powerless, marked the fourth time a Mexican had taken home the award in the last five years, following the success of Alfonso Cuaron and Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu.

The accolades from Hollywood for Mexican filmmakers stands in contrast to Trump's repeated attacks on the United States' southern neighbor, which began when he launched his campaign by saying Mexican immigrants were rapists and murderers. In Mexico, news headlines boasted "Mexico sweeps the Oscars," "Oscar 2018: Mexico's Night" and "Del Toro Paints the Oscars Green, White and Red," the colors of the Mexican flag.

In his acceptance speech, Del Toro celebrated his immigrant heritage and took a veiled dig at Trump, who wants to build a wall on the U.S.-Mexico border to stem illegal immigration. "The greatest thing our art does and our industry does is to erase the lines in the sand," del Toro said. "We should continue doing that when the world tells us to make them deeper." Latinos in the United States and Mexicans back home cheered his win. "It was exhilarating to see," said Gaz Alazraki, a Mexican filmmaker who produces Mexican Netflix series "Club de Crows."

"Guillermo spoke on behalf of all dreamers. With his success, he is a symbol of what the United States has meant for foreigners for ever," Alazraki told Reuters. Mexicans make up about four-fifths of the so-called Dreamers hundreds of thousands of young people whose parents brought them to the United States illegally and whose fate is now uncertain after Trump moved to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program.

Former Mexican President Vicente Fox, who has blasted Trump's plan for a border wall, took to Twitter after del Toro's win to needle the US president. "The Mexican Power at the #Oscars is raw talent, which is not there illegally or stealing jobs, as @realDonaldTrump claims. You see, Donald, talent is not limited by borders," Fox said.

"The Shape of Water" had 13 nominations and won a total of four Academy Awards, including best picture. The success of animated feature "Coco" was also celebrated as a breakthrough for putting Mexican traditions and life in poor villages at the center of the Disney pantheon. The Disney-Pixar film was a box office smash, raking in more than \$700 million worldwide.



Fans of Mexican director Guillermo del Toro celebrate at a mall in Guadalajara, Jalisco State after del Toro won the Oscar for 'The Shape of Water.' — AFP

The film follows a boy named Miguel who finds himself in the land of the dead during the Mexican celebration of the Dia de los Muertos, or Day of the Dead. "With 'Coco' we tried to take a step forward toward a world where all children can grow up seeing characters in movies that look and talk and live like they do," Lee Unkrich, one of the film's directors, said in accepting the award. When del Toro and his fellow "Three Amigos" directors Cuaron and Gonzalez Inarritu began making films in Mexico in the 1990s, the local industry was nearly dead, churning out a handful of films a year. Now, Mexico's industry produces around 150 films a year. Starting next weekend, the country's up-and-coming talent will compete at the Guadalajara film festival, a showcase for local productions. — Reuters



# NO-FUR STELLA MCCARTNEY FUSES MEN'S, WOMEN'S STYLES IN PARIS



In a fall-winter season that's featured a fair share of fur on the runway in spite of growing resistance, Stella McCartney's show was the ecological antidote at Paris Fashion Week. Guests including actresses Kristin Scott Thomas and Isabelle Huppert were served up green juices with spirulina before the McCartney's beautifully uplifting leather-and-fur-free collection inside the ornate Paris Opera. Here are some highlights of Monday's shows, including Giambattista Valli and Alexander McQueen.

### Stella McCartney's humor, passion, style

There's so much to feel good about in a Stella McCartney show. Monday's ever-imaginative styles used artful deconstruction to produce a fresh fusion of menswear and womenswear styles. A man's suit was turned inside out and turned into a fluid dress with bare seams. Suit pants were cut at the knee as if they'd been guillotined. And a minimalist gray waistcoat featured a chic couture-like peplum silhouette. Statement knitwear was a key theme.

Traditional Aran sweaters - in big cable knit - hit a surreal note in multicolor with huge sleeves that made the arms completely disappear. McCartney, a famed vegan, thus proved you don't need fur to be glamorous and stay warm in winter. The 46 styles were served up with an uplifting, foot-tapping soundtrack that provoked a moment of humor. "Where the hell's my phone?" it boomed out. "You're holding it." iPhone-addicted influencers smiled in a moment of self-reflection.

### Mixing menswear and womenswear

Stella McCartney joined the legion of fashion houses - such as Givenchy and Saint Laurent - which are now showcasing designs for men during the womenswear week. The merging styles maximize the commercial impact for each season, but they also serve to blur gender lines and encourage the world to not see gender (and dressing) as so binary.

Monday's show marked the official launch of the British-American designer's menswear capsule with eight looks modeled on men. They styles - like a big blown-up check coat and an oversized cable knit sweater - mirrored many of the women's styles.

### Giambattista Valli's chic '70s

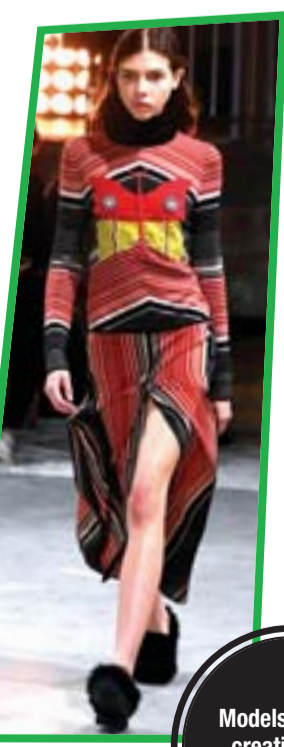
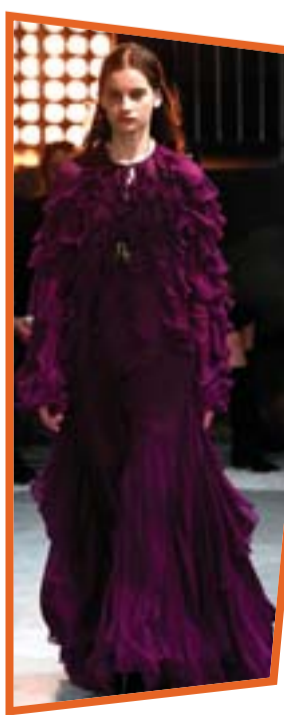
Long, flowing and graceful were the silhouettes of the season for Giambattista Valli - who attracted socialite Olivia Palermo to his front row in the concrete labyrinth basement of Paris' Palais de Tokyo. The venue lent itself more to chaos than grace - and many guests were given erroneous seats or otherwise got lost.

Yet when the beautifully-executed collection began, it was all about patterns - more than making up for the earlier confusion. Checks, "GBV" monograms, florals, dots and thick stripes gave a kinesis to the styles, which had a feel for the 70s.

The ethnic styles in that era were a design touchstone - such as geometric markings on a bodice or myriad hanging pendants. Center parts and glittery face paint on the models combined with these styles to evoke a very chic Woodstock hippie.



Models present creations by Stella McCartney during the 2018/2019 fall/winter collection fashion show. — AFP photos



Models present creations for Giambattista Valli.

Lifestyle | Fashion



Models present creations for Chanel during the 2018/2019 fall/winter collection fashion show yesterday in Paris.



show. It was a makeup mirror that could be hung round the neck.

**Alexander McQueen's metamorphosis**

Transformation was at the core of Sarah Burton's fashion ode Monday night. The Alexander McQueen designer used the idea of the metamorphosing insect - a softly armored Scarab beetle or a butterfly - and creatively flew with it. Silk dresses with a vivid, all-encompassing butterfly print gave way to unfurling black leather bustiers and sections of colorful material that peeped out underneath a black tuxedo like butterfly wings emerging from a black cocoon.

But the roving imaginative explorations were handled tightly. It was a collection that stuck closely to the house's signature silhouettes of strong shoulders, narrow waists and exaggerated hip sections. The idea of the insect transformation was also metaphorical from Burton, who's known as an "intellectual" designer. It produced the strongest parts of the collection.

She developed on from the "morphing of one creature into another" into the morphing of "one garment into another." A tight black military coat cut an interesting style on model Stella Tennant as it transformed into a billowing striped, fringed poncho at the hem.

**Leonard loses an "R"?**

A fashion show is a 5-minute window that shapes how a brand is viewed for the next half year - the most intense manifestation of image in an image-driven industry. There was thus much consternation at Parisian house Leonard when one of the giant letters of the show decor fell as artistic director Christine Phung came out to acknowledge applause after the chic, floral-infused collection.

Phung was seemingly unaware that the moment was less than picture perfect: the "R" in "LEONARD" at the foot of the runway had come loose and was captured by the press. — AP



**Fashion diplomacy**

Luxury is one of France's most prized industries, worth an estimated \$22 billion. French President Emmanuel Macron and his wife Brigitte were engaging in some high-profile Fashion Week diplomacy by hosting a star-studded dinner at the Elysee Palace on Monday night called "Choose France."

It's an event aimed at promoting investment in the French luxury industry.

Guests are expected to include young designers as well as established figures such as Lebanese designer Elie Saab as well as Louis Vuitton's creative director Nicolas Ghesquiere, who dresses France's first lady.

**Eccentric invitations for fashionistas**

The age of email doesn't seem to have left a mark on the fashion industry's antiquated system of invitations. Season after season, gasoline-guzzling couriers criss-cross Paris to personally deliver the ever-elaborate, often hand-made, fashion show invites. Famed eco-warrior Stella McCartney's invite was among the wackiest, comprising of a vacuum-packed pair of bright yellow socks.

"These socks are made re-purposing post-consumer and post-industrial textile waste to create high quality up-cycled years through a process that uses zero water, zero dyes and no harsh chemicals," said the invitation. Some fashion insiders were seen wearing the socks that were made of 85% recycled textiles. Japanese fashion guru Yohji Yamamoto's invitation, meanwhile, was of practical use for fashionistas who rush from show to



Barbers bristle at 'fashionable' beards in Pakistan province

**H**airdressers in Pakistan's conservative northwest have announced a ban in their shops on "fashionable" beards, saying trendy facial hair violates Islamic law. The decision affecting Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province echoes a similar ban introduced there more than a decade ago, after militant groups including the Pakistani Taliban threatened barbers with dire consequences for trimming beards.

"Creating different beard designs is against the Sunnah (teachings) of the Prophet Mohammed," Sulemani Hairdressers Association president Sharif Kahlul told a press conference in the provincial capital Peshawar on Monday. He said tens of thousands of barbers, all members of his association, have promised to abide by the decision and notices would be pasted in shops throughout the province informing customers.

Different Muslim sects adhere to different beard shapes and lengths, but the most generally accepted "Islamic" beard is one that is long enough to be visible from a certain distance, but not longer than a fistful of hair. Kahlul strongly denied any pressure on his association from any militant organization, calling the move "a decision of our conscience". "We met local administrations of all the major cities and districts in the province and they assured us of their full cooperation but refused to issue any directive to make this decision official," he said.

He said there were several shops in the province, which were not members of the association. "We will try and convince them to implement the decision but will not force them at all." Militants attacked many barber shops and saloons in the province a decade ago, calling the shaving of beards un-Islamic. In recent years men in Pakistan's major cities like Karachi and Lahore have become more metrosexual, with the growing middle class taking advantage of a trend in male beauty salons to be selfie-ready at any time. — AFP



A Pakistani hairdresser styles the beard of a customer at a hair salon in Peshawar.



Pakistani hairdressers work at their stations beside a notice sign of the Sulemani Hairdressers Association that reads 'All hairdressers by unanimous decision have decided not to offer their services for clients wishing for stylish beards'. — AFP photos

# Lifestyle

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 7, 2018



An Indian boy gestures as another throws coloured water during Holi festival celebrations in Chennai on March 2, 2018. Holi, the popular Hindu spring festival of colors, is observed in India at the end of the winter season on the last full moon of the lunar month. — AFP

## Smell of coffee permeates streets of tea-obsessed Kabul

**A**fghans in need of a caffeine fix line up at Najibullah Sharyari's coffee cart in Kabul—converts to the drink that is now percolating in a country obsessed with tea for centuries. Standing on a noisy street among vendors hawking their wares, the 30-year-old barista serves take-away instant coffee from a mobile machine at his New York-style cart for as little as 28 cents a cup.

Coffee is the "best medicine" to cope with the daily grind in the overcrowded, polluted and war-torn city, insists Sharyari, pouring Nescafe into a fake Starbucks cup for a customer as honking cars crawl past his stand. The uninitiated often ask for tea, he says, before explaining: "We tell them they can have tea at home. There is a big difference between a cup of tea and a cup of coffee—coffee is better."

Sharyari's coffee cart—one of several he operates around the sprawling Afghan capital—is an oddity in a city where most people drink tea and cafes are often protected by armed guards and hidden from view behind blast walls and steel doors. Afghanistan was introduced to tea because of its location on the ancient Silk Road, and

today remains one of the world's largest tea consumers per capita.

The drink is integral to the country's famed culture of hospitality, with guests offered a cup of green tea—often infused with aromatic cardamom pods, and a piece of sugar on the side—as they enter homes and offices. It is ubiquitous at the table regardless of whether the meal being served is breakfast, lunch or dinner.

But coffee has the power to pull people out of their daily routine, according to the aficionados at Sharyari's cart. "Whenever I go to university I take this street just to drink a cup of coffee while I'm walking," university student Sayed Millad Hashimi tells AFP.

### Getting creative

Sharyari launched his business four years ago in the relatively prosperous northern city of Mazar-i-Sharif, investing 50,000 Afghanis (\$725) in a couple of coffee machines from neighboring Uzbekistan. Its success saw him expand to Kabul, where he says he has eight machines and serves more than 1,500 customers per day. The sight



Najibullah Sharyari (center), 30, prepares coffee for customers at his cart in Kabul. — AFP photos

of steam rising from the cart and the rich smell brew excitement apart from the impending jolt of caffeine, says a government worker named Mujiburrahman, rubbing his hands in anticipation.

"I am also happy to see our people getting creative and create job opportunities," the young and sharply dressed customer tells AFP. Selling coffee on the streets of Kabul—one of the deadliest places for civilians in the country, where blast walls and traffic choke the roads—is a different prospect from Mazar, which Sharyari says is relatively peaceful and has a vibrant street life. But in the capital there are grounds for buying your coffee at a street cart, which is accessible to residents in a way that fancier cafes hidden behind layers of security are not.

Rahim, a taxi driver, pulls up to the vendor and calls for coffee with milk without even leaving his car. "There is no parking lot in this crowded downtown, we cannot park our cars to go to a coffee shop or restaurant," the 45-year-old says.

"But (it) is easy here, just slam the brake, stop, pick a cup of coffee and go," he adds. Security remains a concern. On January 27 one of the deadliest bomb blasts in the capital since 2001 killed more than 100 people just a few hundred meters from Sharyari's cart, he says. "I was shocked but Kabul is such a resilient city," he muses. "The next day the people were in the streets again and it was business as usual." — AFP



Najibullah Sharyari (center), 30, prepares coffee for customers at his cart in Kabul.



Najibullah Sharyari (center), 30, prepares coffee as customers drink the brew next to his cart in Kabul.