

# Friday Times

ISSUE NO: 17476

JAMADA ALTHANI 21, 1439 AH | FRIDAY, MARCH 9, 2018

**9** Fahaheel: Commercial, farming center and important gateway



## KUWAIT QUALIFIER TODAY

Saudi women jog in the streets of Jeddah's historic Al-Balad district yesterday. — AFP



## Int'l Women's Day marked with aspirations for equality

See Pages 10 & 11

## Local

## Wake up, parliament!



IN MY VIEW

By Nejouad Al-Yagout

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Yesterday a Member of Parliament tweeted about three concerts that were to be held this weekend in Kuwait. He insisted that the Ministry of Youth should not revolve around music or dancing, and adds that the ministry is overspending their budget. Eerily, he uses a threat to conclude his message warning that soon those “responsible” will be held into account, in his effort to deter others.

As a local woman who was granted the right to vote in 2005, it amazes me how many times I have witnessed the dissolution of the Parliament due to corruption charges. I joke to my friends abroad who were granted the right way before us that I have voted more than them. I cannot remember any parliament that has run a four-year course, since lawmakers invest so much of their energy trying to bring down “corrupt” ministers and interrogate them. In some cases, it has nothing to do with financial corruption, but what the lawmaker deems as the corruption of the masses. Because, for some odd reason, singing,

or music, tends to frighten certain people.

And so, year after year, we watch or read about another parliamentarian destroying the career of a minister, or jailing someone who said something on social media or musicians and speakers banned entry because they are against our tradition.

We have noble women fighting to abolish Article 153 of the constitution which stipulates that honor killings are merely a misdemeanor. NGOs are struggling to bridge the divide between the stateless and locals. We have domestic helpers and those who suffer from abuse at the hands of their husbands or family members who are vying for the attention of those in power. Yet our lawmakers seem more concerned with imposing their belief systems on a society that is rich in cultural heritage or lamenting everyone else besides themselves. It's always the fault of others, they believe. In the last year alone, we have witnessed xenophobic comments, a member of parliament refusing to sit next to a woman because she was wearing perfume, and episodes of members addressing the speaker to complain about other MPs. What about the issues begging to be resolved in our beloved country, the ones that were mentioned during their campaign tours?

Yes, this is a democracy, but if it is at the expense of respect for our fellow beings or our fundamental right to appreciate art and entertainment in our country, which has many travel-

ing every weekend to neighboring countries, then this is slowly becoming a theatrical performance in its own right, only without music and song.

Everyone loves music. At concerts at JACC and Al Shaheed Park, we witness “conservative” and “liberals” enjoying music. Why do some people in power feel threatened by what unites us, instead of divides us? Music is a universal language, and it is not imperative to attend. It is a choice: a choice that is being robbed from us. There is nothing in our constitution that states that music is against the law.

The Ministry of Youth and Diwan Al-Amiri are beacons of light in our community. The youth is thriving because they finally have an outlet to express themselves. By denying people their right to entertain and be entertained, we are encouraging people in our society to escape via sinister modes of distraction.

Art is not liberalism or progress. It is a part of our roots. As a voter, I beseech MPs to address issues in our society that are essential to the majority, not the few who claim to speak on behalf of all of us. There is room for diversity regarding interests.

## Unscrupulous recruiters target job seekers in Kuwait

By Nawara Fattahova

Job seekers - be careful of getting scammed by fake and unscrupulous recruiting agencies in Kuwait. Sometimes scammers will pose as recruiters for well known multinational companies in Kuwait, asking for small payments from job seekers in exchange for a job. Other times, recruiters may solicit fees from would-be employees to ‘process’ the application and say that these fees are only a deposit - but one that is never returned. Richard is a victim of the latter. He found a recruiting agency that has branches in Hawally, Salmiya and Kuwait City.

“I was looking for a job and I saw the ad of this office on Facebook. I contacted them and they asked me to come over to their office in Hawally for an interview along with my documents. So I went there, submitted my CV, filled up the application form and was interviewed by the staff,” Richard told Kuwait Times.

The office was crowded with other applicants. “They told me they will take my first

salary if they find a job for me, and I agreed. On top of this, they demanded I pay a deposit of KD 20, which according to them would be refunded when I find a job. They even gave me a receipt,” he said.

But the agency didn't find him a job. “Two weeks later, I found a job by myself. The recruiting agency never called me, so I went there to get back my KD 20. They told me to come back the next day. I went there again the next day and they asked me for the receipt. The employee went inside and came back saying the accountant is not available and told me to return tomorrow. He didn't give me back the receipt. I visited the agency more than five times to get my money back, but without any result,” Richard said.

“Finally, they told me I will never get my money back. I couldn't complain at the police station as they had taken the receipt, but I want to stop them from scamming poor people. Every time I went there, I met other victims who were also there to get their deposits back, but were not successful despite coming repeatedly. I'm

sure they made a huge amount out of scamming people, as the number of my application was above 4,000,” he lamented.

An inspector of the consumer protection department of the ministry of commerce and industry noted that in order to file a complaint at the department, the victims should have a contract or it should be written on the receipt that the KD 20 they paid is refundable. “They have to prove they paid the amount and that the company assured this payment is refundable. Otherwise, they can't complain at our department. But they can report the matter at the police station or file a case in court,” said the inspector.

A piece of advice: Always check what's written on the invoice before paying, and never let the receipt leave your possession unless you've been repaid the amount.



## condolences

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Ethylene Unit

On the sad demise of his

**Father**

May his soul rest in peace and may  
God grant comfort and strength to the  
bereaved family members during this time

## CONDOLENCES



With deep sorrow, we inform the sad demise of **Mr Mathews A Mathai**, 64 years, Ambazhathadathil Veedu, Thirumoolapuram, Thiruvalla, Kerala. He entered his heavenly abode on Wednesday 7th March 2018 at Parumala Hospital, Kerala, India. He is survived by his wife Mary Mathews and children Mebin Mathew Mathews and Merin Ann Mathews. The funeral will be held on Friday 9th March, 2pm at Mar. Baselious Orthodox Church, Thirumoolapuram, Thiruvalla. Contact +91 8136959522

Inserted by bereaved Family

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# WATER in the de

Photos by Athoob Al-Shuaibi

**KUWAIT:** Several government officials including Hossam Al-Roumi, Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs and Jenan Boushehri, Minister of Utilities and Minister of State for Housing Affairs recently toured the Sabah Al-Ahmed City after complaints from residents regarding

massive lakes of standing water, swarms of mosquitoes and the unhealthy environment created by the situation.

It's unclear if the lakes are formed by raw sewage seeping into the open desert or from brackish water released to the surface due to the continuing construction. Al-Roumi said during the tour that the problem resulted from not linking the area's sewers to a plant because the

one in Um Al-Haiman is still under construction. But Boushehri denied that the accumulated water was sewage water and stressed that it was treated water that would be sucked from the houses by a special pipeline.

Several government agencies are now involved in trying to resolve the issue but meanwhile plant life and local fauna, including camels, are taking advantage of the situation.



# Desert but no Oasis



# Transparency and the rule of law

By Athoob Al-Shuaibi

As part of French-German diplomatic cooperation, the Franco-German Prize for Human Rights and the Rule of Law was launched to encourage outstanding activists in this field. French and German embassies around the world nominate a number of candidates for the laurel, and 15 winners are selected by a supreme committee comprising of the French foreign minister and his German counterpart. In 2017, a Kuwaiti activist was chosen for his work on a parliamentary monitoring website called Raqib50.com, which was launched in 2011.

Abdullah Al-Khonaini told Kuwait Times that the site focuses on the principle of transparency by putting out all facts about the performance of parliamentarians, especially the percentage of their attendance and absence, the laws that they voted for or against, and draft laws that relate to political and legal developments in Kuwait. The Raqib50 website is one of the projects of the Sout-Al Kuwait group, which promotes awareness in the Kuwaiti society of people's constitutional rights and disseminates democratic culture in the country.

"Hamad Al-Jedaie and I, the co-founders of the parliament watchdog, go to the National Assembly every day. We sit down with MPs to learn about the performance of the parliament and read the internal rules. Most of the parliament's work is written in detail. Our visits and encounters have given us an idea of how things work. We also composed a list of the most important data that affect



laws and state institutions. The administration of documentation in parliament is very cooperative, because what they have is public information. However, it isn't publicly available to voters," Khonaini said.

The parliament watchdog site in its latest update added the details of the latest grilling, or interpellation, of a minister. "It is impossible to inquire at the parliament about the performance of a specific deputy - the information will be in the form of reports and the manual records of the committees, which make up more than 900 pages sometimes. Of course, we cannot assess the impact of Raqib50

on the decisions of the electorate, but the more they rely on the site, the more aware they become, which helps them to make the right decision when electing candidates," Khonaini explained.

He stressed that the prize, even if it is in his name, does not mean that it is for him alone. "The award is not for me - it's for the team of Raqib50. We never expected this great recognition that helped in publicizing the website. Many people had never heard about the site until we won the award, so I am grateful to the French and German embassies for their support," he concluded.

## Kuwait first country in GCC to join 'Ring the Bell' initiative

To commemorate International Women's Day, and in accordance with the Sustainable Stock Exchange Initiative, Boursa Kuwait hosted a women's empowerment and equal opportunities initiative in partnership with the General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development (GSSCPD), Women's Studies and Research Center (WSRC), the United Nations and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP).

In accordance with the Kuwait 2035 state vision, spearheaded by HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the Kuwait National Development Plan, the initiative promotes women's economic empowerment and showcases the role of the private sector to ensure women contribution to sustainable national development.

Commenting on the initiative, Khaled Al-Khaled, Chief Executive Officer at Boursa Kuwait, said: "Boursa Kuwait is honored to implement one of the key goals of the United Nations for women empowerment on this momentous occasion of International Women's Day. As a member of the World Federations of Exchanges, we are committed to the implementation of its initiatives and proud to be the first country in the GCC to join this initiative, and become one of the 60 countries around the world to implement it.

"This initiative also shows how Boursa Kuwait is keen on promoting His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah's vision of Kuwait 2035 and the National Development Plan. I am a firm believer in the role of the private sector to promote women's empowerment and create a more sustainable development plan that benefits all Kuwaiti citizens."

Khaled Mahdi, Secretary General of the General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development, said:



**KUWAIT: Boursa Kuwait hosts a women's empowerment and equal opportunities initiative yesterday to commemorate International Women's Day. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat**

"We honor this initiative as a symbol of the integration of women into the national economy, recognizing this partnership in word and deed and as an affirmation of the policies of the National Development Plan and its pillars to promote socioeconomic integration in the economic and political components."

Evidence shows that increasing women's participation in the private sector at all levels leads to significant economic dividends. In the Arab states region, studies show that if a 25 percent increase of women's role in the workforce was achieved, it could boost gross domestic product (GDP) by \$415 billion.

Murad Wahba, United Nations Assistant Secretary-General, UNDP Assistant Administrator and Director of Regional Bureau for Arab States, highlighted that: "Investing in women's economic empowerment is intrinsic to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It sets a direct path towards providing equal opportunities, poverty eradication, and inclusive economic growth. Yet despite the important progress that has been made in these areas, a large gap between economic opportunities provided to both males and females still exists across all countries and regions.

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# Amir's efforts to prevent Gulf crisis' escalation succeeded

## Jarallah hails Iraq conference, says Syria top priority

**KUWAIT:** Efforts exerted by HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to prevent the escalation of the Gulf dispute were a success, Kuwaiti Deputy Foreign Minister Khalid Al-Jarallah said in an interview with Kuwait TV on Wednesday. The Amir moved quickly to mediate due to his commitment to the Gulf Cooperation Council's unity, added the Kuwaiti official. Jarallah said the continuation of the stalemate on the affair "pains us on a daily basis".

Regarding the Arab quartet's (Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain and Egypt) recent statement on the matter, Jarallah said he was appreciative and proud that the document presents a positive indicator of Kuwait's continuing role of mediation. In response to a question whether the US planned to host Gulf leaders in a bid to resolve the dispute, he confirmed there were attempts, but that so far no invitations have been sent. However, Jarallah said several prominent Gulf figures would be shortly visiting the US amid moves which could pave the way for the convening of the summit.

Regarding Yemen, he said Kuwait places the matter on its priorities list through its non-permanent UN Security Council status and after hosting three months of peace talks between

Yemeni factions which nearly reached a breakthrough. Kuwait remains keen to once more host the Yemenis for the signature of a reconciliation document agreed upon by the opposing factions, he affirmed.

### Kuwaiti triumph

The Kuwait-hosted conference on Iraq's reconstruction, held under the initiative of HH the Amir, assured the world that Kuwait has forgotten its wounds and has been victorious in its moral role throughout the Arab and Islamic regions, Jarallah said. He said the event presented the world with a clear message that this is Kuwait's direction, and this is its leadership - a point which received global acclaim and admiration.

The efforts Kuwait assumed in order to make the event a success were tireless, he added, mentioning that the conference differed from others due to its focus on development. Furthermore, the World Bank's cooperation gave the conference credibility, he added, applauding the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry's role in reaching out to the private sector.

Some 2,400 international businesses were keen on benefitting from the investment oppor-

tunities and assurances provided by Iraq, he said. The event, held in February, resulted in contributions worth \$30 billion presented by governments and businesses. At the conference, HH the Amir announced Kuwait's allocation of \$1 billion in the form of loans and another \$1 billion in the form of investments, alongside donations from Kuwaiti charities.

### Alleviating Syrian suffering

Kuwait has worked to alleviate the suffering of the Syrian people since the beginning of their crisis, through conferences it has hosted and others it has attended internationally, Jarallah said on Wednesday. He said after receiving a non-permanent seat at the UN Security Council, Kuwait realized that it must crucially act and work to address the needs and concerns of Arab and Islamic nations.

Along with issues that are of great concern to Kuwait like the Palestinian issue, the urgent situation in Syria has made it a top priority which has the attention of HH the Amir and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs. Over one month ago, Kuwait along with Sweden, through the coordination of Kuwait's representative to the

UN Mansour Al-Otaibi, sought to frame resolution 2401 in relation to the tragic situation in Syria, he said. Kuwait and Sweden completely saw eye-to-eye on the articles of the resolution, he stressed.

Amid fears of a Russian veto, Kuwait had sought to get the consensus of member states on the approved draft, and to discuss it with "our friends in Russia", added Jarallah. He revealed "positive indicators" on the decision in terms of alleviating the suffering and pain of the Syrian people due to the bombing they are being exposed to.

Under Kuwait's presidency, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2401, proposed by Kuwait and Sweden, which demanded a 30-day ceasefire to allow the transportation of humanitarian assistance to those in need. The Security Council has been discussing the situation in Syria, particularly in regards to the rebel-held enclave of Eastern Ghouta near Damascus, which has been the target of heavy airstrikes since the start of February. Over the past four days, around 400 people have been killed and over 1,000 wounded due to these airstrikes, according to UN estimates. — KUNA

## Kuwaitis keen on spaceknow-how, says NASA expert

**KUWAIT:** More and more Kuwaitis are looking to the stars in a quest to create the foundations for space exploration. But the difficult endeavor requires expertise from more experienced nations in the field. Through meetings with Kuwaiti researchers and youngsters, a leading NASA engineer said she had witnessed an "organic interest" in US space technology and research. This cooperation could be through helping young Kuwaitis learn about "cube satellites or sounding rockets," senior NASA engineer Nagin Cox told KUNA at the US Embassy in Kuwait.

Cube satellites, or cube sats as Cox describes, are very small satellites which US universities help students build in order to give them a background on how satellites operate in addition to their functions. When countries ponder plans for space exploration, these are usually the first steps towards that goal, Cox said, adding NASA offers several internships to international students which are scientifically-orientated in nature. The US is not the only country with a space program, and Cox mentioned the United Arab Emirates' plans to send its own spacecraft to Mars in 2021, which will monitor conditions on the Red Planet, said to have the closest conditions to Earth in the Solar System.

Meanwhile, she said that current cooperation currently exists between NASA and the Kuwait Foundation for Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) on a satellite observation of Earth's surface. KFAS is conducting the "calibration and validation of data" from a NASA satellite, called SMAP, or Soil Moisture Active Passive, which is an observatory



Senior NASA engineer Nagin Cox

that has been placed in a polar orbit around Earth designed to measure the planet's soil moisture over a three-year period.

During her weeklong stay which began on Sunday, the engineer held public talks at two public schools and several universities describing her current research role on the space agency's Mars robotics exploratory Rover vehicles mission. She has also met several public and private research and academic institution representatives, such as KFAS, Kuwait University, Kuwait College of Science and Technology and the College of Aviation Technology. Following several leading speakers invited by the US Embassy, the engineer said she hoped her visit would inspire more students to get involved in science, technology engineering and maths. Cox also said she was "very impressed" by the level of scientific convergence between the local engineering community, as well as the numbers of women involved in scientific research in Kuwait.

US Ambassador Lawrence Silverman revealed that cooperation was in the pipeline on the terrestrial mapping of Kuwait between Kuwait's Environment Protection Agency (EPA) and the United States Geological Survey, USGS. The USGS is a government research agency dedicated to the



US Ambassador Lawrence Silverman

study of matters such as the earth's natural resources, meteorological movements, ecosystems and water. The cooperation, which will involve the dispatch of a several UGS researchers to Kuwait in two months, will help local scientists understand their environment better, including how to deal with tough climatic conditions like sandstorms and drought. In the meantime, through Cox's visit, the US government hopes to encourage cooperation with Kuwait, specifically on scientific and technological research, particularly after HH the Amir's signature of an agreement in this regard, the ambassador added. During his visit to Washington in September last year where he met President Donald Trump, HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah signed a memorandum of understanding with US officials, which included cooperation on research and educational aspects.

"Part of what she (Cox) is doing is connecting with people and other researchers, who have an interest in space. You never know who the next astronaut is going to be, you never know who the next researcher is going to be," said Silverman, "you need to give them that inspiration when they're younger." Young Kuwaitis today have a strong desire to learn about aviation, said Marzouq Al-Sha-



Vice Dean of College of Aviation Technology Marzouq Al-Shareefi

reefi, the Vice Dean of the Kuwait-based College of Aviation Technology, which hosts over 500 students. The American expert's visit to Kuwait is a "benefit for us in the aviation sector," he said after Cox earlier toured the academic institution and expressed a "good opportunity" for cooperation with NASA. The Kuwaiti college, which possesses three small-sized Cessna and one large Gulfstream aircraft, all manufactured by the US, could benefit from US academic expertise, through lectures from experts, or through purchasing equipment, he added.

Nasser Ashkanani hopes to one day send a cube satellite he and another seven Kuwaitis, including physicists and teachers who call themselves the 'Kuwaiti Suborbital Rocket Propulsion Group', have successfully designed. The group has created the blueprints - a 3D model design - for the goal, the 23-year-old told KUNA, and now require funding worth an estimated KD 100,000 (\$334,000), and necessary government permission to launch the project. After speaking to the NASA expert, the Kuwait University physics student also hopes to be involved in an internship program at NASA or renowned private American aerospace firm SpaceX, which he underlined would offer him a lot of experience. — KUNA

# Fahaheel: Commercial, farming center and important gateway



Sheikh Salem Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah



Fahaheel village coastline

**KUWAIT:** "Fahaheel used to be Kuwait's southern gateway," said Kuwaiti heritage researcher Hussein Al-Qattan, adding that as one of the districts of Ahmadi governorate, Fahaheel is an ancient commercial center and a farming area where plenty of groundwater exists. He added it was a village located 25 miles to the south of Kuwait City and four miles from Ahmadi. He said Fahaheel initially covered an area of 11.5 sq m and that it was famous for growing palm and Sidr trees, vegetables and watermelon. Some of its residents also used to dive for pearls.

Qattan explained that the word 'Fahaheel' is the plural of the word 'fahhal' - the male palm tree - which was abundantly planted in the village and from which it acquired its name. Qattan said the village used to be surrounded by a small wall built in the aftermath of the Al-Jahra battle in 1920 during the reign of the late Amir Sheikh Salem Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, who provided all the needed material to build the wall and its two gates. The wall also included several observation towers. It was torn down in the mid-1950s after the oil boom and urban expansion. Qattan noted that in view of its growth following the Al-Sareef battle in 1901, many Kuwaiti families left the city and moved southwards to live in Fahaheel. — KUNA



The Fahaheel wall



Fahaheel c. 1954

## CRIMES

### Man missing after car sinks

**KUWAIT:** A non-Kuwait rescue team member went missing while on a rescue mission along with two citizens at Subiyya Creek. Security sources said the team members were driving on swampland when their vehicle suddenly plunged into the water. The sources said the two citizens managed to swim out, but their colleague was not found even after choppers and divers combed the area.

### Women fight in cafe

Two female citizens were arrested for fighting in a public restaurant. Security sources said a woman was dining with her husband when she noticed another woman trying to flirt with him. The jealous wife got angry and demanded the other woman leave the restaurant, which triggered the fight and prompted restaurant staff to call the police. — Al-Rai/ Al-Anbaa

## Bidaa flyover opens Mar 10

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

**KUWAIT:** The Traffic Directorate announced that in collaboration with the public authority for roads and land transport, the first phase of the Bidaa roundabout flyover will open tomorrow (Saturday, March 10). Accordingly, the interior ministry's relations and media security urged all motorists using Blajat Road heading towards Al-Taawon Street to drive carefully, slow down, respect speed limits and observe warning signs and traffic police instructions.





Mosque, shops attacked in anti-Muslim riots in Sri Lanka

## Saudi crown prince meets Archbishop of Canterbury

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Women gather as they shout slogans and flash the V-sign for victory during a demonstration to mark International Women's Day in Diyarbakir, southwestern Turkey. —AFP Photos

# 'Men don't want women to work' in the Arab world

**BEIRUT:** Unemployment among women in the Middle East is twice that of men, the United Nations said on Wednesday, pointing to low wages, a lack of skills and a belief among some that a woman's place is in the home. About 16 percent of women in Arab states are unemployed, compared to a global average of 6 percent, the UN's International Labor Organization (ILO) said.

"The incentive for women to work in the Middle East is not there," said Emanuela Pozzan, a gender specialist with the ILO, pointing to poor maternity provisions and costly childcare. "The jobs are not attractive because the salaries are not attractive," she said. Getting more women into work globally was essential to achieve a global goal of gender equality by 2030, the ILO said, calling for policymakers to recognize the "unequal demands" on women at home and in caring for others.

Farah Nawayseh, 29, said she had been

looking for work in her home country of Jordan for nearly nine months. Traditional male views of women were a significant roadblock, she said. "Because I am female it is harder for me to find jobs," she said by phone from Amman, the capital. "It has to do with a conservative mindset that men don't want women to work - they are for marriage and to be in the home." She said the monthly wage for the sales jobs she sought was about 200 Jordanian dinar.

"A lot of the time when I go for jobs they are asking for males and the salaries are so low," she said. Middle Eastern countries are among the worst in the world for unequal pay between men and women, according to the World Economic Forum, a Swiss charity. The five lowest ranking countries for women's economic participation and opportunity are Syria, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Yemen and Iran, with a gap of at least 65 percent, it said. —Reuters



Women PM members of People's democracy party (HDP) take part in a rally to mark International Women's Day in Diyarbakir, southwestern Turkey.

## International

Friday, March 9, 2018

# Women celebrate IWD with equality aspirations

**NEW YORK:** Despite the progress in gender equality, the International Labor Organization (ILO) statics shows inequality between men and women, and indicate a drop in opportunities for women participation in job market, in turn increases women unemployment rates. A new study published by International Labor Organization (ILO) a night before International

Women's Day (IWD) which comes on March the 8th every year, showed that female participation in the international workforce reached 48.5 percent in 2018, which is a rate less by 26.5 percent compared to male rates. It also designates an increase in international unemployment rates by 0.8 percent compared to men rates, which means that each 10 working men work for only six women.

"Women still have many steps to take in order to reach equality with men, whither it is regarding obtaining a job or regarding inequality in salaries, or any other aspect of discrimination", ILO Deputy Director General for Policy Deborah Greenfield said in press remarks yesterday. "We should work more to encounter this unacceptable wave by setting policies to fit women that considered the asymmetrical demands the family encounters", she added.

The study shows a great variation that is found between countries considering their resources, as the gap between men and women unemployment rates in developed countries are relatively slight, while it records less unemployment rates between women compared to men in Eastern Europe and Northern American. Meanwhile women unemployment are twice much the men rates in regions like the Arab nation and northern Africa, as societies traditions in such regions hamper the employment of women in paid jobs, the study added.

The women also often undergo poor working conditions, with no written conditions or contracts, the study added. Despite that working women share in the family projects in emerging countries decreased during the last decade, yet in developing countries rates are still high, reaching 42 percent out of the total female employment in 2018 compared to 20 percent of male employment, it said. The male employers worldwide are four times more than female employers are in 2018, it added. Such gender gapes affects opportunities in taking over executive posts, as women are still facing obstacles in the work market in reaching such jobs. It added.—Agencies



Saudi women jog in the streets of Jeddah's historic Al-Balad district. —AFP photos



Somali female activists hold messages "Save Somali Women and children" gather to mark International Women's Day in Mogadishu.



Pakistani civil society activists carry placards as they march during a rally to mark International Women's Day in Karachi.



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## International

# Saudi crown prince meets Archbishop of Canterbury

## Welby concerned over treatment of Christians in Saudi Arabia

**LONDON:** Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman held a private meeting yesterday with Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby, where he made a “strong commitment” to interfaith dialogue, the archbishop’s office said. During the hour-long visit at Lambeth Palace, the pair discussed the crown prince’s reform plans and Welby—the head of the Anglican church—expressed his concerns about the treatment of Christians in Saudi Arabia.

“The Crown Prince made a strong commitment to promote the flourishing of those of different faith traditions, and to interfaith dialogue within the Kingdom and beyond,” the archbishop’s office said in a statement. “The archbishop shared his concern about limits placed on Christian worship in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and highlighted the importance for leaders of all faiths to support freedom of religion or belief, drawing on the experience of the UK.”

Prince Mohammed is on a three-day visit to Britain, which began with a lunch with Queen Elizabeth II on Wednesday, and will see him hold the second of two meetings with Prime Minister Theresa May yesterday. It follows a trip to Egypt earlier in the week, when Prince Mohammed met Coptic Pope Tawadros II in Cairo.

In what his office described as a “cordial and honest conversation”, the archbishop also voiced his concern over the Saudi-led military action in Yemen, which has been the cause of protests during the crown prince’s British visit. “The archbishop voiced his distress at the humanitarian crisis in Yemen, and asked that all that is possible be done to alleviate the suffering of civilian populations and to seek an end to the conflict,” the statement said. The men viewed a selection of early texts from the Christian, Muslim and Jewish faiths during their meeting.—AFP



**LONDON:** Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby, right, walks with Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, left, as the Crown Prince arrives for a private meeting at Lambeth Palace in London.—AFP

## War leaves Yemenis struggling to buy fuel to cook

**SANAA:** Long queues of men line the streets of Yemen’s rebel-held capital Sanaa waiting alongside empty propane gas canisters they are desperate to replace so they have fuel to cook. Three years of war accompanied by a crippling Saudi-led blockade has led to chronic shortages and with them prices that are skyrocketing. The price for a refill of cooking gas has more than doubled in recent weeks from \$12 to \$26. Longtime Sanaa resident Mohammed Khaled Hussein said he had been waiting three days for a replacement canister to take back to his family with the hope of at least making tea and rice.

But each time he went home with the empty one. “I’ve still not been able to get a replacement canister and today I found out that prices have soared again,” Hussein said. “We even heard petrol shortages could be next,” he added. “So I headed to the nearest petrol station and used the money I had put aside for propane gas to fill my car a bit.” Supporters of the Houthi rebels accuse the Yemeni army and its Saudi-led allies of blocking fuel supplies to the capital and other rebel-held areas across the north.

Other Sanaa residents, however, say the rebels are to blame for imposing a hefty fuel tax. Restaurateur Talal Sharaf Al-Qudsi said he had been forced to close his doors after the shortages left him unable to run his ovens. “I can’t raise the prices on these poor people,” Qudsi said. “It’s better to just close the restaurant.”

### Parked without fuel

Bus driver Shihab Al-Hashidi, whose vehicle is his sole source of income, says he struggled for days to fill up his tank. “One day you manage to fill your tank, then the next two or three days you’re stuck parked without fuel,” said Hashidi. “There are a lot of buses out of service and parked.” The crisis has seen residents turn to other forms of fuel, including firewood, as they attempt to adjust. “The crisis is suffocating us,” said Ahmed Ali Mohammed, who sells wood for household use. “There’s a big rush to buy firewood now, because people don’t have gas,” he said. “We’re trying to provide as much as we can.”

Outside the capital, the shortages are even more devastating.



**SANAA:** A Yemeni man inspects the damage in the aftermath of a reported air strike by the Saudi-led coalition in the Yemeni capital Sanaa.—AFP

The United Nations says 22.2 million people are dependent on food aid, of whom more than eight million people are at risk of famine. The war has hit food production and the Saudi-led blockade has halted all but very limited commercial imports of basic foodstuffs. Lack of access to safe drinking water has seen cholera infect 1.1 million people since April 2017 in the world’s worst outbreak. Saudi Arabia and its allies say their blockade is vital to prevent arms shipments reaching rebel-held areas, particularly missiles like those the rebels have launched multiple times into the kingdom.—AFP

## Cubs of the Caliphate: Rehabilitating IS child fighters, victims

**RAWANGA CAMP:** While children who have been through war typically draw devastating pictures of the violence they have suffered, few show themselves as the perpetrators. The suicide belts, car bombs and other explosives sketched again and again by a 14-year-old boy newly arrived at this camp in northern Iraq are the ones he built himself: used by Islamic State militants against civilians and troops in Iraq and Syria.

One image depicted him killing a man with a spray of bullets, something he said he did during three years as a child fighter forcibly conscripted by Islamic State. Kidnapped from his Yazidi homeland in northern Iraq, he said he got used to the sound of bombs falling on Islamic State’s de facto capital, Raqqa, in Syria, as security forces closed in last year. “Here’s where I got shot fighting the SDF,” said the boy, not named to protect him from retribution, referring to the US-backed rebel Syrian Defense Forces and pointing out a bullet wound on his shin.

Giving him time to draw and talk about his experience is part of a treatment program to help him move on and protect both him and others from lasting damage. Hundreds of children are estimated to have been used as fighters by Islamic State, including boys who joined with their families or were given up by them and the offspring of foreign fighters groomed from birth to perpetuate its ideology. Experts have warned that indoctrinated children, who began escaping the clutches of Islamic State as its territory fractured last year, could pose an ongoing threat to security, both regionally and in the West, if they are not rehabilitated. Treating Yazidi children, who were separated from their families and in many cases orphaned, holds particular challenges.

There is little in the way of specialized care for them in Iraq, where the minimum age of criminal responsibility is nine. The government has detained and prosecuted dozens of children for their suspected IS affiliation, according to a recent report by New York-based Human Rights Watch. —Reuters

## International

# Ghouta aid postponed as Syria regime presses assault

**HAMMURIYEH, Syria:** Aid agencies postponed a convoy of vital food and health supplies to Eastern Ghouta yesterday, as the Syrian regime pressed a relentless ground and air assault against the rebel enclave. Dozens of people, including many children, were treated overnight for breathing problems and symptoms that medics said were consistent with chlorine attacks, which Western powers have repeatedly warned would not go unpunished.

New air strikes on the town of Zamalka killed at least seven civilians, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, bringing the total number of dead in the offensive to more than 900. The aid trucks were meant to bring relief to war-weary civilians living under government siege for five years and now facing a deadly Russian-backed assault. The fighting has prompted international outrage, culminating in the UN Security Council demanding an immediate ceasefire, aid deliveries and evacuations.

But with bombardment continuing, a joint convoy between the United Nations, International Committee of the Red Cross and Syrian Arab Red Crescent planned yesterday could not go through. "The convoy for today is postponed, as the situation is evolving on the ground, which doesn't allow us to carry out the operation in such conditions," ICRC spokeswoman Ingy Sedky said. It marks the second time this week that aid operations have been disrupted by military developments, with food deliveries cut short Monday due to bombardment. Ghouta is home to around 400,000 people under siege and is the last opposition-controlled zone on the capital's outskirts. The Syrian army and allied militias began a fierce bombing campaign on February 18 against Ghouta, followed by a ground offensive.

## Breathing difficulties

The campaign has so far recaptured half of rebel-held territory, according to the Observatory, a Britain-based monitor. Towns and villages have fallen in quick succession in recent days, with regime forces on the verge of cutting the remaining rebel-held territory into two isolated pockets. AFP's correspondent in the town of Hammuriyeh saw motionless bodies lying in the streets on Thursday after a night of ferocious bombing.

On Wednesday, volunteers from the civil defence group known as the "White Helmets" were seen trying to douse flames burning two men lying dead on the street next to a motorbike after a strike. Dozens of civilians were treated in the town for breathing difficulties late Wednesday, with medics reporting symptoms consistent with a toxic attack. Doctors at one facility treated at least 29 patients with signs of exposure to chlorine, according to the Syrian American Medical Society (SAMS), which supports hospitals in Eastern Ghouta. It said victims were suffering from shortness of breath, wheezing, and redness of the eyes. Several families were seen trying to reach fresh air late Wednesday on the roof of a four-storey building in Hammuriyeh, after air strikes on their neighborhood.

Parents had stripped their children down and were spraying them with water, fearing toxic substances had been absorbed into their clothes. "I'm going to suffocate," two children screamed as rescue workers carried them down from the roof for treatment.

## 'Not authorized' by Syria

Regime forces have been repeatedly accused of using chlorine on Eastern Ghouta in recent weeks, which both the government and Russia



DOUMA, Syria: Syrian children pose for a picture at a basement being used as a make-shift bomb shelter in the rebel-held town of Douma in the Eastern Ghouta enclave on the outskirts of Damascus.—AFP

have staunchly denied. Government troops have imposed a siege on Eastern Ghouta since 2013, and deliveries of food and medicine to the zone require permission from all warring sides. The UN's humanitarian coordination office (OCHA) in Damascus told AFP the convoy could not go through Thursday because it had not received permission from Syrian authorities.

"Today, the UN and partners were not able to return to Douma in east Ghouta because the movement of the convoy was not authorised by the Syrian authorities due to security reasons," said spokeswoman Linda Tom. The UN Security Council on February 24 demanded a 30-day cessation of hostilities but the resolution has done little to bring relief to civilians. Bombardment has continued and on Monday a long-

awaited aid delivery was cut short after heavy air strikes. Nearly half of the food aid on the trucks could not be delivered, and the UN said Syrian authorities removed some medical and health supplies from the trucks. The UN's top body met behind closed doors on Wednesday for three hours in an attempt to shore up the ceasefire. UN peace envoy Staffan de Mistura briefed the meeting and offered to help broker a deal with Russia to allow fighters in Eastern Ghouta to leave, a diplomat said.

Rebel groups operating in Eastern Ghouta have so far refused to discuss evacuating the enclave and have been firing rockets and artillery into eastern areas of Damascus in recent weeks, leaving at least 32 dead according to the Observatory.—AFP

## Spanish women stage strike for rights on Women's Day

**MADRID:** Spain marked International Women's Day yesterday with an unprecedented strike in defence of their rights that saw hundreds of trains cancelled and countless protests scheduled throughout the day. Called by 10 unions to demand gender equality, particularly where salaries are concerned, the strike dominated the headlines with famous female presenters noticeably absent from radio or television shows.

Feminist groups have also called on women not to spend money, particularly on items such as deodorant whose versions created for women often cost more, and to ditch domestic chores for the day. The strike is attempting to emulate Iceland's 1975 work stoppage, when women took a day off in October to demonstrate their vital contribution to the country's economy and society. However Spain's two main unions—the CCOO and UGT—have called on their members to stop work for only two hours yes-

terday. Ana Reyes, a 37-year-old PR executive, said she was striking "in the hope that the importance of half of the population will be recognized and that it will bring about a real change." She told AFP the action gave "visibility to the malaise and discrimination we women suffer". The strike comes as countries around the world mobilize for #internationalwomensday2018, a worldwide trending topic on Twitter, and comes hot on the heels of #MeToo and #Timesup campaigns that went global with allegations of sexual misconduct in Hollywood.

## Spain fights hard

Spain is a leading country in the fight for women's rights and against gender violence, even though much remains to be done. In 2004, for instance, the then Socialist government approved a law on violence against women that the European Council has upheld as an example to follow. The groundbreaking legislation set up a hotline that would not appear on users' phone bills, offered free legal aid and established special courts for victims.

Last year, though, 49 women died at the hands of their partners or ex-partners, an increase on 2016 when 44 were killed, official statistics show. Women earn 14.9 percent less than men in Spain, slightly better than the EU average of 16.2 percent, according to the bloc's statistics agency Eurostat. Official data also show that more women leave their job when they have children than men. It was not yet clear how many Spaniards went on strike, but trains



Demonstrators hold up a placard as they attend a protest during a one day strike to defend women's rights on International Women's Day in Madrid.—AFP

on the Madrid and Barcelona undergrounds were less frequent than usual. Meanwhile, more than 300 intercity and long-distance trains were cancelled throughout Spain. The mobilization started at midnight when women gathered on Madrid's central

Puerta del Sol square to bang pots and pans. In major cities across the country yesterday, representatives of political parties, unions and associations will join regular men and women protesting for more equality.—AFP

## International

# UK races to find source of nerve agent in ex-Russian spy attack

## Politicians point finger at Russia, sparking anger in Moscow

**LONDON:** British detectives yesterday scrambled to find the source of the nerve agent used in the “brazen and reckless” attempted murder of a Russian former double-agent and his daughter. Sergei Skripal, 66, who moved to Britain in a 2010 spy swap, is unconscious in a critical but stable condition in hospital along with his daughter Yulia after they collapsed on a bench outside a shopping centre on Sunday.

Interior minister Amber Rudd yesterday told MPs that Britain would do “all we can to bring the perpetrators to justice, whoever they are and wherever they may be,” as media and politicians pointed the finger at Russia, sparking an angry response in Moscow. Rudd called the attack “brazen and reckless” and “attempted murder in the most cruel and public way”. She said Britain “will act without hesitation as the facts become clearer”. A policeman also fell ill after coming to their aid and remains in a serious but stable condition and is “conscious, talking and is engaging,” Rudd added.

### Russia suspected

On Wednesday, British police confirmed for the first time that a nerve agent was used and that their probe was now an attempted murder investigation. “Police are now in a position to confirm that their symptoms are a result of exposure to a nerve agent,” said the Metropolitan Police. “Scientific tests by government experts have identified the specific nerve agent used which will help identify the source.” The Times newspaper reported

yesterday that Skripal’s condition was particularly severe, quoting a senior unnamed British government official.

“The feeling is that he is not going to make it out of this,” the source said. “I think it could be more positive (for Yulia).” Police have cordoned off an Italian restaurant and a pub that the pair are believed to have visited. A diner in the restaurant told the Times that Skripal had eaten there on Sunday and that he was in an agitated state. “He was going absolutely crazy, I didn’t understand it and couldn’t understand them,” the witness said.

“He didn’t seem ill physically but perhaps mentally ill with the way he was shouting.” Police say they are keeping an open mind about what happened, but Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson has alluded to Russia. He noted the “echoes” with the 2006 poisoning in London of former Russian spy and Kremlin critic Alexander Litvinenko, which Britain has blamed on Russia. Defense Secretary Gavin Williamson told British television yesterday that Russia was “becoming an ever-greater threat”.

Fellow Conservative MP Nick Boles tweeted that “I do not see how we can maintain diplomatic relations with a country that tries to murder people on British soil”. Moscow accused British politicians and journalists of whipping up anti-Russian sentiment. Kremlin foreign ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova telling reporters the story “was straight away used to boost an anti-Russian campaign in the media”.



**LONDON:** In this file photo people walk in front of the Harrods department store in London.—AFP

Hundreds of counter-terrorism detectives are working “around the clock” to create a timeline of the victims’ movements, with “many hours” of CCTV under review, police said. The Times reported police are probing whether Skripal’s daughter, who arrived in Britain from Moscow last

week with “gifts from friends”, may have inadvertently brought in the nerve agent. The paper previously said investigators would also examine the 2012 death of Skripal’s wife from cancer and that of his 44-year-old son last year in St Petersburg, reportedly from liver problems.—AFP

## Macron heads to India, seeking to avoid Trudeau errors

**PARIS:** Two weeks after Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau returned from a blunder-struck trip to India, Emmanuel Macron arrives in New Delhi hoping to avoid the missteps of his ally. Trudeau and Macron are often compared internationally because of their broadly similar political views, as well as youth and good looks. But the French leader will be eager to make a different impression on his Indian hosts.

Trudeau, already facing suspicions in India that Canada was too soft on Sikh separatists back home, was seriously embarrassed when a former militant was invited to a dinner with him in Mumbai. Even before this revelation, India’s Hindu nationalist Prime Minister Narendra Modi had given Trudeau a cool reception, but he is expected to be much more welcoming for Macron after a warm meeting between the two in Paris last year.

Macron will “spend a lot of time with Narendra Modi,” a source in the French presidency said, adding that they had “formed a close relationship” during Macron’s first nine months in power. They will meet Saturday for talks before Macron attends a solar power summit on Sunday designed to showcase India and France’s commitment to fighting climate change, which both leaders have made a priority.

Travelling with his wife Brigitte, France’s 40-year-old president is set to make the almost obligatory visit to the monument to love, the Taj Mahal, a few hours drive from the Indian capital



**PARIS:** French President Emmanuel Macron, right, and French Junior Minister for Gender Equality Mariene Schiappa, left, pose with employees of an investment company where women and men are paid the same for the same work, in Paris, to mark the international women’s day.—AFP

on Sunday. On Monday, he heads to the chaotic Hindu holy city of Varanasi on the banks of the river Ganges, which the Indian premier has promised to modernize and clean up. Having seen Trudeau pilloried on social media and in the Canadian press for donning traditional Indian clothing at every opportunity, Macron is likely to be far more conservative in his dress-sense.

As well as discussing climate change and ways to build closer diplomatic ties, the two biggest issues between the countries in recent years—defense and nuclear energy sales—will also take centre-stage during private talks.—AFP

## German AfD politician quits over ‘camel drivers’ race slur

**BERLIN:** A regional leader of Germany’s far-right AfD party said yesterday he would resign after he insulted Germans of Turkish origin, calling them “camel drivers”. Andre Poggenburg, 42, is the leader of the AfD in the formerly communist eastern region of Saxony-Anhalt as well as chief of the anti-immigration party’s state parliamentary group. He will leave both posts from the end of March because of “pressure from the parliamentary group and party”, the Saxony-Anhalt state chapter of the Alternative for Germany (AfD) party said in a statement.

Poggenburg made the inflammatory comments in February after a Turkish community organization had questioned plans in Berlin to create a new “homeland” ministry. He said Germany needed no advice on its culture and history from Turks who he said bore responsibility “for their own genocide”, the mass killings of Armenians in the World War I-era. “Are they crazy?” he told several hundred mostly-male AfD supporters in Nentmannsdorf, a village near Dresden. “These camel drivers should go back to where they belong, far beyond the Bosphorus, to their mud huts and multiple wives.” Poggenburg counts among the most right-leaning members of the AfD.—AFP

# US military veterans join forces for gun reform

## Vets call for tighter firearms regulations to reduce gun violence

**WASHINGTON:** Dave Baril has served in the US Marine Corps for over 18 years, deployed twice to Iraq, and is a gun owner. But after a teenager killed 17 people in Florida last month—the deadliest school shooting to hit the country in over five years—he took his personal AR-15 rifle to a local police station and turned it in for destruction. Baril is one of a group of US military veterans calling for tighter firearms regulations in an effort to reduce gun violence in America, bringing their knowledge of weapons and war—and accompanying credibility—to the contentious debate.

Shootings at a Las Vegas concert last year and at the Parkland, Florida high school “really woke me up the most,” he said. The 42-year-old said he is “all for the 2nd Amendment” to the US Constitution, which guarantees the right to bear arms. “But that doesn’t mean that... we should all be driving around in tanks just because... the military has tanks,” he said. And without changes to current gun laws, Baril believes the current pattern of mass shootings will continue—or get worse.

“The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result,” he said. Both the Las Vegas and Parkland shootings were carried out with AR-15-style rifles,

which are similar to military-issue M4s but lack a burst-fire mode. “If I’m gonna say that... we shouldn’t have these things out there, I can’t have one myself and say, ‘Well, I’m special,’” said Baril. So he decided to turn in his rifle.

### ‘Amplifying’ survivors’ voices

After the Parkland shooting, Baril started the Twitter hashtag #VetsForGunReform and asked a few other veterans if it was something they would support. They said yes, and it has since taken off,

becoming a rallying point for like-minded veterans on social media. “This has really coalesced the group, and the reach that it’s gotten has been incredible,” Kyleanne Hunter, one of the primary Vets for Gun Reform organizers, said of the hashtag.

“Right now, we’re just sort of a little bit of a ragtag group of volunteers who also all have other jobs, and so we’re getting this going as we can,” said Hunter, a former Cobra helicopter pilot who served in the Marines for nearly 12 years, deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan and is a gun owner. “What we really want to focus on right now is amplifying the voices of these students who are driving the movement,” she said, referring to survivors of the Parkland shooting, some

“Florida high school shooting really woke me up”



GHAZNI: US Army Combat Medic, Staff Sergeant Dennis Magnasco, is pictured in 2011 in Ghazni, Afghanistan. — AFP

of whom have become prominent advocates for tighter firearms laws.

“We volunteered to go into harm’s way, they didn’t, and they shouldn’t have to experience this,” said Hunter. She and fellow veterans aim to be “a voice of reason” in the debate on gun regulations and “bridge the gap between the left and the right,” she said. “We’re keeping a close eye on the

policy debates that are happening right now and being very deliberate as to how we want to proceed.” Pete Lucier, who served in the Marines from 2008 to 2013, deployed to Afghanistan and was a marksmanship instructor, said he was once a “pretty strong believer” in the idea of a “good guy with a gun” countering those who would do harm in the US. —AFP

## Africa, US move on from ‘sh••hole’ remarks as Tillerson starts tour

**ADDIS ABABA:** Washington’s top diplomat began his first Africa tour yesterday by meeting with the African Union chief, who said the continent had moved on from a reported insult by President Donald Trump. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and AU commission chairman Moussa Faki Mahamat discussed security and counter-terrorism, trade and development, corruption and conflict in an hour-long meeting at the continental body’s headquarters in the Ethiopian capital.

But looming over the meeting was Trump’s alleged description of African nations as “sh••hole countries” in January, which forced the president to pen a letter reaffirming his commitment to the continent. Faki, however, insisted the slur was now in the past. “I received a letter written by President Trump to myself and I shared that with other African leaders. I believe this incident is of the past,” he said.

Tillerson’s five-nation Africa tour—to include Djibouti, Kenya, Chad and Nigeria, all key allies in fighting Islamic extremism—has been described as a “listening tour”, with no deals or initiatives due to be announced. “The purpose of my trip is to listen to what the priorities of the countries here on the continent are and see where there is good alignment,” said Tillerson.

The diplomat met Ethiopia’s Foreign Minister Workneh Gebeyehu as well as Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn who resigned earlier this month amid a political crisis in Africa’s fastest growing economy. Tillerson urged Ethiopia to move on from a



ADDIS ABABA: US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, left, speaking during a joint press conference, with Chairperson of the African Union (AU) Commission Moussa Faki Mahamat at the AU headquarters in Addis Ababa. — AFP

state of emergency “as quickly as possible” and called for citizens in the tightly-run country to be given “greater freedoms”.

### Focus on security

Analysts highlight the choice of countries visited by Tillerson as a sign of the United States’ focus on security issues on the continent. Chad, Kenya and Nigeria are all battling Islamic extremism, with help from the United States, while Djibouti hosts the only permanent US military base on the continent. Tillerson and Faki discussed continued US support to African counter-terrorism forces in the Sahel and Somalia but no new concrete commitments were given. “We have not yet won that battle in Somalia and we must stay at it,” Tillerson said. His visit is also a bid to counter the mounting perception that the continent is a low priority for the Trump administration, with US-Africa policy ill-defined and key ambassadorial and State Department posts unfilled. —AFP

## Embattled White House promises quick tariff decision

**WASHINGTON:** President Donald Trump’s team played down talk of a trade war Wednesday as it fought to limit a financial market sell-off, promising a quick decision on contentious tariffs that prompted a popular economic advisor to the president to quit. Administration big guns Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross and Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin rushed to the cameras to calm market jitters over proposed steel and aluminum duties, which they indicated were still negotiable and would not hurt growth.

Trump is set to formalize the tariffs at a signing ceremony Thursday afternoon, and Canada and Mexico will be exempt initially, Peter Navarro, a top trade advisor, told Fox Business Network Wednesday night. As markets fell on news that Wall Street favorite Gary Cohn, Trump’s top economic adviser, had resigned from the White House in protest at Trump’s trade decision and global partners vowed retaliation, Ross tried to calm fears of a trade war. “We’re going to have sensible relations with our allies,” he told CNBC, claiming that Trump’s policy was well “thought through. We’re not looking for a trade war.” Mnuchin joined the effort, claiming that the tariffs, which are not yet finalized, would not hurt the administration’s projections for three percent growth. —AFP

# Mosque, shops attacked in anti-Muslim riots in Sri Lanka

## 24-hour curfew imposed after hand grenade explosion

**COLOMBO:** Sri Lankan police said petrol bombs were hurled at a mosque yesterday as hundreds of troops patrolled a troubled central district where anti-Muslim violence has left three people dead. Muslim-owned businesses were set on fire and vandalized in several parts of Sri Lanka, police said, days after an island-wide state of emergency was imposed to curb riots in Kandy. Armored vehicles and heavily-armed troops fortified the hill district, where internet services remain suspended and an evening curfew is in place.

The government ordered the internet blackout after police discovered mobs of Sinhalese rioters were using social media to coordinate attacks on Muslim establishments. More than 200 homes, businesses and vehicles have been torched in three days of violence by mobs from the mainly Buddhist Sinhalese majority. A 24-hour curfew was imposed on Wednesday afternoon after a hand grenade exploded in the

hands of an attacker, killing him and wounding 11 others, officials said. The day-time curfew was eased following a calm night but tensions remain high in the tourist hotspot and schools shuttered.

But in Kuruvita, 125 kilometers south of Kandy, police said petrol bombs were lobbed at a mosque. Little damage was inflicted and three suspects are being pursued. In Weligama, 240

kilometers south of Kandy, a Muslim-owned business was attacked, police said, while Muslim establishments were pelted with stones in at least two other locations outside Kandy. Sri Lanka's telecoms regulator asked internet providers to block access to Facebook and

other social media platforms to prevent the spread of anti-Muslim hate speech.

Police have already identified anti-Muslim messages being shared on social networks, including a video posted by a hardline Buddhist monk urging violence against Muslims. Muslims



**PALLEKELE:** Sri Lankan police commandos patrol on the streets of Pallekele, a suburb of Kandy, following anti-Muslim riots that has prompted the government to declare a state of emergency. — AFP

in Kandy complained that security forces and police-equipped with special powers to detain under the emergency provision-were slow to react as the violence unfolded. "The main junc-

tion is going up in flames. At the same time, the authorities are folding their arms and watching," said Muslim businessman M. Jaffer, as quoted in yesterday's DailyFT newspaper. —AFP

## Female slavery survivors unite to back India anti-trafficking law

**NEW DELHI:** Female survivors of modern slavery are joining forces in India's capital to urge lawmakers to urgently pass a tough new anti-trafficking law that aims to help victims rebuild their lives. India's cabinet last week approved a law which would prioritize survivors' needs, establish a rehabilitation fund and prevent the imprisonment of victims of forced labor and sexual exploitation, such as women and girls found in brothel raids.

Dozens of survivors and activists are meeting politicians in Delhi this week to demand that the bill is passed by parliament soon amid fears it may fall off the radar with political attention expected to turn to general elections set for 2019. Several victims - who had been sexually exploited, trapped in bonded labor and forced into marriage - said they were struggling to survive and feed their families since escaping and feared being trapped back into slave labor to survive.

"We need shelter, support, education for our children ... not just money," said mother-of-four Meena, 50, who was trapped working in a brick kiln for three years during which time she was abused, deprived of food and paid just 5,000 rupees (\$77). Meena - who withheld her real name for fear of retribution - was rescued by activists last month, but said a lack of help from the government had driven her to send her children to work. "We are poor so access to justice and rehabilitation is hard," said Meena, one of five survivors who spoke at a workshop on trafficking run by the Thomson Reuters Foundation in Delhi. — Reuters

## India's all women railway crew derail sexist attitudes

**JAIPUR, India:** Mahima Dutt Sharma rolls her eyes when men make excuses to gawk at her inside the booth where she checks tickets at India's only interstate train station run entirely by women. "Even though all the information is displayed on boards, they keep coming again and again with silly queries," she said at Gandhinagar junction in Jaipur, where female station masters and clerks draw astonished looks.

"They are not used to seeing women handling such jobs, so I don't really blame them." These trailblazers are not just breaking new ground in conservative Rajasthan but upending social norms in India that assume a women's proper place is in the home. India is one of the world's fastest growing major economies but also has one of the lowest rates of female employment, and the trend is worsening.

Fewer and fewer women are entering the workforce, particularly in rural areas where most Indians live. Women are staying in school longer, but even two-thirds of those with university degrees are not working, the World Bank says. This helps explain the fascination with the all-women crew "manning" Gandhinagar as superin-



**JAIPUR:** This photo shows Mahima Dutt Sharma, the head ticket collector, right, and Usha Chauhan, left, her deputy, at work at the Gandhinagar railway station in Jaipur. — AFP

tendents, conductors and station masters.

Urban subway networks in major Indian cities may have train carriages designated for women, but that is less about empowerment than a measure to prevent sexual harassment. Yet roughly 7,000 passengers passing through the major junction at Gandhinagar-including Indians from remote tribal corners of the desert region-come into direct contact with these pioneering women every day.

Many passengers travel from villages where women are rarely seen outdoors, let alone managing a major state-run institution from the ground up. Women even staff the bulk of the security detail that patrols the station, muscling in on jobs still consid-

ered in many parts of the world to be the realm of men.

### Keeping on track

Seeing women make the trains run on time and round up troublemakers in smart government uniforms remains a leap too far for many men, suddenly forced to interact with females outside their comfort zone. Neelam Jatav said her job as a station supervisor had undeniably given her "new wings to fly", but she still had to deal with men skeptical of a female authority figure. "Ever since I started working here, I have noticed men keep trying to peep in from here and there," she said. "It feels really awkward, because I am just doing my job." —AFP

# Kabul hotel reopens after deadly attack as guests stay away

## Not a single room booked since the attack

**KABUL:** The piano notes of Richard Clayderman's "Romeo and Juliet" accompanied Taliban gunmen as they rode gold mirrored elevators to the upper floors of a luxury Kabul hotel in search of guests to kill. Stopping on nearly every floor of the Intercontinental Hotel, the heavily armed militants went from room to room, blasting away electronic door locks and shooting terrified guests during the hours-long attack on January 20.

At least 25 people, including 15 foreigners, were killed. Nearly seven weeks on, AFP was allowed to inspect the still badly damaged hilltop hotel overlooking the Afghan capital after it partially reopened its doors to the wary public. Having repaired the ground floor, workmen ride up and down the landmark hotel's plush elevators as they strip and rebuild the upper four floors that were also shot up, bombed and set alight in the raid.

The soothing piano music inside the lifts, which sales and marketing manager Rohullah Nawab said was also playing that night, provides a chilling contrast to the destruction in the hallways and rooms. The smell of smoke permeates

the upper floors where bullet-riddled mirrors, blackened walls, shattered door locks and burned carpets provide a grim reminder of the carnage caused during the 15-hour ordeal.

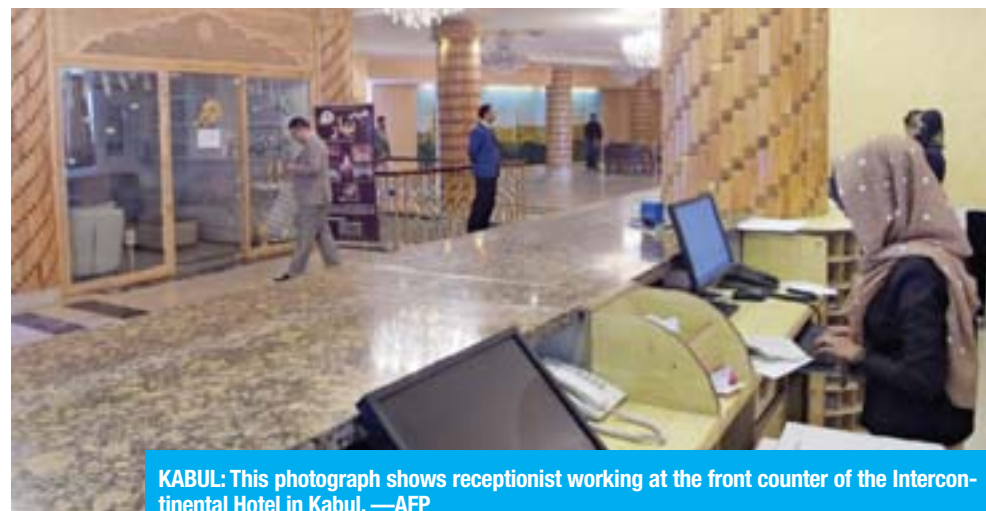
Clear plastic sheets are draped over furniture stacked up in some rooms as workmen paint walls, replace electrical wiring and install new windows and doors. Nawab estimates it will take five months and around 40 million afghanis to

restore the government-owned hotel—which does not belong to the global InterContinental chain—to its former glory. Repairing its reputation, however, will probably take much longer.

On the night of the attack 173 guests had checked into the 200-room hotel, Nawab said.

Since then not a single room on the first floor—the only one undamaged in the attack—has been reserved in recent weeks since it reopened. The ground-floor restaurant, where militants pretending to be guests launched the assault by opening fire on diners, has been repaired and every trace of the bloody incident erased. But the buffet lunch—salads and silver dishes of hot food—had no takers when AFP reporters visited,

“It’s a historical hotel. The govt will never close it”



**KABUL:** This photograph shows receptionist working at the front counter of the Intercontinental Hotel in Kabul. —AFP

and Nawab said only a handful of people had dared to eat there since the assault.

### Heavy discounts

The hotel's revenues have been devastated, plunging from more than one million afghanis a day to around 50,000 afghanis, Nawab said, with a couple of wedding parties and official functions providing succor. But Nawab is confi-

dent the hotel will remain open. "It's a historical hotel. The government will never close it," he said. To entice people back, the Intercontinental, which opened in the 1960s, has launched a publicity campaign on Afghan television talking up its history and offering discounts of up to 50 percent on food, rooms and events. "It takes a lot of time to get back to business. It shocked the foreign community," Nawab said. — AFP

## US Holocaust Museum strips rights award from Myanmar's Suu Kyi

**WASHINGTON:** The US Holocaust Memorial Museum said Wednesday it was stripping Myanmar's de facto leader Aung San Suu Kyi of a prestigious human rights award, accusing her of doing little to halt the ethnic cleansing of Rohingya Muslims. Suu Kyi, who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991 for her long campaign against the country's military dictatorship, was awarded the Holocaust Museum's Elie Wiesel award six years ago "for her courageous leadership and great personal sacrifice in resisting tyranny and advancing the freedom and dignity of the Burmese people."

But the Museum said it was rescinding the award due to her inaction over what it called "mounting evidence of genocide" committed by the Myanmar military against civilians from the Rohingya minority in Rakhine state. "As the military's attacks against the Rohingya unfolded in 2016 and 2017, we had hoped that you—as someone we and many others have celebrated for your commitment to human dignity and universal human rights—would have done something to condemn and stop the military's brutal campaign and to express solidarity with the targeted Rohingya population," the museum said in a letter to Suu Kyi.

Instead, it said, her political party, the National League for Democracy, has refused to cooperate with UN investigators and added to the anti-Rohingya rhetoric. The party has also obstructed journalists trying to report on the mass murder and expulsion to Bangladesh of the Rohingya. "The military's orchestration of the crimes against Rohingya and the severity of the atrocities in recent months demand that you use your moral authority to address this situation," they said.



**MYANMAR:** Myanmar's State Counselor Aung San Suu Kyi speaks during the International Women's Day ceremony at the Myanmar International Convention Center 2 in Naypyidaw. — AFP

In November a joint report by the Museum and Southeast Asia-based watchdog Fortify Rights—based on testimony they gathered in the field—documented "widespread and systematic attacks" on Rohingya civilians. The award was named after Elie Wiesel, a survivor of the Nazi genocide against Jews who spent much of his life campaigning for human rights, himself winning the Nobel Peace Prize in 1986.

Suu Kyi, the country's symbol of democracy for decades, has come under heavy criticism for her refusal to stand up for the Rohingya. About 700,000 Rohingya have fled over the border to Bangladesh since August, with horrifying testimony of murder, rape and arson by soldiers and vigilante mobs. In January US diplomat Bill Richardson resigned from a Suu Kyi-appointed panel set up to ease tensions with the Rohingya, assailing her for an "absence of moral leadership." — AFP

## India, with eye on China ties, bans Tibetans rally in New Delhi

**NEW DELHI:** India has banned Tibetans from holding a rally with the Dalai Lama in New Delhi this month to mark the 60th anniversary of a failed uprising against Chinese rule, officials said on Wednesday, as it tries to improve fraught ties with China. Relations between China and India have been tense in recent months after their troops faced off on a disputed part of their border. China was also angered by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's February visit to the eastern border state of Arunachal Pradesh, also claimed by China.

Senior officials in the foreign and interior ministries said exiled Tibetans would not be allowed to hold a rally in the capital, but could do so in the northern town of Dharamsala, where a Tibetan government in exile is based. "We don't want Tibetans to hold big anti-China protests in New Delhi because it creates a bit of diplomatic tension between India and China," said the senior foreign ministry official. "It's a very sensitive time for India and China ties and we want to ease tensions."

China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi said at a news briefing on Thursday that there was a "pressing need" for China and India to resolve a lack of mutual trust. Authorities in India and Nepal have previously banned protests against China by Tibetans during sensitive times, such as visits by Chinese leaders. China took control of Tibet in 1950 in what it calls a "peaceful liberation" of the remote, Himalayan region. — Reuters

## International

# Indonesian universities 'ban' niqab over fundamentalism fears

## Universities to follow moderate form of Islam

**YOGYAKARTA, Indonesia:** Many Indonesian Islamic universities are pushing female students to ditch niqab face veils—with one threatening expulsion for non-compliance—as concerns grow over rising fundamentalism in the world's biggest Muslim-majority nation. Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University said it issued the edict this week to more than three dozen niqab-wearing students, who will be booted from school if they refuse.

Although niqabs are common in ultra-conservative Saudi Arabia and some other Gulf states, they're rare in secular Indonesia, where around 90 percent of its 260 million people have traditionally followed a moderate form of Islam. For many Indonesians, the niqab—a full veil with a small slit for the eyes—is an unwelcome Arab export and some associate it with radical Islam, which the country has wrestled with for years.

"We are a state university... we've been told to spread moderate Islam," the school's chancellor Yudian Wahyudi told a press briefing this week. The school, based in Indonesia's cultural capital Yogyakarta, has some 10,000 students. Another Yogyakarta-based institution, Ahmad Dahlan University, has also introduced a new prohibition on the niqab out of fears it might stir

up religious radicalism, which has seen a resurgence on many of the nation's university campuses. There will be no penalty for those who refuse, it added.

"But during exams, they cannot wear it because officials have to match the photos on their exam ID with them, which is hard if one is wearing the niqab," university chancellor Kasiyarno, who like many Indonesians goes by one name, told reporters Wednesday. Indonesia's reputation as a bastion of progressiveness and religious tolerance has recently been tested by a government push to outlaw gay and pre-marital sex. The conservative lurch comes as once-fringe Islamic political parties move into the mainstream.

The niqab has been at the centre of a heated global debate over religious freedom and women's rights, with France the first European country to ban it in public spaces. Backers of the schools' new rules said wearing a niqab is not a religious obligation. "Education should be about dialogue—open and progressive—and if you wear a niqab it interferes in that dialogue and the teaching-learning process," said Zuhairi Misrawi, head of the Jakarta-based Muslim Moderate Society.

But others saw the anti-niqab appeal as



INDONESIA: This photo shows a student wearing a niqab face veil outside a university in Yogyakarta.—AFP

trampling on individual rights. It's "a matter of personal preference and the university has to respect that", said Fadlun Amin, a spokesman for the local chapter of the Forum Ukhuwah Islamiyah, part of top clerical body the Indonesian Ulema Council. Several Indonesian universities

have issued niqab bans in the past. Last year, a private Islamic high school in Java was reprimanded by local officials after images went viral online that showed a classroom of sitting female students wearing niqab, violating a national regulation on acceptable school uniforms.—AFP

## Philippines' top judge vows fight as Duterte, allies seek ouster

**MANILA:** The Philippine Supreme Court chief justice vowed to fight "bullying" and save judicial independence as President Rodrigo Duterte's congressional allies launched an impeachment process yesterday to remove her from office. Voting 38-2, the House of Representatives justice committee said there was "probable cause" to impeach Maria Lourdes Sereno, in a move critics allege is part of wider efforts by Duterte to destroy foes and usher in one-man rule.

A US-style impeachment trial in the Senate will follow if the House adopts the committee report, focusing on allegations Sereno failed to pay about two million pesos in taxes. "All kinds of lies, threats, harassment and bullying have been thrown my way but I will not yield," Sereno, the country's first female chief justice, said at an International Women's Day event in Manila. "I am fighting for our future as a freedom-loving nation," the 52-year-old said, framing the case against her as an issue of "judicial independence".

Aside from the impeachment case, the government's chief lawyer on Monday asked the Supreme Court itself to oust its chief justice, citing her alleged failure to disclose assets. Justice committee chairman Reynaldo Umali said his panel will ask the lower house, dominated by Duterte allies, next week to send the case to the Senate for trial. The committee also accused Sereno



MANILA: Philippine's Chief Justice Maria Lourdes Sereno gestures as she delivers a speech at a forum at St. Scholastica's college in Manila.—AFP

of falsifying and tampering with court resolutions, excessive spending by buying a luxury official vehicle, staying in "opulent" hotels and flying business class.

Duterte and Sereno first crossed swords in 2016 when the newly elected president demanded that judges he linked to the illegal drug trade hand themselves in to authorities as part of his crackdown on narcotics. The chief justice rebuffed him, citing rule of law and separation of powers between the executive and judicial branches of government. Police have since killed more than 4,100 drug suspects, with rights groups alleging more than 8,000 others have been murdered in what they describe as crimes against humanity.

Other Duterte critics have also been ousted, punished or threatened including detained Senator Leila de Lima, the Commission on Human Rights, and an anti-corruption prosecutor who had investigated allegations of Duterte's hidden wealth.—AFP

## China urges US, North Korea to hold talks 'sooner than later'

**BEIJING:** China's foreign minister urged the United States and North Korea yesterday to start talks as soon as possible, stressing that "the sincerity" of all parties to solve the nuclear crisis would be tested. Foreign Minister Wang Yi cautiously welcomed Seoul's announcement that Pyongyang had offered to hold denuclearization talks with the United States in return for security guarantees. The North also agreed to hold a historic summit between its leader Kim Jong Un and South Korean President Moon Jae-in in late April.

"The Korean peninsula issue has finally taken an important step in the right direction," Wang told a press conference on the sidelines of annual parliamentary session. "These initial steps must be followed up by corresponding and concerted efforts by the parties. We call on the parties, particularly the United States and the DPRK, to engage in dialogue sooner rather than later," he said. But Wang issued a word of caution, noting that breakthroughs on the North Korean nuclear

issue had collapsed in the past.

"Of course it takes more than one cold day to freeze three feet of ice," he said. "Despite light at the end of the tunnel, the journey ahead won't be smooth. History has reminded us time and again that whenever tensions subsided on the peninsula the situation would be clouded by various interferences," he said. "Now is the crucial moment to test the sincerity of the parties to solve the nuclear issue."

Wang's comments come as two South Korean envoys left for Washington to brief US officials on the North's offer, after their landmark visit to meet Kim in Pyongyang. According to Seoul, Kim said the North wanted to talk to the US and would not need nuclear weapons if the country's security was guaranteed. Envoy Chung Eui-yong, head of Seoul's National Security Office, will travel to China and Russia following his Washington trip.

### Breakthrough or ploy?

Wang said the security concerns of North Korea must be addressed in return for progress towards denuclearization. Under pressure from US President Donald Trump, Beijing has backed a series of United Nations sanctions against North Korea, sending relations between the Cold War-era allies to a new low. Beijing has repeatedly called for negotiations to peacefully put an end to tensions that have raised fears of nuclear warfare, after months of fiery rhetoric between Kim and Trump.—AFP

# Lifestyle

Friday Times

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Indian acid attack survivors wait for the start of fashion show as part of a campaign to spread the message 'Stop Acid Sale', in Thane on March 7, 2018, ahead of International Women's Day. — AFP

**Indian acid attack survivors sparkle at fashion show to spotlight equality**

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# Sixties icon Anna Karina revels in comeback at 77

Anna Karina is wondering whether to say how many times she has been married. “Oh la la! I prefer not to,” laughed the actress and director who was the face of the French New Wave. “Less than Liz Taylor,” she joked, who went up the aisle eight times. “I’ve been married to the same man for the last 40 years,” Karina protested, referring to her fourth husband, the American director Dennis Berry of “Stargate” and “Highlander” fame. But it was with her first, Jean-Luc Godard, that Karina helped turn cinema on its head.

Now 77, the Danish-born Sixties icon is having something of a comeback. Her 1973 film “Vivre ensemble” (Live Together) is back in cinemas, winning praise from the critics as a “little gem”. And she has a new album out, fittingly called “I am an Adventurer.” “I never expected this, it’s amazing,” she said, not having made a film in a decade or recorded a song for even longer. Sitting at a restaurant table in the once bohemian Saint Germain des Pres on Paris’ Left Bank, Karina is as striking and elfin as ever, her kholed blue eyes burning out from under a felt hat. It was around the corner at the Deux Magots cafe, then the hang-out of Sartre, de Beauvoir and Camus, where Karina was discovered 60 years ago, a 17-year-old waif in full flight from a troubled childhood.

### Renamed by Coco Chanel

It was also where she became Anna Karina. One day after modeling for a magazine “this extraordinary woman asked me, ‘What’s your name, darling?’ ‘Hanne Karin Bayer,’ I said.” “No, no,” the woman replied, “you will be called Anna Karina.” The woman was Coco Chanel, the founder of the fashion house that still bears her name. And so began an incredible career as a model, actor, singer, director and muse. Godard spotted her while he was walking on the Champs Elysees. She was hard to



Danish-French actress Anna Karina poses during a photo session in Paris, on March 2, 2018. — AFP

miss. As the poster girl for Palmolive soap as well as one of its rivals, her face stared down from billboards on both sides of the grand Paris avenue.

He offered her a nude scene in “Breathless”, his first and most famous film, but she refused. They were already a couple when, at barely 21, she won best actress at the Berlin film festival for his “A Woman is a Woman” in 1961. But Godard was not the ideal partner for someone who had hardly known her father and had been all but abandoned by her mother. “We loved each other a lot,” Karina told AFP, “but it was complicated to live with him” – a sentiment shared by his next wife, Anne Wiazemsky, whose account of their short marriage is the basis of the new film, “Redoubtable”.

### Godard’s disappearing acts

“He was someone who could say to you, ‘I am going to get

some cigarettes’ and come back three weeks later.” At the beginning Godard’s dark glasses made him appear “scary” before Karina discovered his “magnificent almond eyes”. But their love did not survive the loss of a child she was carrying. It has been 20 years since she saw or heard from the reclusive director. “He is in Switzerland and doesn’t open his door,” said Karina. “No, it doesn’t make me sad. It’s his life after all.”

For all the talk of how the New Wave revolutionized cinema, the only women who ended up behind the camera were her and Agnes Varda. Karina’s film, “Vivre ensemble”, is a tragic love story about a couple who can’t do exactly that. A romance between a history teacher and a free spirited young women ends in drugs and domestic violence. “It is a portrait of my youth. I saw people around me go down and die,” she recalled.

At the time, Karina was the first French actress to direct a feature film, and “everybody was saying, ‘How dare she.’ There was a real macho attitude.” “I even thought for a while of using a man’s name because I was afraid of the reaction.” Despite starring in more than 30 films, at first directing freaked her out. But Karina knew she didn’t want to work in an off-the-cuff whirlwind manner like Godard, “who could do everything in five minutes”.

Macho attitudes were not just confined to the critics. Karina will never forget being summoned by the press agent of “A Woman is a Woman” and finding him-as Harvey Weinstein is alleged to have been-almost naked in his bathrobe at the door of his apartment. “I was so shocked that I leapt down the stairs and I nearly broke my neck. “When a woman does not want something to go on she has to say stop. “And she always has the right to change her mind,” Karina insisted. — AFP

# Lionel Richie honored at Hollywood handprints ceremony

Four-time Grammy winner Lionel Richie cemented his legacy in Hollywood Wednesday, plunging his feet and hands into a wet paving slab at the forecourt of the iconic TCL Chinese Theatre. The 68-year-old R&B singer, a former front man for Motown legends The Commodores, has sold more than 100 million records over a career spanning six decades. “This is almost beyond the childhood dream,” Richie told AFP at the ceremony on Hollywood Boulevard, a time-honored tradition launched in the 1920s.

“When I first came to this town, the Holiday Inn was back there, right behind me, and the first thing I did was ran out the room, came downstairs and put my feet in all the hands and feet on the ground. Now, my hands and feet are going into this thing, it’s almost beyond belief.” Late night talk show host Jimmy Kimmel, fresh off his Oscars hosting duties, presented the ceremony while veteran actor Samuel L. Jackson was on hand to support Richie, who told the crowd the honor was an “out of body experience.”



Lionel Ritchie attends his Hand and Footprints ceremony. — AFP

Lionel Brockman Richie Jr. was born on June 20, 1949 and raised on the private, historically black Tuskegee Institute university campus in Alabama, where his family had worked for generations. A high school tennis star, he accepted a scholarship to study at the institute but dropped out and seriously considered becoming a priest for a while. He formed a series of bands and, while still at college in 1968, joined aspiring Motown group The Commodores, playing saxophone and singing. He went on to write some of his most enduring songs for the group, including “Still,” “Sail On,” “Easy” and “Three Times a Lady,” which earned a 1979 American Music Award and a People’s Choice Award.

### Motown hits

He later wrote “Lady” for Kenny Rogers and had a huge hit alongside Diana Ross with “Endless Love,” which became the most successful single in Motown history, topping the US charts for nine weeks. Alongside Michael Jackson and Prince, he was one of the most successful male solo artists of the 1980s, with a run of 13 consecutive top ten hits in the US Billboard charts, five of them number ones. He scored a major hit with “All Night Long,” and won an Oscar for “Say You, Say Me,” written for the film “White Nights.” His Grammys include the 1985 Song of the Year prize for “We Are the World,” co-written with Jackson.

Richie managed a nine-year streak of writing at least one number one single a year—a feat matched only by Irving Berlin—enjoying much of his success internationally, with a particularly strong following in the Arab world. But his run came to an end in 1987 and Richie took some time out, coming back in the 1990s, with mixed results. Despite the runaway success of “Hello,” Richie has said he came to resent being classified as a balladeer and chose simply to follow his artistic senses. —AFP

# Cranberries to release album despite O’Riordan death

Irish rockers The Cranberries said Wednesday they would go ahead with a new album despite the sudden death of singer Dolores O’Riordan in January. The surviving three members of The Cranberries said that O’Riordan had already recorded vocals for a new album, which the band now hopes to finish and release in early 2019.

The Cranberries said that they also would move forward with a 25th anniversary reissue this year of their debut album, “Everyone Else is Doing it, So Why Can’t We?,” after putting work on hold following O’Riordan’s death. “After much consideration we have decided to finish what we started,” the band wrote on Facebook. “We thought about it and decided that as this is something that we started as a band, with Dolores, we should push ahead and finish it.”

The 1993 album proved to be an international success led by “Linger,” a wistful song about a first kiss. The reissued edition will be remastered and feature previously unreleased material from the era, the band said. O’Riordan was found dead in a London hotel on January 15 at age 46. A full inquest into her death is set for April 3, although authorities are not treating her death as suspicious. With a voice that merged florid traditional Celtic singing with the ferocity of punk rock, O’Riordan defined the sound of The Cranberries whose major hits also included the politically charged “Zombie.” The Cranberries last released an album of new material, “Roses,” in 2012 after a gap of more than a decade. — AFP



Photo shows men dressed as local deities as they perform the “eating flowers” ritual in front of a temple in Xiaohu village, Baitang, in Fujian province. — AFP Photos



A man dressed as a local deity performing the “eating flowers” ritual in front of a temple in Xiaohu village, Baitang, in Fujian province.

# China villagers ‘eat’ sparks to ring in Year of the Dog

Working themselves into a trance, bare-chested men in eastern China lean into incandescent fountains of sparks to cleanse themselves of evil spirits and ensure a fortuitous new year. The spectacular scene takes place annually in villages such as Xiaohu in coastal Fujian province, which is home to an array of colorful centuries-old Lunar New Year rites linked to ancient customs and local gods.

Selected devotees allow themselves to be “possessed” by those gods, then chant intonations and blow on horns as they are escorted to the courtyard of Xiaohu’s main temple. There, they lean for up to 10 seconds into a spray of bright white sparks

shooting upward from fireworks placed on the ground while waving small flags or fans as hundreds of people watch. Opening their mouths, they pretend to “eat” the sparks, thus giving the custom its local name, “eating flowers”.

The villagers emerge singed and darkened with soot, but off to a clean start to the Year of the Dog, which began on February 16 according to the lunar calendar. “I was very surprised when I first saw it. I didn’t believe it was real. And now I come and watch this every year,” said Fujian resident Chen Guoqiang. — AFP



Lin Xiwei, a 36-year-old shoemaker from Putian, dressed as a local deity reacts after performing the “eating flowers” ritual in front of a temple in Xiaohu village, Baitang.



Lin Xiwei, a 36-years-old shoemaker from Putian, dressed as a local deity performs the ‘eating flowers’ ritual in Xiaohu, Baitang.



People watch as a man dressed as a local deity reacts after performing the “eating flowers” ritual.



A man dressed as a local deity performs the ‘eating flowers’ ritual in front of a temple in Xiaohu village.



Members of the Afghan Jogi community gather outside their temporary home on the outskirts of Mazar-i-Sharif. — AFP photos



An Afghan Jogi woman washes clothes outside her temporary home on the outskirts of Mazar-i-Sharif.

# Afghanistan's forgotten gypsies seek legal recognition

Afghanistan's Jogi tribe live on a knife edge: forced to abandon their nomadic lives after violence wrecked their traditional wandering grounds, they still face daily discrimination trying to carve a more sedentary existence in a country that does not recognize them as proper citizens. Many from the ethnic minority opted to settle near Mazar-i-Sharif, the capital of the relatively peaceful Balkh province, where they have built neat, mud-brick houses on rented land but their position is precarious.



An Afghan Jogi man looks at an empty bird cage at his temporary home on the outskirts of Mazar-i-Sharif.

Afghanistan's constitution does not explicitly recognize the Jogi as Afghans, making it difficult for them to obtain a tazkira, an identification document needed for any administrative procedure including buying the land they would need to settle permanently. To obtain a tazkira the applicant's father or elder brother must already have one. The community's leader Mullah Wural says they could be evicted at any time. It is part of a pattern of discrimination and violence that the Jogi-also called "Jat" in Dari, a name as pejorative as "Roma" in Europe-have suffered since arriving in Afghanistan in the mid-nineteenth century from other parts of Central Asia.

These Sunni Muslims are distinguished from the rest of Afghanistan's conservative and ethnically diverse population by their social customs-namely how women play an equal role to men in economically supporting their families. Lightly veiled and wearing bright coloured dresses, they can be seen in Mazar's streets begging and reading palms, a striking sight in a gender-segregated country where most women are kept behind walls. "The Jogi are the most open community in the country," boasts Wural.

## Discrimination

But, though the Jogi men work also, often as day-laborers or caring for livestock, many Afghans accuse them of prostituting their wives while they stay at home and do nothing. "The prejudice is so strong, it's overwhelming," says German anthropologist Annika Schmeding, who documented discrimination against the Jogi community in a 2015 report for NGO People in Need (PIN). Playful 12-year-old Fodar jumps from one courtyard to another as a cow's ear broth simmers in a pot and chickens busily peck at the ground. He has managed to enrol in a public school because his family was able to secure him a tazkira owing to his father already holding one.

Because most Jogi are effectively stateless, they also have limited options to move beyond Afghanistan's borders. Musician Haji Rangin says he has missed out on gigs abroad because he does not have an identity document. Sitting on a carpet between his son on the drums and his brother on a type of violin, he takes his long-handled traditional Uzbek guitar and strikes the strings with a hand adorned with little bells. The sound draws curious children from the street to listen. "I get inspired by my community, by my roots. Sometimes when I start the music and specific poems the men start crying," Rangin tells AFP.

"I just wish sometimes to be counted as a citizen of this country... There is no discrimination when it comes to music," he smiles. "The problem is, to get a tazkira you have to get registered with somebody of your family who already has a tazkira," says Schmeding, who believes that the tazkiras held by Jogi are often fake. "It's very difficult to check if it's legal or not," she explains.

## 'Sensitive issue'

Most Afghans do not consider the Jogis fellow citizens, no matter how long they have been in the country, she says. Often politicians will not speak for the group for fear of upsetting the majority of the public. "It's a sensitive issue," agrees Homayoun Mohtaat, director of the population bureau at the Ministry of the Interior. In 2006, he says, the Jogi petitioned Afghanistan's parliament for official legal recognition.

Official estimates put the total population at 20,000 to 30,000 people, mainly in northern Afghanistan. "So far, 1,300 tazkira have been issued, in Kunduz and Mazar," Mohtaat said. But the presidential decree that would give them legal status across the country is still pending. In a country with so many problems the plight of the Jogi is not a priority. And even if it is delivered, discrimination and social prejudice may be harder to root out. Schoolboy Fodar says he is bullied by other children at school. He reveals: "Every day I paint something for them and I offer them the painting to buy peace; if not they beat me." — AFP

# Indian architecture laureate Doshi has no plans to slow down

Trailblazing Indian architect Balkrishna Doshi vowed yesterday to use his award, considered architecture's Nobel equivalent, to escalate his campaign for proper housing for the poor as the country battles a massive shortage of homes. The 90-year-old told AFP he had no plans of slowing down as he received well-wishers at his home in the western city of Ahmedabad, a day after becoming India's first winner of the prestigious Pritzker Prize.

"If I as an architect am not able to do something for my people and provide them with what they need, then I should say my job is incomplete," said the pioneer of low-cost housing. In a career lasting almost 70 years, Doshi trained with Swiss-Franco icon Le Corbusier and became known for the Aranya Low Cost Housing project, which accommodates 80,000 people with houses and courtyards linked by a maze of pathways in the city of Indore. He also oversaw the School of Architecture in Ahmedabad and the Indian Institute of Management, the country's top business school in Bangalore.

Doshi, who now works mainly as a consultant, mixes modernism with functionality to produce what he calls a "holistic habitat" that puts India's army of poor before profit. "My projects have been participatory in nature and relevant to the people for which it was designed," he told AFP. "It was not like we have land and we just constructed a building like real estate developers do today."

## 'Godfather' of design

With India's economy booming and pressure mounting for homes in the country's polluted cities, Doshi said more must be done for the poor. "In India, whatever you do, it is always less. India is transforming fast and we need to do a large number of things which have to be ecologically sustainable and that would empower the people." Highlighting the shortage of housing, schools and health centers, Doshi said: "We need to create affordability, sustainability in terms of local culture and affect people's lives."

The Aranya project accommodates "families within a range of poor-to-modest incomes" in 6,500 homes ranging from one room to spacious houses. The deposit to buy a home is based on a family's average income. Indian architects hailed the win for Doshi. "This is very good news for Indian architects because he is our godfather. We are very proud," Alok Ranjan, Jaipur-based professor and member of the Indian Institute of Architects, told AFP. "What stands out about his work is that it is for all strata of society... not only for the elite group but also for the middle and low income groups," he said. —AFP



Indian architect Balkrishna Doshi, 90, poses at his residence in Ahmedabad.

## Lifestyle | Feature



A group of traditional horn players from the National Ballet perform at the museum square in Bangui. — AFP photos



A traditional musician from the National Ballet performs at the museum square in Bangui.



Two dancers from the National Ballet perform at the museum square in Bangui.

# IN WAR-TORN C AFRICA, BALLET PROVIDES GLIMMER OF UNITY

The sound of drums rips through the air in a dusty alley scorched by the afternoon sun in Bangui, capital of the Central African Republic. Passersby stop in their tracks, entranced by the hypnotic rhythm pounded out by the musicians of the national dance company. In a country bloodily divided by ethnic and religious strife, the National Central African Ballet is a rare unifying factor—a melting pot, professing no favoritism or allegiance to any group or sect.



A traditional group of dancers from the National Ballet perform at the museum square in Bangui.

For at least two days a week, the conflicts that ravage most of the country seem far away in downtown Bangui, where 30 or so professional artists come together. “It’s for all Central Africans, whether they’re Christian, or Muslim, or even if they’re foreign. We can train them. That’s how we like it,” says Kevin Bemon, the dance company’s 37-year-old technical director, as he puts on his costume. The remarks may seem surprising given the sectarian strife that has torn the country apart for years. Fol-

lowing Bemon’s cue, the dancers also shed their everyday clothes and don instead crowns of feathers, pearls or shells, animal skins, skirts and multicolored traditional costumes.

Then they leap into action. Digging into forms of music and movement beyond recorded history, they sway and bend to the melodies of the horns and the electrifying beat of the drums, their half-naked bodies quickly bathed in sweat. Faces, previously dour and serious, light up in smiles. The trials of everyday life are forgotten for a while—and so are the armed militias patrolling a few kilometers (miles) from the capital.

## Unity in dance?

Like the costumes, the dances and the music are a mixture of traditional cultures from the 16 different prefectures of the strife-torn country, two-thirds of which are under the sway of some 18 armed groups. For all its aspirations of national unity, the Central African Ballet has no dancers from the far north, the area from which the Muslim Seleka rebels originated who overthrew Christian leader Francois Bozize in 2013, sparking a cycle of intercommunal violence. But even if almost all of its current members come from Bangui, the troupe is adamant that neither ethnicity nor religion play a role.

“I don’t have dancers from the Vakaga but I would like to have some,” says company director Dieudonne Koumba, 59, referring to a region in the northeast of the country, near the borders with Chad and Sudan. He insists that despite this lack, the troupe’s composition is “solidly representative” of the country as a whole. Originally set up under former president Jean-Bedel Bokassa, the national ballet has regularly travelled abroad since it was founded in 1969. “It’s a symbol of the unity of the country. Here there are no differences, no divisions. It’s like football,” says Maurice Souanenbgi, who has played as a musician in the company for 32 years.

A ballet advisor and very much the company’s living memory, 77-year-old Souanenbgi says the troupe has performed in Ivory Coast, for King Mohammed VI in Morocco, for Moamer Khadafi



Traditional dancers from the National Ballet perform at the museum square in Bangui.

in Libya, in Algeria, in France, and even in China. The company undertakes one to two trips per year, at the invitation of various festivals. Its most recent was to Douala in Cameroon, where it performed at the Ti-i festival in December. “The aim was to promote social cohesion by celebrating with Central African refugees in Douala,” says Koumba.

In addition to music and dance, Koumba also has ambitions to put on theatre performances. But his hands are tied by lack of funds. “We have financing allocated in the state budget. Unfortunately, we haven’t been paid yet,” Koumba says. He says he has recently sent an application for funding to the country’s arts, tourism and culture ministry. True to the company’s optimistic mission, he hopes that it will be successful. — AFP



Indian acid attack survivors wait for the start of fashion show as part of a campaign to spread the message 'Stop Acid Sale', in Thane ahead of International Women's Day. — AFP

# INDIAN ACID ATTACK SURVIVORS SPARKLE AT FASHION SHOW TO SPOTLIGHT EQUALITY

Sparkling in shades of green, pink and peach, Indian women survivors of acid attacks walked the ramp at a fashion show to boost awareness about violence against women. Scarred faces held high, 11 members of a non-profit group showcased colorful Indian and Western garments, spoke about confidence and posed for photographs on Wednesday, a day ahead of International Women's Day.

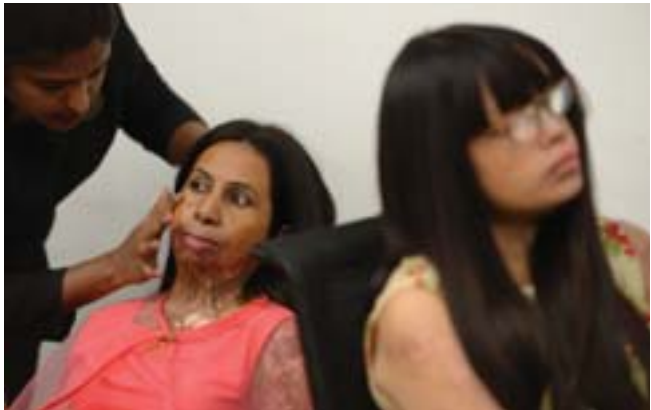
Laxmi, attacked in 2005 at the age of 15 by a 32-year-old man whose marriage proposal she rejected, was the showstopper of the event, held near India's financial capital of Mumbai. "I swept aside notions about the face, which society spoke of, and moved forward in life," said Laxmi, whose plea against acid attacks prompted India's Supreme Court to order regulations

on the sale of acid in 2013. "We don't want respect, we want equality."

More than two-thirds of the 1,500 acid attacks worldwide each year are estimated to take place in India, many by enraged family members or jilted partners. Few victims report the attacks, for fear of reprisals by abusers, even though the resulting disfigurement often brings isolation and rejection. "What others think about us does not have relevance, what we think about ourselves is only what matters," said one participant, Deepmala Tiwary, an attack survivor and member of the nonprofit Acid Survivors and Women Welfare Foundation. — Reuters



Indian acid attack survivors walk during a fashion show as part of a campaign to spread the message 'Stop Acid Sale'.



An Indian acid attack survivor gets her make up done before a fashion show.



An Indian acid attack survivor gets her hair done before a fashion show.



An Indian acid attack survivor poses for a picture before a fashion show as part of a campaign to spread the message 'Stop Acid Sale'.



Indian acid attack survivors walk during a fashion show.



Kurdish women pose on the catwalk during an International Women's Day fashion show displaying traditional clothing for Kurdish women in Arbil, the capital of the Kurdish autonomous region in northern Iraq. — AFP photos

# The 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Mixtape Academy Awards

By Aakash Bakaya

The Academy Awards reached a milestone this year. The world’s most prestigious awards show had its 90th birthday this week and to top it all off, it also had a great, wide-ranging list of movies nominated. There were no clear front-runners and people were left guessing at who would win until the very end. Too bad nobody watched it though - again. It’s definitely a chore for us in the Gulf but even in the US the ratings dropped a staggering 17% from last year, which also saw a drop from the year before that. The Oscars might be losing its appeal (for a number of reasons) but that’s not what I want to talk about. Instead of droning on about what should and shouldn’t have won, I taught I would bestow my own accolades to the movies I watched this Academic year IE the movies released between last February to this February. Don’t worry though - it won’t take you 3 hours and 45 minutes to get to the last award. So sit back, relax and thanks in advance for tuning in for the 1st Annual Mixtape Academy Awards.



**\*BEST DIRECTOR**

**Christopher Nolan for ‘Dunkirk’**

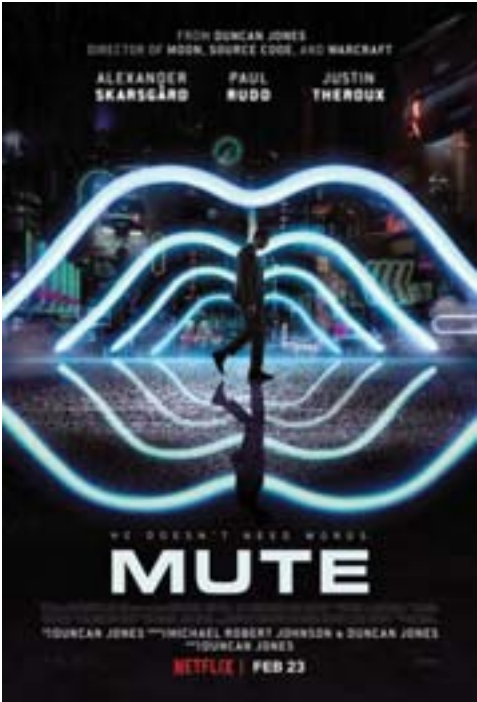
This might surprise some people but Nolan’s Oscar nomination for ‘Dunkirk’ was his first ever nomination for Directing. The big screen auteur is so widely loved for his bold and expensive vision he puts on screen that it’s easy to see why a few critics deride his success as high-brow but shallow pandering to the masses. ‘Dunkirk’ was different though. It was an epic portrayal of a far from epic period of WW2 history, one that was squarely focused on the people who experienced it and it left me breathless from the very first frame. Another magnificent score from Hans Zimmer mixed with some of the best aerial dog-fights ever put on film and you get something truly great. Nolan

never hesitated to put his own touches on it as well which was another risky but ultimately successful move by him. The manner in which he incorporated a non-linear structure to the narrative (something he is known for) kept the audience engaged and the threat of sudden death ever present. I don’t even think ‘Dunkirk’ is Nolan’s best film but just the fact that he managed to re-create a real historical movement in his own peculiar manner is something so desperately missing in modern blockbusters. I believe he deserves recognition in this category for that reason alone.

**\*LEAST FAVORITE FILM OF THE YEAR**

**‘Mute’**

It’s hard to call this category ‘The Worst’ movie of the year, simply because I’m sure the actual ‘worst’ movie of the year was never actually seen by anyone. So I’ll just break



it down to my own worst film experience I’ve had this year. If I was writing this over a month ago, I would have easily put either ‘Star Wars: The Last Jedi’ or ‘Justice League’ here. They were some of the most disappointing experiences I have ever had in a cinema and travesties in their own right. But then a few weeks ago as I was browsing Netflix, I saw Duncan Jones’ ‘Mute’ being brightly advertised. I haven’t seen his critically acclaimed ‘Moon’ but I was more than a little lukewarm on his take on ‘Warcraft’. So I was at least a little excited to see him get back to his sci-fi roots. Sadly, by the end of this shambolic attempt at telling a sci-fi story the only thing I felt excited for was finally pressing the ‘X’ on the top right-hand corner of the Netflix app. Incoherent, tasteless and bordering on parody nothing in ‘Mute’ either made sense or had any reason for existing. Almost every performance is terrible especially the lead character played by Alexander Skarsgard that proves that looks does not automatically equal talent. It’s a terrible film that doesn’t even achieve what other terrible films manage to achieve - be so bad its fun. Jones would rather bore you to literal death with a story so atrociously dull you’ll want to not only shut the movie but to stop your Netflix subscription all together.



**\*BEST SCREENPLAY**

**Greta Gerwig for ‘Lady Bird’**

I’ll admit that when it comes to middle-of-the-road, American Indie films about misunderstood teens and young adults - I am totally biased. It’s a genre of film I love even at its most mediocre. So while most feel confused at the point of such films, I would sit completely engrossed even at the most mundane scenes. Gerwig’s ‘Lady Bird’ is such an anomaly to this formula because as much as it follows the rule book for “Indie film set at the end of high school” - it equally subverts it as well. Gerwig experience in the ‘mumblecore’ subgenre finally pays its dividends here. Her previous scripts were filled with obscure, narcissistic characters that felt more like caricatures than real people. This time though, she dials back the ‘banter’ and creates something that feels genuinely authen-

tic. It’s also easier to accept teens being weird because who wasn’t weird in their teens? There is no real plot and no real antagonist, even the mother (played superbly by Laurie Metcalf) feels like a mother anybody can relate to. The story just flows endlessly forward. Sometimes big moments go by in a flash and small, minor scenes linger just long enough for them to sink in. The objective is to capture life in all its small and large intricacies and Gerwig’s wonderfully weird dialogue and the script’s superb pacing nails this aspect in every respect. Sometimes it’s the simplest stories that are the hardest to capture realistically but Gerwig does it almost effortlessly. ‘Lady Bird’ is a tremendous achievement.

FAVORITE SCENE OF THE YEAR

The party from ‘Get Out’

‘Get Out’ is a film full of many great scenes. Its only problem was not making those scenes collectively a better sum of its parts I wish the third act was better. But regardless, it was a very good movie that was both timely and original while deftly adhering to its influences. The scene I single out in particular is the big party scene that takes place right at the very middle of the movie. Chris (Daniel Kaluuya) and his girl-friend were supposed to be visiting her parents’ house for a nice, relaxing weekend. Nobody informed them about an annual gathering that was set to take place the very next day. He being African-American was already in an awkward (and strange) situation with just her parents but now there’s a big gathering of family and friends, things are sure to escalate. And it does, but not in the way I expected. Without going into spoiler’s territory I’ll just say that it is this scene that becomes the crux of the film. It starts off as you expect with the numerous white guests

making cringe-worthy remarks and overall acting like they’ve never interacted with a black person before. But then things start to get stranger and finally the scene cumulates to one of my most favorite moments of the year. An exhausted Chris goes back upstairs for a bit of privacy and as he walks up the stairs, the camera pans to the guests who all stop talking simultaneously. They just look up and without a sound between them they start following Chris’s footsteps as he paces around in his room. What seemed like a normal every day afternoon party suddenly reveals itself to be a facade that was hidden from both the audience and the protagonist. Eerie and jarring, it such a fantastic way to end the sequence all the while providing clues and hints to the rest of the plot. It’s a scene that has stayed with me ever since I’ve watched the film and it makes a great movie even better.



FAVORITE PERFORMANCE OF THE YEAR

Harrison Ford as Deckard from ‘Blade Runner 2049’

This was the category I most struggled with as I was trying to avoid any overlap with actors who won an Oscar this year. I also did not want to praise performances from those who were nominated because there’s already being a vast amount of praise for most of them already. So I was left ruminating on not what I felt was the best acted performances of the year but one I personally loved more than others. A number of those could have found themselves at this spot but I feel satisfied giving this accolade to Ford’s brilliant return as Deckard in ‘Blade Runner 2049’. He only appears after more than an hour of runtime but the rest of the film rests on him nailing his performance. It was crucially important to not give away the major mystery of the original ‘Blade Runner’ - is Deckard human or a replicant? Fans and the creators alike have their own takes on that

question but I never once expected the sequel to keep that mystery intact. But somehow they did and that was down mainly to director Denis Villeneuve and of course Harrison Ford himself. He gave an old-school stoic performance, reminiscent of the kinds of roles he became famous for. It was surprisingly layered and Villeneuve added plot points that tested him far beyond his comfort zone. Fortunately he managed to hit it out of the park and was bright point in a film that is cemented to become a sci-fi classic. Harrison Ford has already starred in a few of those. It’s not an Oscar winning performance by any means but it’s definitely one fans will remember for years to come.

BEST “COMIC BOOK” MOVIE OF THE YEAR

‘Logan’

Let’s be honest, the vast majority of people have most likely not even seen half of the films nominated for Best Picture this year or any year for that matter. I am not trying to be insulting, that’s just how it usually is. When the films do come out, they don’t have the ‘Nominated for Oscar’ tag to go along with it and even after they get re-released that tag sometimes does more harm than good because of the expectations that go along with it. So to change things up, I’ve chosen a category of film the overwhelming majority of people as surely seen - the best movie based on a superhero comic book. I’ve seen quite a few over the year but nothing as even got remotely close to James Mangold’s ‘Logan’. Hugh Jackman’s swan-song to a character he so diligently portrayed for almost two decades,

‘Logan’ encapsulates everything that makes a superhero film so interesting and mixes in a Western redemption story to go along with it. It also finally gives Wolverine the hard ‘R’ rating he so long deserved, giving us a complex tale of brutality and heart. Jackman and Patrick Stewart give so much to their respective roles and Dafne Keen is an absolute revelation as Laura. ‘Logan’ rips apart the standard Marvel formula with glee and aplomb giving us a methodological re-imagining of the superhero comic book genre, a film I cannot recommend highly enough.



# Praline is standout in recipe for arugula salad

By Sara Moulton

Here's a salad fit to join the lineup for your fanciest dinner or holiday meal. Each of the ingredients brings its own unique taste and texture to the mix, but the standout is the praline. A hard candy typically consisting of sugar and nuts, praline was invented in the 17th century by the French (which is why it's pronounced "prah leen," not "pray line"). Here in America all these years later, there are two distinct versions of praline - the New Orleans version and the version made everywhere else. This recipe uses the non-New Orleans type.

At the heart of the praline is its caramel, which is nothing more or less than sugar cooked until it turns golden. The challenge is how to cook it. Typically, we're advised to combine sugar and water in a saucepan until the sugar dissolves. The process requires using a brush dipped in water to wash any sugar stuck to the

sides of the pan into the mixture on the bottom. Doing so is meant to prevent the mixture from crystalizing and becoming cloudy and soft when you want it to end up clear and hard. My best efforts notwithstanding, I've found that the sugar often crystalizes anyway.

The Brits have figured out a better to make caramel (aka burnt sugar): put the sugar in a dry pan over medium heat until it melts, then continue cooking until it becomes golden. Simple and foolproof. If you're a caramel maker, or you want to be one, this is the best method for you. As for the other ingredients, you're welcome to swap in different greens, dried fruits or cheeses. And if you're no fan of pecans, substitute walnuts, pistachios or even peanuts. Whatever the combo, the praline will put it over the top.



## ARUGULA SALAD WITH SPICY PECAN PRALINE, DRIED CRANBERRIES AND AGED GOUDA

**Ingredients**  
Start to finish: 35 minutes  
Serves: 6  
For the praline:  
1/2 cup pecans, coarsely chopped  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
1/4 teaspoon cayenne, or more to taste  
1/4 cup sugar  
For the dressing:  
1/2 teaspoon Dijon mustard  
1 tablespoon sherry wine vinegar  
3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

Freshly ground black pepper  
For the salad:  
8 cups loosely packed arugula  
3/4 cup coarsely grated aged gouda  
1/2 cup dried cranberries

**Preparation**  
Make the praline: Lightly oil a baking sheet. In a small bowl toss the pecans with the salt and cayenne. Place the sugar in a heavy skillet or saucepan and cook over medium heat until the sugar starts to melt. Continue cooking, stirring occasionally, until the sugar turns a golden caramel. Add the pecan mixture

and, using a heatproof spatula or spoon, stir to combine well. Carefully pour the pecan praline onto the sheet pan (the mixture will be very hot) and spread evenly with an oiled offset spatula. Let cool completely. Crack the praline into pieces and medium-chop it.

Make the dressing: In a bowl whisk together the mustard, vinegar and salt to taste, until the salt is dissolved. Add the oil in a stream, whisking, until all the oil is incorporated. Taste and add additional salt, if necessary, and black pepper to taste.

Make the salad: In a large bowl combine the arugula, gouda, cranberries and praline. Add the dressing and toss well.

## Shepherd's Pie is a spring delight

The dead of winter is much more tolerable when you make a mood-lifting dinner like this one. And with St Patrick's Day approaching, Irish dishes seem like the right thing to do. (I don't believe I have a drop of Irish blood in me, but that doesn't stop me from getting caught up in the spirit. I love to use different countries' holidays as an excuse to dive into their cuisine. Shake things up and try something new).

What's the difference between Shepherd's Pie and Cottage

Pie? Shepherd's Pie contains lamb and is an Irish specialty. Cottage Pie is English and contains beef. Both have mashed potatoes on top, and occasionally on the bottom as well. This version of Shepherd's Pie calls for ground lamb, readily available in most supermarkets. If you have a tight relationship with your butcher, ask him or her to grind it fresh - why wouldn't you?

This pie was actually created as a way to use up leftover lamb, probably over a century ago. It's completely worth making

even without leftover lamb, so let's proceed with our ground-meat version. But do think of this recipe any time you make a roast of lamb, whether it's a shoulder or leg or loin. Try hard to make sure there are leftovers, and then dice them finely and use them in this comfort-food pot pie.

### Ingredients

Serves 6

45 minutes start to finish  
 4 large Yukon Gold potatoes, peeled and halved (about 1 1/2 pounds)  
 1 1/2 pounds ground lamb  
 4 tablespoons (1/2 stick) unsalted butter, divided  
 1 cup chopped onion  
 1/2 cup chopped carrots  
 1/2 cup chopped fennel  
 1 teaspoon minced garlic  
 1/2 teaspoon dried thyme  
 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour  
 1 cup whole milk, divided  
 1/2 cup chicken broth  
 1/2 cup fresh or frozen corn  
 1/2 cup fresh or frozen peas  
 Freshly ground black pepper to taste  
 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce  
 1/2 cup shredded sharp cheddar cheese

### Preparation

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F. Place the potatoes in a medium-size saucepan and add cold water to cover. Salt the water, then place over high heat until the water simmers. Lower the heat to medium-high and continue to simmer, partially covered, until the potatoes are very tender, about 20 minutes. Meanwhile, spray a large skillet with nonstick cooking spray and heat over medium-high heat. Add the lamb and cook, stirring frequently to break up the meat, until brown and crumbly, about 5 minutes. Turn into a colander and carefully wipe out the skillet.

Heat 2 tablespoons of the butter in the same large skillet over medium-high heat, and when it is melted, saute the onion, carrots, fennel, garlic and thyme, and saute for 4 to 5 minutes until the vegetables are lightly golden and tender. Add the flour and stir until it coats the vegetables, about 1 minute. Stir in the lamb, and then 1/2 cup of the milk and the broth, and cook until the mixture comes to a simmer (there's not a lot of liquid; it absorbs quickly into the lamb mixture), stirring occasionally. Stir in the corn and peas, and season with salt and pepper. Add the Worcestershire sauce and continue cooking until everything is well combined and hot, about 3 minutes. Turn the mixture into a 9-inch, deep-dish pie pan.

Drain the cooked potatoes. In the saucepan that you used to cook the potatoes, heat the remaining 1/2 cup milk and the remaining 2 tablespoons butter until barely simmering. Put the cooked potatoes through a food mill or ricer, or use a potato masher to mash and add them to the simmering milk. Stir in the cheese, season with salt and pepper, and stir to blend well, until the cheese is melted and incorporated. Spread the mashed potatoes evenly over the lamb mixture in the pie pan. Use a spoon to make nice wavy peaks and valleys in the potatoes; the peaks will then get nicely browned and beautiful in the baking. Bake for 15 minutes, until the top is set and a bit colored. If you want the top a little more browned, you can run it under the broiler for a minute or two, but keep a close eye on it so it doesn't get too brown. Remove from the oven and let sit for 5 to 10 minutes before serving.



# Shakshuka, the egg dish with an awesome name

By Rick Nelson

Suddenly, it seems like shakshuka is everywhere. Restaurant menus. Food Network how-to shows. YouTube videos. And on breakfast, lunch and dinner tables in homes across the country. Maybe the dish's ascendancy can be traced to cookbook author Yotam Ottolenghi. In his bestselling "Jerusalem" and "Plenty" tomes, the Israeli-born London chef prominently features shakshuka recipes.

Or perhaps it's the influence of much-heralded American chefs - including Michael Solomonov in Philadelphia and Alon Shaya in New Orleans - and the rising familiarity of their modern Israeli cooking, boosted by their cookbooks. In the end, it doesn't really matter. Shakshuka, which is basically eggs poached in a peppery tomato stew, is delicious, and it's here to stay. You know those days when you come home from a gruesome day at work, and you end up calling scrambled eggs "dinner"?

This is when shakshuka is totally your friend, because it has the appearance that you've fussed, but the effort you're actually investing is minimal. Don't forget to keep shakshuka in your brunch back pocket, because it's one of those centerpiece recipes that never fails to impress. An easy stovetop meal, shakshuka (also spelled shakshouka) comes together in a flash. It requires a little chopping, some simmering and a round of egg-cracking. Thirty or so minutes, and you're eating.

I rely on the recipe in Solomonov's James Beard award-winning "Zahav: A World of Israeli Cooking" (Rux Martin/Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2015), because it calls for ingredients that I usually have on hand. Another plus is the way it ramps up the paprika, cumin and garlic, ensuring that the outcome will be more lively than other recipes I've considered. It also cooks completely on the stovetop. Some shakshuka recipes start on the stove, then the pan goes into the oven to cook the eggs, but that's a hassle. Besides, in the summer months - and yes, you'll want to serve shakshuka year-round - who wants to heat up the

kitchen by turning on the oven?

Shakshuka is also remarkably flexible. The "Zahav" recipe doesn't include feta. To me, that's a mistake, so I add about 1/2 cup crumbled feta. Sometimes it goes in at the end, just before the cilantro. Other times, I follow the advice of Melissa Clark from the New York Times, and add the feta just before cracking the eggs; the heat of the pan turns the cheese soft and creamy.

Want to make it spicier? Add a tablespoon or two of harissa. Don't have red bell peppers? Use their green cousins. No cilantro? Flat-leaf parsley or mint will do. Instead of sugar, consider honey. Crushed caraway seeds are a fragrant replacement for coriander. For a nutritional boost, stir in a cup of chopped kale or Swiss chard before adding the eggs.



Ingredients

- Serves 4
- 1/4 c. olive oil, divided
  - 1 onion, chopped
  - 2 red bell peppers, cored, seeded and chopped into 1/4-in. dice
  - 3 garlic cloves, sliced
  - 3 tbsp. sweet paprika
  - 1 tsp. ground cumin
  - 1 tsp. ground coriander
  - 1/4 tsp. kosher salt
  - 4 c. crushed tomatoes
  - 2 tsp. sugar
  - 8 eggs
  - Serrano chiles, thinly sliced
  - Freshly chopped cilantro, for garnish

Preparation

Heat 2 tablespoons olive oil over medium heat in a large skillet. Add the onions, bell peppers, garlic, paprika, cumin, coriander and salt, and cook, stirring occasionally, until the vegetables have softened but not browned, about 10 minutes. Add crushed tomatoes and sugar and simmer until reduced by about one-third, 10 to 12 minutes. Whisk in the remaining 2 tablespoons olive oil. Crack the eggs in the skillet, spacing them evenly in the sauce. Reduce heat to low, cover and cook until the egg whites are set but the yolks remain runny, about 5 minutes. Top with serrano chiles and cilantro and serve immediately, right from the pan.

Comic

Word Search

Photography

Find and circle all of the Photography terms that are hidden in the grid.  
The remaining letters spell the name of a type of camera.

C L O S E U P E D S F I L T E R X C I  
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DARKROOM  
DEVELOPER
- ENLARGEMENT  
ENLARGER  
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FIXING BATH  
FLASH  
FOCAL LENGTH  
FRAME  
HOT SHOE  
LIGHT METER  
LIGHTING  
NEGATIVE
- OVEREXPOSURE  
PANNING  
PANORAMA  
PARALLAX  
PHOTOFINISHER  
POSITIVE  
PRINT  
PROCESSING  
RANGEFINDER  
RETOUCHING  
SAFELIGHT
- SATURATION  
SHUTTER  
SLIDE  
STOP BATH  
TELEPHOTO LENS  
TINT  
TONE  
TRIPOD  
UNDEREXPOSURE  
VIEWFINDER  
ZOOM LENS

Yesterday's Solution

Phonetic Alphabet

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

- ALPHA  
BRAVO  
CHARLIE  
DELTA  
ECHO  
FOXTROT  
GOLF
- HOTEL  
INDIA  
JULIET  
KILO  
LIMA  
MIKE
- OSCAR  
PAPA  
QUEBEC  
ROMEO  
SIERRA  
TANGO
- UNIFORM  
VICTOR  
WHISKEY  
X-RAY  
YANKEE  
ZULU

The hidden word is: NOVEMBER

CROSSWORD 1853



ACROSS

1. Having undesirable or negative qualities.  
4. A public register showing the details of ownership and value of land.  
12. System of measurement based on centimeters and grams and seconds.  
15. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).  
16. Qualified for or allowed or worthy of being chosen.  
17. Take in solid food.  
18. A metrical unit with unstressed-stressed syllables.  
20. The yield from plants in a single growing season.  
21. To a severe or serious degree.  
23. Moving or progressing very slowly or laboriously especially by or as if by dragging the body along close to the ground.  
26. (British) An open river valley (in a hilly area).  
27. European freshwater fish resembling the roach.  
31. The supreme commander of a fleet.  
34. Slow or shallow breathing.  
37. A mountain in the central Himalayas on the border of Tibet and Nepal (27,890 feet high).  
39. A unit of weight equivalent to 1000 kilograms.  
40. A ductile silvery-white ductile ferromagnetic trivalent metallic element of the rare earth group.  
41. An association of countries in the western hemisphere.  
45. Of or involving the ovaries.  
48. A thief who grabs and runs.  
50. Marked by excessive enthusiasm for and intense devotion to a cause or idea.

51. Having angles or an angular shape.  
52. A white soft metallic element that tarnishes readily.  
54. Realistic Norwegian author who wrote plays on social and political themes (1828-1906).  
55. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.  
58. Annual to perennial herbs of the Mediterranean region.  
60. Look at with amorous intentions.  
63. An Arabic speaking person who lives in Arabia or North Africa.  
65. A colorless and odorless inert gas.  
66. A crystalline rock that can be cut and polished for jewelry.  
68. A silvery ductile metallic element found primarily in bauxite.  
69. A luminance unit equal to 1 candle per square meter measured perpendicular to the rays from the source.  
73. A city in central Alabama on the Alabama river.  
75. (informal) Of the highest quality.  
76. Segmented worms.  
78. Belonging to or on behalf of a specified person (especially yourself).  
79. An interest followed with exaggerated zeal.  
80. French philosopher and writer born in Switzerland.  
81. Someone who is morally reprehensible.

DOWN

1. The Tibeto-Burman language spoken in the Dali region of Yunnan.  
2. Any culture medium that uses agar as the gelling agent.  
3. Informal terms for a (young) woman.

4. A ductile gray metallic element of the lanthanide series.  
5. Web-footed diving seabirds of northern seas.  
6. A full skirt with a gathered waistband.  
7. Highly excited.  
8. A small drink.  
9. A metallic element of the rare earth group.  
10. Angular distance above the horizon (especially of a celestial object).  
11. (informal) 'johnny' was applied as a nickname for Confederate soldiers by the Federal soldiers in the American Civil War.  
12. Consisting of or made of cedar.  
13. An open sore on the back of a horse caused by ill-fitting or badly adjusted saddle.  
14. An infection of the sebaceous gland of the eyelid.  
19. The Jewish rite of circumcision performed on a male child on the eighth day of his life.  
22. Having or showing knowledge and skill and aptitude.  
24. The act of pursuing.  
25. (informal) Uncomplimentary terms for a policeman.  
28. A derogatory term used by Jews to refer to non-Jewish women.  
29. Of or relating to or associated with or resembling a dictatorship.  
30. The matter ejected in vomiting.  
32. An Indian tree of the family Combretaceae that is a source of timber and gum.  
33. A family of Amerindian languages spoken in Washington and British Columbia.  
35. Any of various usually white herons having long plumes during breeding season.  
36. Love intensely.  
38. The syllable naming the fourth (subdominant) note of the diatonic scale in

- solmization.  
42. The brother of your father or mother.  
43. A motley assortment of things.  
44. The longest river of Asia.  
46. The seventh month of the Moslem calendar.  
47. The branch of computer science that deal with writing computer programs that can solve problems creatively.  
49. Any of various often strong-smelling plants of the genus Cleome having showy spider-shaped flowers.  
53. A river that rises in northeastern Turkey (near the source of the Euphrates) and flows generally eastward through Armenia to the Caspian Sea.  
56. Any plant of the genus Erica.  
57. Held back.  
59. A mountain range in western Russia extending from the arctic to the Caspian Sea.  
61. (folklore) A corpse that rises at night to drink the blood of the living.  
62. Either of two large African antelopes of the genus Taurotragus having short spirally twisted horns in both sexes.  
64. Obtained from various tropical plants.  
67. (Old Testament) The eldest son of Isaac who would have inherited the Covenant that God made with Abraham and that Abraham passed on to Isaac.  
70. A room or establishment where alcoholic drinks are served over a counter.  
71. (Babylonian) The sky god.  
72. A statement that deviates from or perverts the truth.  
74. Resinlike substance secreted by certain lac insects.  
77. An official prosecutor for a judicial district.

Yesterday's Solution

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

Daily SuDoku

			7		9	4	5	
9				2	6	1		7
4					3		2	
2	7						4	1
		9		4				6
1			4	3	9			5
	5	2	1		7			

Yesterday's Solution

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


TV Listings



01:00 Resident Evil: Vendetta  
02:40 Operation Chromite  
04:45 Armageddon America  
06:20 Eagle Eye  
08:20 Resident Evil: Vendetta  
10:05 Operation Chromite  
12:05 Being Evel  
13:50 Eagle Eye  
15:50 Everest  
17:55 The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part II  
20:15 I Am Number Four  
22:10 In Time



00:50 Untamed & Uncut  
01:45 The Jeff Corwin Experience  
02:40 Bad Dog  
03:35 Night  
04:00 Night  
04:25 Whale Wars  
05:15 North Woods Law  
06:02 Wildest Islands Of Indonesia  
06:49 Untamed & Uncut  
07:36 Escape To Chimp Eden  
08:00 Escape To Chimp Eden  
08:25 Night  
08:50 Night  
09:15 The Jeff Corwin Experience  
10:10 Bad Dog  
11:05 Wildest Islands Of Indonesia  
12:00 Night  
12:28 Night  
12:55 Whale Wars  
13:50 North Woods Law  
14:45 Bad Dog  
15:40 Wildest Islands Of Indonesia  
16:35 Untamed & Uncut  
17:30 The Jeff Corwin Experience  
18:25 The Bronx Zoo  
19:20 Missouri Mountain Family  
20:15 Biggest And Baddest  
21:10 Night  
21:38 Night  
22:05 The Bronx Zoo  
23:00 Missouri Mountain Family  
23:55 Wildest Islands Of Indonesia



00:25 Mum  
00:55 Agatha Raisin  
01:45 Holby City  
02:35 Born To Kill  
03:25 Born To Kill  
04:15 Agatha Raisin  
05:00 Doctor Who  
06:00 Doctors  
06:30 Casualty  
07:25 Holby City  
08:20 Doctor Who  
09:15 Doctors  
09:45 Doctors  
10:15 EastEnders  
10:50 Agatha Raisin  
11:40 Casualty  
12:35 Holby City  
13:30 Doctor Who  
14:25 EastEnders  
15:00 EastEnders  
15:30 Casualty  
16:25 Doctors  
16:55 Doctors  
17:25 Doctors  
18:00 Doctors  
18:30 Doctors  
19:00 Friday Night Dinner  
19:20 Agatha Raisin  
20:10 Father Brown  
21:05 Father Brown  
21:55 Poldark  
22:50 Doctors  
23:25 Friday Night Dinner  
23:50 Agatha Raisin



00:00 The First 48  
01:00 The First 48  
02:00 The Eleven

03:00 Fritzl By Fred Dinenage  
04:00 The First 48  
05:00 The First 48  
06:00 The Eleven  
07:00 Cold Case Files  
08:00 The First 48  
09:00 It Takes A Killer  
09:30 It Takes A Killer  
10:00 Crimes That Shook Australia  
11:00 Crimes That Shook Australia  
12:00 Crimes That Shook Australia  
13:00 The First 48  
14:00 Homicide: Hours To Kill  
15:00 Homicide Hunter  
16:00 Homicide Hunter  
17:00 Cold Case Files  
18:00 Homicide: Hours To Kill  
19:00 It Takes A Killer  
19:30 It Takes A Killer  
20:00 Kids Who Kill  
22:00 The Jersey Slayings  
23:00 Crazy Love



00:05 Another Period  
00:30 Chris Ramsey Stand Up Central  
00:55 Tosh.0  
01:20 Tosh.0  
01:45 Tosh.0  
02:10 The Opposition With Jordan Klepper  
02:35 Real Husbands Of Hollywood  
03:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah  
03:25 Comedy Central Presents Comedy 3alwagef  
03:50 The Opposition With Jordan Klepper  
04:15 Ridiculousness Arabia  
04:40 Workaholics  
05:05 Workaholics  
05:30 Workaholics  
05:55 Workaholics  
06:20 Workaholics  
06:50 The Jim Gaffigan Show  
07:15 The Jim Gaffigan Show  
07:40 The Jim Gaffigan Show  
08:05 The Jim Gaffigan Show  
08:30 The Jim Gaffigan Show  
08:55 Friends  
09:20 Friends  
09:45 Friends  
10:10 Brotherhood  
10:35 Detroiters  
11:00 Impractical Jokers  
11:25 Impractical Jokers  
11:50 Impractical Jokers  
12:15 Impractical Jokers  
12:40 Impractical Jokers  
13:05 Lip Sync Battle  
13:30 Lip Sync Battle  
13:55 Key And Peele  
14:20 Key And Peele  
14:45 Key And Peele  
15:10 Key And Peele  
15:35 Key And Peele  
16:00 Detroiters  
16:30 Detroiters  
16:55 Detroiters  
17:20 Friends  
17:45 Friends  
18:10 Friends  
18:35 Friends  
19:00 Friends  
19:25 Nathan For You  
20:10 Comedy Central Presents Comedy 3alwagef  
20:35 Ridiculousness Arabia  
21:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah  
21:30 The Opposition With Jordan Klepper  
22:00 Chris Hardwick: Funcomfortable  
22:50 Comedy Central Presents Comedy 3alwagef  
23:15 Ridiculousness Arabia  
23:40 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah




00:30 Destroyed In Seconds  
00:55 Destroyed In Seconds  
01:20 Strip The Cosmos  
02:10 Man v The Universe  
03:00 Nextworld  
03:50 Ultimate Survival  
04:40 Tanked  
05:30 How It's Made  
05:55 How It's Made  
06:20 Destroyed In Seconds  
06:40 Destroyed In Seconds  
07:00 Ultimate Survival  
07:50 How It's Made  
08:15 How It's Made  
08:40 Destroyed In Seconds  
09:05 Destroyed In Seconds

09:30 Tanked  
10:20 Nextworld  
11:10 Guinness World Records Smashed New Zealand  
11:35 Guinness World Records Smashed New Zealand  
12:00 Deception With Keith Barry  
12:50 How It's Made  
13:15 How It's Made  
13:40 Destroyed In Seconds  
14:05 Destroyed In Seconds  
14:30 Tanked  
15:20 Ultimate Survival  
16:10 Nextworld  
17:00 Guinness World Records Smashed New Zealand  
17:25 Guinness World Records Smashed New Zealand  
17:50 Dynamo: Magician Impossible  
18:40 Destroyed In Seconds  
19:05 Destroyed In Seconds  
19:30 How It's Made  
19:55 How It's Made  
20:20 Tanked  
21:10 Guinness World Records Smashed New Zealand  
21:35 Guinness World Records Smashed New Zealand  
22:00 Dynamo: Magician Impossible  
22:50 Nextworld  
23:40 Ultimate Survival



00:50 Blood In The Sand: People Magazine Investigates  
01:45 Hostage: Deadly Demands  
02:40 The Perfect Suspect  
03:35 Murder Book  
04:30 Blood In The Sand: People Magazine Investigates  
05:25 Swamp Murders  
06:20 I Almost Got Away With It  
07:10 Evil Online  
08:00 California Investigator  
08:25 Deadline: Crime With Tamron Hall  
09:15 Swamp Murders  
10:10 Evil Online  
11:05 Betrayed  
12:00 Married With Secrets  
12:55 Deadline: Crime With Tamron Hall  
13:50 I Almost Got Away With It  
14:45 Evil Online  
15:40 Suspicion  
16:35 Reasonable Doubt  
17:30 Deadline: Crime With Tamron Hall  
18:25 Swamp Murders  
19:20 I Almost Got Away With It  
20:15 Evil Online  
21:10 Suspicion  
22:05 A Crime To Remember  
23:00 The 1980s: The Deadliest Decade  
23:55 The Grim Sleeper: People Magazine Investigates




00:10 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch  
00:35 Binny And The Ghost  
01:00 Hank Zipzer  
01:25 Alex & Co.  
01:45 Disney Mickey Mouse  
01:50 Evermoor Chronicles  
02:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch  
02:40 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch  
03:05 Binny And The Ghost  
03:30 Binny And The Ghost  
03:55 Hank Zipzer  
04:15 Disney Mickey Mouse  
04:20 Hank Zipzer  
04:45 Alex & Co.  
05:10 Alex & Co.  
05:35 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch  
06:00 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch  
06:25 Binny And The Ghost  
06:45 Disney Mickey Mouse  
06:50 Rolling With The Ronks  
07:00 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir  
07:25 Hotel Transylvania: The Series  
07:50 Tsum Tsum Shorts  
07:55 Tangled: The Series  
08:20 Elena Of Avalor  
08:45 Bunk'd  
09:10 Stuck In The Middle  
09:35 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir  
10:00 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat


Noir  
10:25 Lolirock  
10:50 Lolirock  
11:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch  
11:40 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch  
12:05 Hank Zipzer  
12:30 Alex & Co.  
12:55 Alex & Co.  
13:20 Lolirock  
13:45 Lolirock  
14:10 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir  
14:35 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir  
15:00 The Zhuzhus  
15:15 Bunk'd  
15:40 K.C. Undercover  
16:05 Disney Mickey Mouse  
16:10 Elena Of Avalor  
16:35 Bizaardvark  
17:00 Tangled: The Series  
17:25 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir  
17:50 Raven's Home  
18:15 Stuck In The Middle  
18:40 Hotel Transylvania: The Series  
19:05 K.C. Undercover  
19:30 Bunk'd  
19:55 Descendants Wicked World  
20:00 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir  
20:25 Liv And Maddie  
20:50 Jessie  
21:15 Disney Mickey Mouse  
21:20 Tangled: The Series  
21:45 Bizaardvark  
22:10 Hotel Transylvania: The Series  
22:35 Bunk'd  
23:00 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir  
23:25 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir  
23:50 Lolirock




00:00 PJ Masks  
00:30 PJ Masks  
01:00 PJ Masks  
01:30 Art Attack  
01:55 Henry Hugglemonster  
02:05 Loopdidoo  
02:20 Henry Hugglemonster  
02:35 Calimero  
02:50 Henry Hugglemonster  
03:05 Art Attack  
03:30 The Hive  
03:40 Loopdidoo  
03:55 Henry Hugglemonster  
04:10 Art Attack  
04:35 Loopdidoo  
04:50 Calimero  
05:05 Art Attack  
05:30 Henry Hugglemonster  
05:45 Henry Hugglemonster  
06:00 Art Attack  
06:30 Henry Hugglemonster  
06:45 Loopdidoo  
07:00 Henry Hugglemonster  
07:15 Calimero  
07:30 PJ Masks  
08:00 Trulli Tales  
08:30 Jungle Junction  
08:50 Handy Manny  
09:10 PJ Masks  
09:30 Vampirina  
10:00 Mickey And The Roadster Racers  
10:30 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse  
11:00 Puppy Dog Pals  
11:30 Puppy Dog Pals  
12:00 The Lion Guard  
12:30 The Lion Guard  
13:00 Sofia The First  
13:30 Sofia The First  
14:00 PJ Masks  
14:30 PJ Masks  
15:00 P-King Duckling  
15:30 Tangled  
16:00 Elena And The Secret Of Avalor  
17:00 PJ Masks  
17:30 Miles From Tomorrow  
18:00 The Lion Guard  
18:30 Puppy Dog Pals  
19:00 Trulli Tales  
19:30 Mickey And The Roadster Racers  
20:00 Sofia The First  
20:30 The Lion Guard  
21:00 Vampirina  
21:30 PJ Masks  
22:00 Trulli Tales  
22:30 Tangled  
23:00 Elena And The Secret Of Avalor



00:15 Alaskan Bush People  
01:05 Killing Fields: Murder Isle  
01:50 Bear Grylls: Breaking Point  
02:35 Man v Expert  
03:20 Extreme Engineering  
04:05 Flying Wild Alaska  
04:50 Dirty Jobs  
05:35 How Do They Do It?  
06:00 Beetle Crisis  
06:23 Beetle Crisis  
06:45 How Do They Do It?  
07:35 Flying Wild Alaska  
08:20 Beetle Crisis  
08:45 Beetle Crisis  
09:10 Dirty Jobs  
09:55 Flying Wild Alaska  
10:45 Dirty Jobs  
11:30 Alaskan Bush People  
12:20 Beetle Crisis  
12:43 Beetle Crisis  
13:05 How Do They Do It?  
13:55 Dirty Jobs  
14:40 Alaskan Bush People  
15:30 How Do They Do It?  
16:15 Bear Grylls: Breaking Point  
17:05 Man v Expert  
17:50 Impossible Engineering  
18:40 Fire In The Hole  
19:25 Alaskan Bush People  
20:15 Extreme Engineering  
21:00 Street Justice: The Bronx  
21:50 Gear Dogs  
22:40 Jesse James Outlaw Garage  
23:30 Gold Rush



06:00 Marvel's Spider-Man  
06:25 Milo Murphy's Law  
06:50 Right Now Kapow  
07:15 Mech-X4  
07:40 Disney Mickey Mouse  
07:45 Walk The Prank  
08:10 Walk The Prank  
08:35 Right Now Kapow  
09:00 Right Now Kapow  
09:25 Mighty Med  
09:50 Mighty Med  
10:20 Star Wars: The Freemaker Adventures  
11:10 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Every-thing  
11:35 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Every-thing  
12:00 Kid vs. Kat  
12:25 Two More Eggs S2  
12:30 Kid vs. Kat  
12:55 Kirby Buckets  
13:20 Kirby Buckets  
13:45 Supa Strikas  
14:10 Disney Mickey Mouse  
14:15 Supa Strikas  
14:40 Right Now Kapow  
15:05 Right Now Kapow  
15:30 Milo Murphy's Law  
15:55 Two More Eggs S2  
16:00 The Suite Life Of Zack & Cody  
16:25 Lab Rats  
16:50 Walk The Prank  
17:15 Mech-X4  
17:40 Marvel's Spider-Man  
18:05 Kickin' It  
18:30 Randy Cunningham: 9th Grade Ninja  
18:45 Kickin' It  
19:10 Mini Ninjas  
19:25 Walk The Prank  
19:50 Marvel's Rocket And Groot  
19:55 Mech-X4  
20:20 Penn Zero: Part Time Hero  
20:45 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Every-thing  
21:10 Kid vs. Kat  
21:35 Marvel's Rocket And Groot  
21:40 Disney Mickey Mouse  
21:45 Lab Rats  
22:10 Lab Rats  
22:35 Phineas And Ferb  
23:00 Programmes Start At 6:00am KSA



00:10 WAGs LA  
01:00 WAGs LA  
01:50 E! News  
02:50 #RichKids Of Beverly Hills

## TV Listings

03:40 #RichKids Of Beverly Hills  
04:35 #RichKids Of Beverly Hills  
05:30 Celebrity Style Story  
06:00 Rob & Chyna  
06:55 E! News Middle East  
07:10 Mariah's World  
08:10 E! News: Daily Pop  
09:10 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry  
10:10 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry  
11:05 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry  
12:00 E! News Middle East  
12:15 WAGs Atlanta  
13:10 WAGs Atlanta  
14:05 WAGs Atlanta  
15:00 E! News Middle East  
15:15 E! News: Daily Pop  
16:15 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry  
17:10 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry  
18:05 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry  
19:00 E! News  
20:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians  
21:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians  
22:00 Botched  
23:00 E! News Middle East  
23:15 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry



00:10 Who's Doing The Dishes?  
01:00 Emmerdale  
01:30 Coronation Street  
02:00 Coronation Street  
02:30 Couples Come Dine With Me  
03:25 It's Not Rocket Science  
04:20 The Jonathan Ross Show  
05:15 Don't Tell The Bride  
06:15 Who's Doing The Dishes?  
07:10 Couples Come Dine With Me  
08:05 Cannonball  
09:00 The Jonathan Ross Show  
09:55 Don't Tell The Bride  
11:00 Who's Doing The Dishes?  
11:50 Couples Come Dine With Me  
12:45 Emmerdale  
13:15 Emmerdale  
13:45 Coronation Street  
14:15 Who's Doing The Dishes?  
15:10 Couples Come Dine With Me  
16:00 Dancing On Ice  
17:50 Don't Tell The Bride  
18:50 Emmerdale  
19:15 Emmerdale  
19:45 Coronation Street  
20:10 Couples Come Dine With Me  
21:00 Dancing On Ice  
22:50 Emmerdale  
23:15 Emmerdale  
23:40 Coronation Street



00:00 Million Dollar Genius  
01:00 Cities Of The Underworld  
02:00 10 Things You Don't Know About...  
03:00 Hangar 1: The UFO Files  
03:50 Ancient Aliens  
04:40 Ancient Impossible  
05:30 Million Dollar Genius  
06:20 How 2 Win  
07:10 The Universe: Ancient Mysteries Solved  
08:00 Cities Of The Underworld  
09:00 10 Things You Don't Know About...  
10:00 Hangar 1: The UFO Files  
11:00 Ancient Aliens  
12:00 Ancient Impossible  
13:00 Million Dollar Genius  
14:00 Cities Of The Underworld  
15:00 10 Things You Don't Know About...  
16:00 Hangar 1: The UFO Files  
17:00 Ancient Aliens  
18:00 Ancient Impossible  
19:00 Cities Of The Underworld  
20:00 10 Things You Don't Know About...  
21:00 Hangar 1: The UFO Files  
22:00 Ancient Aliens  
23:00 What Really Happened



00:20 Swamp People  
01:05 Swamp People  
02:00 American Pickers  
02:50 The Curse Of Oak Island  
03:40 Pirate Treasure Of The Knights Templar  
04:30 Swamp People

05:15 Swamp People  
06:00 Swamp People  
06:50 Swamp People  
07:40 Swamp People  
08:30 Swamp People  
09:20 Swamp People  
10:10 Swamp People  
11:00 Swamp People  
11:50 Swamp People  
12:40 Swamp People  
13:25 Swamp People  
20:10 Swamp People  
21:00 Swamp People  
21:50 Swamp People  
22:40 Swamp People  
23:30 Swamp People



00:15 Chasing The Sun  
00:45 Andy And Ben Eat Australia  
01:10 Tripping Out With Alie & Georgia  
01:40 Eat: The Story Of Food  
02:35 Confucius Was A Foodie  
03:30 Raw Travel  
03:55 Raw Travel  
04:25 Dog Whisperer  
05:20 Dog Whisperer  
06:15 Food School  
06:40 Food School  
07:10 Eat: The Story Of Food  
08:05 Confucius Was A Foodie  
09:00 Raw Travel  
09:25 Raw Travel  
09:55 Dog Whisperer  
10:50 Dog Whisperer  
11:45 Food School  
12:10 Food School  
12:40 Chasing Time  
13:05 Chasing The Sun  
13:35 Confucius Was A Foodie  
14:30 What's For Sale?  
14:55 What's For Sale?  
15:25 Dog Whisperer  
16:20 Dog Whisperer  
17:15 Food School  
17:40 Food School  
18:10 Chasing Time  
18:35 Chasing The Sun  
19:05 Confucius Was A Foodie  
20:00 What's For Sale?  
20:30 What's For Sale?  
21:00 Dog Whisperer  
22:00 Dog Whisperer  
22:55 Food School  
23:20 Food School  
23:50 Chasing Time



00:10 Battle For Iwo Jima  
01:00 Apocalypse: The Second World War  
02:00 Chain Of Command  
03:00 Science Of Stupid Compilations  
03:30 Science Of Stupid Compilations  
04:00 Battle For Iwo Jima  
05:00 Going Deep With David Rees  
05:30 Going Deep With David Rees  
06:00 Mega Factories  
07:00 Origins: The Journey Of Humankind  
08:00 Woman Raised By Monkeys  
09:00 Going Deep With David Rees  
09:30 Going Deep With David Rees  
10:00 Locked Up Abroad  
11:00 Killing Reagan  
13:00 Reinventing Seoul  
14:00 He Named Me Malala  
16:00 Locked Up Abroad  
17:00 Chain Of Command  
18:00 Battle For Iwo Jima  
19:00 Apocalypse: The Second World War  
20:00 Locked Up Abroad  
20:50 Chain Of Command  
21:40 Battle For Iwo Jima  
22:30 Apocalypse: The Second World War  
23:20 Money Meltdown  
23:45 Money Meltdown



00:20 Super Pride  
01:10 Monster Croc Wrangler  
01:35 Monster Croc Wrangler  
02:00 Monster Croc Hunt  
02:50 World's Deadliest Killers  
03:45 Wild 24  
04:40 The Invaders

05:35 Monster Croc Hunt  
06:30 World's Deadliest Killers  
07:25 Wild 24  
08:20 The Invaders  
09:15 Snakes In The City  
10:10 Wild Japan: Snow Monkeys  
11:05 Giants Of The Deep Blue  
12:00 Shark Alley  
12:55 Tiger Queen  
13:50 Predator Fails  
14:45 Wild 24  
15:40 The Invaders  
16:35 Snakes In The City  
17:30 Wild Little Cats  
18:25 Operation Sumatran Rhino  
19:20 Wild 24  
20:10 The Invaders  
21:00 Snakes In The City  
21:50 Wild Little Cats  
22:40 Operation Sumatran Rhino  
23:30 Shark Alley



00:12 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles  
00:36 Rabbids Invasion  
01:00 Rabbids Invasion  
01:24 Sanjay And Craig  
01:48 Sanjay And Craig  
02:12 Winx Club  
02:36 Winx Club  
03:00 Harvey Beaks  
03:24 Harvey Beaks  
03:48 The Loud House  
04:12 The Loud House  
04:36 Breadwinners  
05:00 Breadwinners  
05:24 Get Blake  
05:48 SpongeBob SquarePants  
06:12 SpongeBob SquarePants  
06:36 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles  
07:00 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles  
07:24 Rabbids Invasion  
07:48 Get Blake  
08:12 Harvey Beaks  
08:36 Sanjay And Craig  
09:00 SpongeBob SquarePants  
09:24 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles  
09:48 Henry Danger  
10:12 Game Shakers  
10:36 Regal Academy  
11:00 Winx Club  
11:24 SpongeBob SquarePants  
11:48 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles  
12:12 The Loud House  
12:36 Rabbids Invasion  
13:00 Breadwinners  
13:24 Massive Monster Mayhem  
13:48 I Am Frankie  
14:12 The Thundermans  
14:36 Sanjay And Craig  
15:00 Legends Of The Hidden Temple  
16:12 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles  
16:36 The Loud House  
17:00 Massive Monster Mayhem  
17:24 I Am Frankie  
17:48 Hunter Street  
18:12 Henry Danger  
18:36 Henry Danger  
19:00 Henry Danger  
19:24 Henry Danger  
19:48 Henry Danger  
20:12 Harvey Beaks  
20:36 SpongeBob SquarePants  
21:00 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles  
21:24 Sanjay And Craig  
21:48 Rabbids Invasion  
22:12 Breadwinners  
22:36 Harvey Beaks  
23:00 SpongeBob SquarePants  
23:24 SpongeBob SquarePants  
23:48 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles



00:14 Kid-E-Cats  
00:20 Shimmer And Shine  
00:43 Sunny Day  
01:05 Max & Ruby  
01:28 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom  
01:39 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom  
01:50 The Day Henry Met  
01:56 Blaze And The Monster Machines  
02:18 Blaze And The Monster Machines  
02:41 Paw Patrol  
02:53 Kid-E-Cats  
02:57 Kid-E-Cats  
03:03 Shimmer And Shine

03:25 Nella The Princess Knight  
03:37 Paw Patrol  
04:00 The Day Henry Met  
04:06 Max & Ruby  
04:27 Dora The Explorer  
04:51 Sunny Day  
05:13 Nella The Princess Knight  
05:37 Shimmer And Shine  
05:59 Wallykazam!  
06:23 Zack & Quack  
06:34 The Day Henry Met  
06:40 Blaze And The Monster Machines  
07:01 Rusty Rivets  
07:14 Paw Patrol  
07:37 Dora The Explorer  
08:00 Nella The Princess Knight  
08:22 Bubble Guppies  
08:45 Blaze And The Monster Machines  
09:08 Paw Patrol  
09:32 Shimmer And Shine  
09:54 Nella The Princess Knight  
10:16 The Day Henry Met  
10:21 Paw Patrol  
10:45 Rusty Rivets  
11:08 Wallykazam!  
11:31 Bubble Guppies  
11:54 Team Umizoomi  
12:17 Kid-E-Cats  
12:22 Shimmer And Shine  
12:45 Sunny Day  
13:08 Max & Ruby  
13:31 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom  
13:41 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom  
13:52 The Day Henry Met  
13:57 Blaze And The Monster Machines  
14:20 Blaze And The Monster Machines  
14:42 Paw Patrol  
14:54 Kid-E-Cats  
14:58 Kid-E-Cats  
15:04 Shimmer And Shine  
15:26 Nella The Princess Knight  
15:37 Paw Patrol  
16:00 The Day Henry Met  
16:06 Max & Ruby  
16:28 Dora The Explorer  
16:51 Sunny Day  
17:14 Nella The Princess Knight  
17:37 Shimmer And Shine  
17:59 Wallykazam!  
18:22 Zack & Quack  
18:33 The Day Henry Met  
18:38 Blaze And The Monster Machines  
19:00 Rusty Rivets  
19:13 Paw Patrol  
19:37 Dora The Explorer  
20:00 Nella The Princess Knight  
20:22 Bubble Guppies  
20:45 Blaze And The Monster Machines  
21:07 Paw Patrol  
21:31 Shimmer And Shine  
21:55 Nella The Princess Knight  
22:16 The Day Henry Met  
22:22 Paw Patrol  
22:45 Rusty Rivets  
23:09 Wallykazam!  
23:32 Bubble Guppies  
23:56 Team Umizoomi



01:05 Secretary  
03:00 LA Bamba  
04:50 Meru  
06:25 Clifford  
08:10 LA Bamba  
10:05 The Flying Scotsman  
11:55 African Safari  
13:35 OSN Special Oscars Red Carpet Coverage 2018  
14:00 Operation Avalanche  
16:00 Wuthering Heights  
17:50 OSN Special Oscars Red Carpet Coverage 2018  
18:20 Never Let Me Go  
20:20 Frankie And Johnny  
22:20 Babel



01:00 Teo: The Intergalactic Hunter  
02:30 The Apple & The Worm  
03:55 Help And Freedom  
05:30 Louis & Luca And The Snow Machine  
06:55 Catcher: Cat City 2  
08:35 Dwegons And Leprechauns  
10:20 The Fairy Tales Tree  
11:45 Nur And The Dragon's Temple

13:05 The Apple & The Worm  
14:30 Help And Freedom  
16:05 Dinofroz The Origin  
17:40 The Fairy Tales Tree  
19:05 Mia And The Migoo  
20:45 The Emperor's Secret  
22:20 Dinofroz The Origin  
23:55 Dwegons And Leprechauns



00:35 Trainwreck  
02:40 Dan In Real Life  
04:20 The Cable Guy  
05:55 Batman Unlimited: Mechs vs. Mutants  
07:15 Max  
09:10 Dan In Real Life  
10:50 The Cable Guy  
12:30 OSN Special Oscars Red Carpet Coverage 2018  
12:50 The Flintstones  
14:25 In The Heart Of The Sea  
16:30 Mr. Deeds  
18:10 Hail, Caesar!  
20:00 The Magnificent Seven  
22:15 Training Day



00:40 Mythbusters  
01:30 How Do They Do It?  
01:55 Food Factory  
02:20 Man v Expert  
03:10 Superhuman Showdown  
04:00 The Big Brain Theory  
04:48 Mythbusters  
05:36 How Do They Do It?  
06:00 Food Factory  
06:24 Man v Expert  
07:12 Superhuman Showdown  
08:00 How Do They Do It?  
08:26 The Big Brain Theory  
09:14 Mythbusters  
10:02 Superhuman Showdown  
10:50 How Do They Do It?  
11:14 Food Factory  
11:38 Man v Expert  
12:26 The Big Brain Theory  
13:14 Mythbusters  
14:02 How Do They Do It?  
14:26 Food Factory  
14:50 Superhuman Showdown  
15:38 The Big Brain Theory  
16:26 Man v Expert  
17:14 Mythbusters  
18:02 Superhuman Showdown  
18:50 The Big Brain Theory  
19:40 Mythbusters  
20:30 Hacking The Wild  
21:20 How Do They Do It?  
21:45 Food Factory  
22:10 Superhuman Showdown  
23:00 Hacking The Wild  
23:50 The Big Brain Theory



01:00 Formula Drift Highlights  
01:30 Formula Drift Highlights  
02:00 Formula Drift Insider  
02:30 Red Bull Crashed Ice Highlights  
03:30 Red Bull Crashed Ice Highlights  
04:30 WWE Wal300ha  
05:00 Monster Energy AMA Supercross Highlights  
07:00 Winter X Games Highlights  
08:00 Winter X Games Highlights  
09:00 Amsoil Arenacross  
10:00 Amsoil Arenacross  
11:00 This Week In WWE  
11:30 WWE Wal300ha  
12:00 WWE Bottom Line  
13:00 WWE Afterburn  
14:00 Mobil 1 The Grid  
14:30 Formula Drift Insider  
15:00 WWE Wal300ha  
15:30 Arena Esports  
16:00 Amsoil Arenacross  
17:00 WWE Wal300ha  
17:30 Winter X Games Highlights  
18:30 Winter X Games Highlights  
19:30 Arena Esports  
20:00 WWE Experience  
21:00 WWE Wal300ha  
21:30 WWE Bottom Line  
22:30 WWE Afterburn  
23:30 Arena Esports

Stars



Aries (March 21-April 19)

If a coworker seems to have a problem, don't let it get you upset -- you won't be privy to the problem for a few days yet. In the meantime, you're a machine when it comes to getting the job done -- any job -- and you'll get it done well. Since you've probably been playing for the past few days, this diligent mood will be just what the doctor ordered -- if you want to keep your job, that is, and of course you do.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Okay, so you've been working hard but you've still got time to make this a day -- and more importantly, an evening -- to remember. You're on a mission -- and you know how you get when your determination kicks in. You want to get up close and personal with a companion who has a taste for quality. Now, do it up right. The flowers, the gourmet meal, the music. Find the right person, and all ingredients will be on hand!



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You've done your share of dreaming lately, but you may be feeling a bit nervous about taking that first step. Not to worry. No matter what type of offer you extend -- and with your legendary gift of gab, it can't help but emerge sounding like poetry -- the Universe is on your side, ready to help you phrase the invitation for a guest list of one in just the right words.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You're tired, confused, and wondering if you can even communicate what's on your mind. You can. If you let your feelings out honestly without stopping them for a second, you'll be able to make your point easily. Oh, and any sibling or neighbor who tries to give you a hard time, just for fun, had better come to this verbal duel well-armed -- because if they don't they'll be quite embarrassed when it's all over.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

It's definitely time to relax because romance is still very much on your personal agenda. Of course, you'll need to finish up your chores, balance the checkbook and shop -- but once that's over, you'll be free to fully commit yourself to the concept of nothing but recreation. You being the romantic, it won't be difficult to entice that certain companion to join you -- the one who'll be more than happy to pretend not to rush over the moment you call.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

At this point, you may be a bit more -- okay, a lot more emotional than you usually are, but it's entirely understandable. Everyone gets to feel confused when they're putting their priorities in order. It's just your turn. In the meantime, though, since you're certainly no exception, allow yourself to be sentimental and nostalgic, and to 'gush' as much as you like. It'll do you good -- and your relationship even better.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Okay, so since life could be a bit tricky now, especially since the rumor mill hasn't shut down just yet -- and in fact, it's picking up speed -- you may have a problem holding onto that secret you've been wrestling with. Your challenge is to decide if it might not be time to approach the person(s) involved and offer to let the cat out of the bag. The good news is that you're verbally adept enough to open that bag without anyone being at all angry with you about it. Good for you.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You were probably quite irritated with someone who deceived you recently, and remnants of those feelings could be hanging over your heart right now. If it's a friend who's responsible, you can make peace, but not until later tonight, after you've had the chance to do some detective work to prove to yourself that you're right to help. In the meantime, you'll have to endure at least one more conversation with the same person over the same issue before it's over.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

After days of enjoying a delightfully keen companion, you're still not quite ready to quit. You may even be in the mood to have one of those verbal sparring matches for an audience since your ego (yep, you've got one, too) is urging you to get out there and prove yourself. If your partner (i.e. opponent) doesn't quite see it that way initially, don't worry. If you can't convince them to see it your way after just a bit of persuasion, give it a rest.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You may have a long-distance friend or lover on your mind, but your heart is urging you to get out there and mingle right now -- with folks who are right around the corner. Nobody's telling you to actually 'love the one you're with,' but having some fun with them certainly can't hurt. You're in a playful mood, and someone new and interesting doesn't come along every day. Get dressed and get out there. Guilt-free!



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Recently, you ran into someone every bit as fiery, independent and innocently reckless as yourself. Since those, of course, are exactly the qualities you insist upon when you're looking for companionship -- in fact, they're secretly at the very tip-top of your list of 'absolutely non-negotiable qualities which must be sensed within five minutes of meeting someone you find attractive,' you'd be foolish to let them escape.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

The heavens are inspiring you to tiptoe, not stomp, whisper, not shout, and glance meaningfully, not stare. Basically, you have the urge to connect, delicately, with just the right someone -- the one who's intuitive enough to pick up on all those subtle signals. Just be sure you've cleared the runway for takeoff before you schedule a new flight. Otherwise, you could end up in a tense situation with someone whose jealousy could put quite the crimp in your style.

COUNTRY CODES

Afghanistan	0093	Jordan	00962
Albania	00355	Kazakhstan	007
Algeria	00213	Kenya	00254
Andorra	00376	Kiribati	00686
Angola	00244	Kuwait	00965
Anguilla	001264	Kyrgyzstan	00996
Antiga	001268	Laos	00856
Argentina	0054	Latvia	00371
Armenia	00374	Lebanon	00961
Australia	0061	Liberia	00231
Austria	0043	Libya	00218
Bahamas	001242	Lithuania	00370
Bahrain	00973	Luxembourg	00352
Bangladesh	00880	Macau	00853
Barbados	001246	Macedonia	00389
Belarus	00375	Madagascar	00261
Belgium	0032	Majorca	0034
Belize	00501	Malawi	00265
Benin	00229	Malaysia	0060
Bermuda	001441	Maldives	00960
Bhutan	00975	Mali	00223
Bolivia	00591	Malta	00356
Bosnia	00387	Marshall Islands	00692
Botswana	00267	Martinique	00596
Brazil	0055	Mauritania	00222
Brunei	00673	Mauritius	00230
Bulgaria	00359	Mayotte	00269
Burkina	00226	Mexico	0052
Burundi	00257	Micronesia	00691
Cambodia	00855	Moldova	00373
Cameroon	00237	Monaco	00377
Canada	001	Mongolia	00976
Cape Verde	00238	Montserrat	001664
Cayman Islands	001345	Morocco	00212
Central African Republic	00236	Mozambique	00258
Chad	00235	Myanmar (Burma)	0095
Chile	0056	Namibia	00264
China	0086	Nepal	00977
Colombia	0057	Netherlands (Holland)	0031
Comoros	00269	Netherlands Antilles	00599
Congo	00242	New Caledonia	00687
Cook Islands	00682	New Zealand	0064
Costa Rica	00506	Nicaragua	00505
Croatia	00385	Nigar	00227
Cuba	0053	Nigeria	00234
Cyprus	00357	Niue	00683
Cyprus (Northern)	0090392	Norfolk Island	00672
Czech Republic	00420	Northern Ireland (UK)	0044
Denmark	0045	North Korea	00850
Diego Garcia	00246	Norway	0047
Djibouti	00253	Oman	00968
Dominica	001767	Pakistan	0092
Dominican Republic	001809	Palau	00680
Ecuador	00593	Panama	00507
Egypt	0020	Papua New Guinea	00675
El Salvador	00503	Paraguay	00595
England (UK)	0044	Peru	0051
Equatorial Guinea	00240	Philippines	0063
Eritrea	00291	Poland	0048
Estonia	00372	Portugal	00351
Ethiopia	00251	Puerto Rico	001787
Falkland Islands	00500	Qatar	00974
Faroe Islands	00298	Romania	0040
Fiji	00679	Russian Federation	007
Finland	00358	Rwanda	00250
France	0033	Saint Helena	00290
French Guiana	00594	Saint Kitts	001869
French Polynesia	00689	Saint Lucia	001758
Gabon	00241	Saint Pierre	00508
Gambia	00220	Saint Vincent	001784
Georgia	00995	Samoa US	00684
Germany	0049	Samoa West	00685
Ghana	00233	San Marino	00378
Gibraltar	00350	Sao Tome	00239
Greece	0030	Saudi Arabia	00966
Greenland	00299	Scotland (UK)	0044
Grenada	001473	Senegal	00221
Guadeloupe	00590	Seychelles	00284
Guam	001671	Sierra Leone	00232
Guatemala	00502	Singapore	0065
Guinea	00224	Slovakia	00421
Guyana	00592	Slovenia	00386
Haiti	00509	Solomon Islands	00677
Holland (Netherlands)	0031	Somalia	00252
Honduras	00504	South Africa	0027
Hong Kong	00852	South Korea	0082
Hungary	0036	Spain	0034
Ibiza (Spain)	0034	Sri Lanka	0094
Iceland	00354	Sudan	00249
India	0091	Suriname	00597
Indian Ocean	00873	Swaziland	00268
Indonesia	0062	Sweden	0046
Iran	0098	Switzerland	0041
Iraq	00964	Syria	00963
Ireland	00353	Taiwan	00886
Italy	0039	Tanzania	00255
Ivory Coast	00225	Thailand	0066
Jamaica	001876	Toga	00228
Japan	0081	Tonga	00676

## Health

# Plastic rubbish chokes Bali's rich marine life

**DENPASER BALI:** Millions of tourists are drawn to Bali's palm-fringed scenery and rich marine life, but there is a danger lurking beneath its famously crystal-clear waters: a wasteland of plastic rubbish.

An underwater video shot by British diver Rich Horner this week showing a sea overflowing with plastic and other garbage at Manta Point, a well-known diving site near Bali's main island, has highlighted trouble in paradise. The holiday island has become an embarrassing poster child for Indonesia's trash crisis.

The problem has grown so bad that officials in Bali last year declared a "garbage emergency" across a six-kilometer stretch of coast

that included popular beaches Jimbaran, Kuta and Seminyak.

"The ocean currents brought us in a lovely gift of a slick of jellyfish, plankton, leaves, branches, fronds, sticks, etc.... Oh, and some plastic," the diver wrote on his Facebook account.

His video, which has been viewed more than a million times, shows a diver swimming through a torrent of rubbish-including bottles, cups and straws-at Manta Point about 40 kilometres (25 miles) from Bali's main island.

"Plastic bags, more plastic bags, plastic, plastic, so much plastic!" Horner said. Indonesia, an archipelago of more than 17,000 islands, is the

world's second biggest contributor to marine debris after China, and a colossal 1.29 million metric tons is estimated to be produced annually by the Southeast Asian nation. The waves of plastic flooding into rivers and oceans have been causing problems for years, clogging waterways in cities, increasing the risk of floods, and injuring or killing marine animals who ingest or become trapped by plastic packaging.

"Microplastics can contaminate fish which, if eaten by humans, could cause health problems, including cancer," I Gede Hendrawan, an environmental oceanography researcher at Bali's Udayana University, previously told AFP.

Bali's rubbish problem is at its worst during

the annual monsoon season, when strong winds push marine flotsam on to the beach and swollen rivers wash rubbish from riverbanks to the coast.

"It tends to accumulate (at Manta Point) and the very large amount of rainfall probably has increased the level of garbage because it's all swept from the mainland out to sea by the rains," said Iwan Dewantama, a researcher at NGO Conservation International.

As part of its commitment under the UN Environment's Clean Seas campaign, Jakarta has pledged to reduce marine plastic waste by 70 percent by 2025, through recycling, curbing the use of plastic bags, cleanup campaigns and raising public awareness. —AFP

## CLINIC PAGE



Kuwait Times  
248 33 199

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

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# Classifieds

Friday, March 9, 2018

Kuwait Times  
Established 1961



STATE OF KUWAIT  
DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION  
METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



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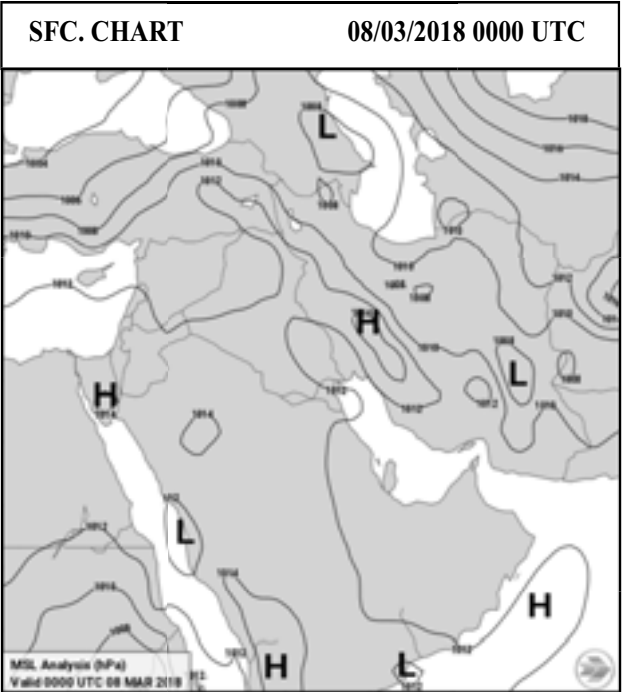
## Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

**BY DAY:** Relatively hot and with light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 08 - 30 km/h .

**BY NIGHT:** Fair with light to moderate north westerly wind to light variable wind, with speed of 08 - 28 km/h .

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

STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.
KUWAIT CITY	28 °C	22 °C
KUWAIT AIRPORT	31 °C	18 °C
ABDALY	35 °C	17 °C
BUBYAN	28 °C	13 °C
JAHERA	36 °C	20 °C
FAILAKA ISLAND	29 °C	18 °C
SALMIYAH	25 °C	21 °C
AHMADI	24 °C	00 °C
NUWAISIB	28 °C	15 °C
WAFRA	35 °C	16 °C
SALMY	34 °C	16 °C



4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Friday	03/09	Relatively hot	32 °C	19 °C	VRB-SE	08 - 32 km/h
Saturday	03/10	Partly cloudy to cloudy with a chance for light rain	29 °C	17 °C	SE-NE	06 - 32 km/h
Sunday	03/11	Mostly Sunny	28 °C	16 °C	VRB-SE	08 - 28 km/h
Monday	03/12	Mostly Sunny	29 °C	19 °C	N-NW	15 - 40 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	04:47
Sunrise	06:05
Zuhr	11:59
Asr	15:21
Sunset	17:52
Isha	19:08

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	34 °C
MIN. Temp.	16 °C
MAX. RH	88 %
MIN. RH	20 %
MAX. Wind	S 21 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

## REQUIRED

### Executive Secretary (Female)

- Should be graduate
- Fluent in English Language
- Knowledge of Computer Skills.
- Short Hand typing.

#### Work requirement

Good Communication, Banking LC's and Correspondence

Send CV's to Email:

yazco\_22@yahoo.com

## Hospitals

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

## Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khaldiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401

## Business

FRIDAY, MARCH 9, 2018

**38** Debt lands hundreds in jail as Gaza economy collapses**39** In show of confidence, ECB inches towards stimulus exit**41** ACICO to distribute 10% cash dividend, 5% shares in subsidiary

QINGDAO: Chinese police officers watch a cargo ship at a port in Qingdao in China's eastern Shandong province yesterday. —AFP

## Europe, China warn Trump over trade war

## EU has 'whole arsenal' for any trade war with US

**PARIS/BEIJING:** Europe and China warned President Donald Trump yesterday they would respond in the event of a trade war with the United States, with one Brussels official saying retaliation could also target goods from areas governed by his Republican Party. Trump was expected later in the day to sign a proclamation imposing 25 percent tariffs on steel imports and 10 percent on aluminum, though a White House official said this could slide into Friday as documents had to be cleared through a legal process.

Both Brussels and Beijing voiced hope that a trade war could be averted, and the European Commission raised the prospect that Trump could consider exempting the EU's 28 member states from the measures along with US neighbors Canada and Mexico. Some countries advised against any overhasty reaction to Trump's plan, which has drawn fire at home as well as rattling global financial markets, particularly Canada which as a close trading partner of the United States has perhaps most to lose.

But the European Union talked tough. "If Donald Trump puts in place the measures this evening, we have a whole arsenal at our disposal with which to respond," European Financial Affairs Commissioner Pierre Moscovici said. Counter-measures would include European tariffs

on US oranges, tobacco and bourbon, he said, adding that some products under consideration for an EU riposte were largely produced in constituencies controlled by Trump's Republicans. "We want Congress to understand that this would be a lose-lose situation," Moscovici told BFM TV. The EU is by far the biggest trading partner of the United States by value and, after China, member states have together the biggest trade surplus with the country. Once approved by Trump, the tariffs would go into effect after two months.

Meanwhile, President Donald Trump's team played down talk of a trade war Wednesday as it fought to limit a financial market sell-off, promising a quick decision on contentious tariffs that prompted a popular economic advisor to the president to quit. Administration big guns Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross and Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin rushed to the cameras to calm market jitters over proposed steel and aluminum duties, which they indicated were still negotiable and would not hurt growth. As markets fell on news that Wall Street favorite Gary Cohn had resigned from the White House in protest at Trump's trade decision and global partners vowed retaliation, Ross tried to calm fears of a trade war. "We're

going to have sensible relations with our allies," he told CNBC, claiming that Trump's policy was well "thought through. We're not looking for a trade war."

Mnuchin joined the effort, claiming that the tariffs, which are not yet finalized, would not hurt the administration's projections for three percent growth. "We're comfortable that we're going to manage through this so that it is not detrimental to our growth projections," he told Fox Business. As stocks fell off on Wall Street, a fierce battle over Trump's proposals raged behind the scenes in Washington. Trump surprised and angered Republican lawmakers with his impromptu tariff announcement last week.

**Necessary response**

The tariffs are designed to counter cheap imports, especially from China, which Trump says are undermining US industries and jobs.

In Beijing, Foreign Minister Wang Yi said China and the United States did not have to be rivals, and history showed that trade wars were not the correct way to resolve problems. "Especially given today's globalization, choosing a trade war is a mistaken prescription. The outcome will only be harmful," he said on the sidelines of an

annual meeting of China's parliament. "China would have to make a justified and necessary response," Trump addressed China in tweets on Wednesday, demanding that Beijing lay out plans for reducing its trade surplus with the United States by \$1 billion. China had a record \$375.2 billion goods surplus with the United States last year.

**Jobs threat**

Trump's administration has faced growing opposition to the tariffs from prominent congressional Republicans and business officials worried about their potential impact on the economy. The White House has said there could be a 30-day exemption from the tariffs for Mexico and Canada - which are members of the North America Free Trade Association (NAFTA) - and some other countries based on national security. Trump wants to renegotiate the NAFTA and a White House official linked any extension of the exemption to progress in NAFTA talks. In Brussels, European Commission Vice President Jyrki Katainen said he had read that Britain might be in line for an exemption too. While Britons have voted to leave the EU, the country remains a member until next year. —Agencies

## Business

# Debt lands hundreds in jail as Gaza economy collapses

## 42,500 people arrested last year for failing to pay debtors

**GAZA CITY, Palestinian Territories:** Sameh Al-Madhoun's eyes fill with tears as he recalls his fall from successful businessman to prisoner in a Hamas jail in Gaza. Once the owner of a flourishing car dealership, he is one of more than 40,000 Gazans charged in the last year with failing to keep up debt payments as the economy in the Palestinian enclave collapses.

Madhoun, a 40-year-old father of four, has sold most of his possessions, including his house and some of his cars, in a bid to pay back the \$3 million (2.4 million euro) debt that dragged his business into bankruptcy. "I have paid off half of it until now. I don't know how I will pay off the rest," he told AFP from his jail cell.

"I don't own anything else now except these debts." A decade-long Israeli blockade and a dispute between Gaza's Islamist rulers and the West Bank-based Palestinian Authorities have brought the coastal territory's economy to its knees.

Some 42,500 people were arrested in the past year for failing to pay debtors, according to Hamas police. At least 600 are currently in jail on similar charges. Madhoun has been detained since September, but is allowed to leave two days a week to see his young children and search for the money to pay back his debtors.



**Debts drag businesses into bankruptcy**

AFP met him both in prison, after being granted access by Hamas, and during one of his leave days at his former company—now just a few cars gathering dust. "The market collapsed. Even though prices fell there were no customers," Madhoun said.

"If it continues all the businesses in Gaza will fail."

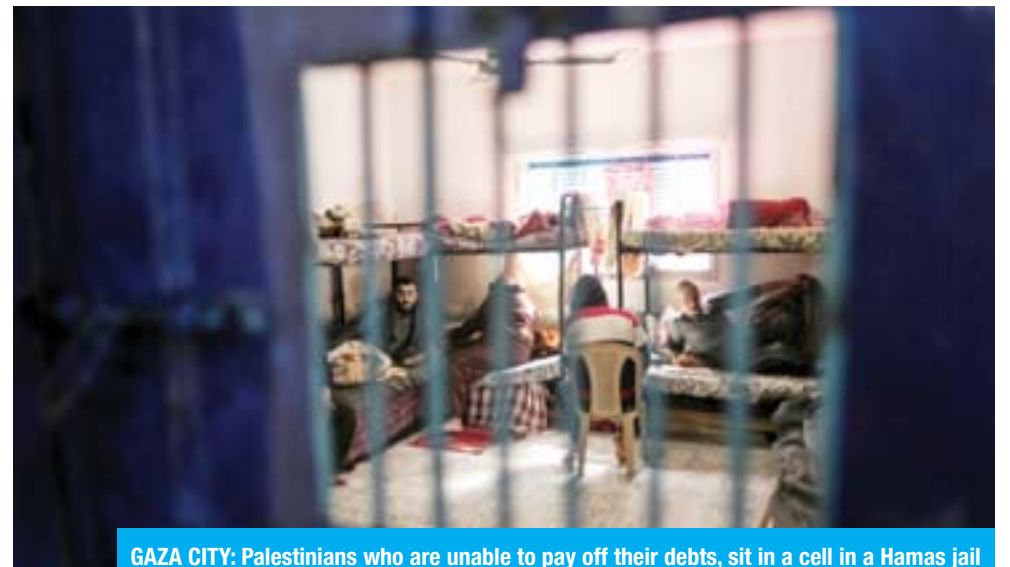
**Economy 'all but dead'**

The economy of Gaza, a Palestinian enclave of two million people sandwiched between Israel, Egypt and the Mediterranean, is "all but dead," said Maher Tabba, an official at the territory's Chamber of Commerce. As Gazans' buying power has collapsed, the amount of goods being imported into the Strip has more than halved in just seven months, according to border officials.

Tabba said some \$112 million-worth of cheques bounced in 2017, up from \$62 million in 2016.

That, he said, is "clear evidence of an economic collapse". Tabba estimates that several hundred of those currently in prison are owners of struggling or failed businesses.

In an attempt to contain the crisis, the Public Prosecutor's Office in Gaza recently announced it would give people an extra month to find the



**GAZA CITY:** Palestinians who are unable to pay off their debts, sit in a cell in a Hamas jail in Gaza City. — AFP

money to service their debts.

Much of the world has dropped the policy of imprisoning debtors, but in Gaza it is still common.

Israel has maintained a blockade of Gaza since 2007 which it says is necessary to isolate Hamas, with which it has fought three wars since 2008. Rights groups and UN officials say it amounts to collective punishment and strangles the economy in the enclave, where unem-

ployment is around 40 percent.

But the Palestinian Authority has also sought in recent months to harm Hamas by damaging Gaza's economy, including by cutting the salaries it still pays to civil servants there despite Hamas taking over the territory in 2007. Hamas has also largely stopped paying civil servants after an attempted reconciliation with the Fatah movement of president Mahmud Abbas stalled. — AFP

## Forbes keeps Saudis off billionaires list after graft purge

**RIYADH:** Forbes magazine said yesterday it was excluding all Saudi Arabian tycoons from its annual list of the world's richest people after dozens of top businessmen from the oil-rich kingdom were detained in a crackdown on corruption last year. Most detainees were released after reaching settlements with the authorities, who say they arranged to seize more than \$100 billion in assets through such deals. But the government has provided few details about who was netted in the sweep, what they were accused of and how much they gave up.

Forbes said earlier in the week that it was "impossible to know definitively who gave how much to whom when". The magazine said it had removed the 10 Saudi billionaires who made the cut last year, including detained in the crackdown like Prince Alwaleed bin Talal, with wealth previously valued at \$18.7 billion, and Mohammed Al-Amoudi whose treasure stood at \$8.1 billion. "With greater clarity regarding their wealth, some might eventually return to the ranking," Forbes said. The magazine's Middle East edition said in a separate statement yesterday that the wealth of Saudi billionaires was believed to have increased from \$42.1 billion last year due to the rise in oil prices and capital markets globally, but would be excluded due to the reported asset seizures. — Reuters

## Moody's downgrades Turkey's sovereign rating, markets shrug

**ISTANBUL:** Ratings agency Moody's cut Turkey's sovereign rating further into junk territory overnight, citing a continued weakening of its economic and political institutions and the increased risks from its wide current account deficit. The rating was downgraded by one notch to Ba2.

"The government appears still to be focused on short-term measures, to the detriment of effective monetary policy and of fundamental economic reform," Moody's said.

Set against a negative institutional backdrop, Turkey's external position, debt and rollover needs had continued to deteriorate, it said. The downgrade was shrugged off by financial markets and dismissed by Turkey's government, which has vaunted a strong economic recovery after a brief dip following 2016's failed coup. GDP surged 11 percent in the third quarter.

"It is unfair. We have just been through the most dangerous period of recent Turkish history. We recovered very fast ... We have some major investments still going on, big projects," Tourism Minister Numan Kurtulmus told Reuters in Berlin.

"It is unfortunately an effect of some political feelings, some political threats. It does not reflect the reality of the Turkish economy," he said at a travel trade fair.

Moody's had already cut Turkey's rating to a sub-investment grade Ba1 in September 2016 following the attempted putsch, which undermined investor sentiment towards what was once seen as one of the world's most promising emerging markets.

One banker described the downgrade as a "surprise development" that could put some pressure on Turkish markets, although he said there was no fundamental difference between a Ba1 and Ba2 rating.

"I think this decision reflects the course of Turkey-US relations, as we are not in a different place in an economic sense from where we were a year ago," said the banker, who declined to be identified.

Relations between the NATO allies have become increasingly strained over a range of issues, including US support for a Syrian Kurdish militia that Ankara views as a terrorist group and the conviction of a Turkish bank executive in a US sanctions-busting case.

There was limited reaction from Turkish assets. The lira weakened to 3.8115 against the dollar by 1210 GMT from 3.8035 at the close on Wednesday. The main Istanbul share index edged 0.1 percent lower. The 10-year benchmark bond yield rose to 12.29 percent from a close of 12.20. "The mentioned risks are not new to the market and the focus is mostly on global risk sentiment rather than local developments," said BNP Paribas/TEB strategist Erkin Isik. — Reuters

## Business

Friday, March 9, 2018

# ECB drops easing bias en route to stimulus exit

## Draghi: Unilateral trade policy moves are 'dangerous'

**FRANKFURT:** The European Central Bank dropped a long-standing pledge yesterday to increase its bond buying if needed, taking another small step in weaning the eurozone economy off protracted stimulus. Keeping its broader policy unchanged, the ECB said it could still extend its 2.55 trillion euro (\$3.16 trillion) bond purchase scheme beyond September if needed. But it omitted a reference to bigger purchases, a signal that it remains on track to end a three-year-old stimulus scheme before the end of 2018. Having revived eurozone growth with lavish stimulus, the ECB has been dialling back support in tiny increments, fearing any big change could unravel its work and force an embarrassing and economically damaging policy reversal. "The net asset purchases, at the current monthly pace of 30 billion euros, are intended to run until the end of September 2018, or beyond, if necessary, and in any case until the Governing Council sees a sustained adjustment in the path of inflation consistent with its inflation aim," the ECB said in a statement after its regular policy meeting.

Eurozone inflation remains stubbornly low. "Our mandate is in terms of price stability. Victory cannot be declared yet," ECB President Mario Draghi told a news conference. Dropping the ECB's so-called easing bias is largely symbolic as few if any expected bigger bond buying. But the move was still seen as a precursor to a broader revision of the bank's policy



### Euro's volatility risks derailing bank's efforts

guidance, a move flagged in earlier meetings.

"This is, in our view, an important first step towards the exit of unconventional policies, and increases the probability that the asset purchases will be finalized in September," said Kjersti Haugland, chief economist at DNB Bank. The euro, which was down 0.3 percent at \$1.2378 before the announcement, firmed to the day's high of \$1.2431 before easing back 0.1 percent to \$1.2409.

Draghi unveiled a modest upgrade of the ECB's eurozone economic growth forecast to 2.4 percent from 2.3 percent previously, with projections for 2019 and 2020 unchanged at 1.9 percent and 1.7 percent respectively. "Incoming information, including our staff projections, confirms the strong and broad-based growth momentum in the euro area economy, which is projected to expand in the near term at a somewhat faster pace than previously expected,"

he said.

Unilateral decisions on trade policy are dangerous and disputes should be settled using international bodies, Draghi said, in the wake of US plans to impose tariffs on imports of steel and aluminum. "We are convinced that disputes should be discussed and resolved in a multilateral framework, that unilateral decisions are dangerous," Draghi said at a news conference after the ECB's regular monetary policy meeting. Draghi suggested a unilateral approach on

ary's employment report, which is scheduled for release today, as it falls outside the survey period. Claims mostly declined in February, leading economists to expect another month of strong job growth.

According to a Reuters survey of economists, the Labor Department's closely followed employment report will likely show that non-farm payrolls increased by 200,000 jobs last month, matching January's gains. The unemployment rate is forecast falling one-tenth of a percentage point to 4.0 percent, which would be the lowest level since December 2000.

The dollar held at slightly lower levels against a basket of currencies after the data. Prices for US Treasuries were little moved. US stock index futures were mostly flat.

The Labor Department said claims for Maine and Colorado were estimated last week. It also said claims-taking procedures in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands had still not returned to normal, months after the territories were slammed by Hurricanes Irma and Maria.

The four-week moving average of initial claims, viewed as a better measure of labor market trends as it irons out week-to-week volatility, rose 2,000 to 222,500 last week. The claims report also showed the number of people receiving benefits after an initial week of aid decreased 64,000 to 1.87 million in the week ended Feb. 24. The four-week moving average of the so-called continuing claims fell 14,250 to 1.91 million. —Reuters



**FRANKFURT:** Mario Draghi, President of the European Central Bank (ECB), addresses the media during a press conference following the meeting of the Governing Council in Frankfurt yesterday. —AFP

trade matters, however, reflected badly on the state of diplomatic relations between countries.

### Dichotomy

The dichotomy facing the ECB is that while growth has blown past expectations, inflation remains weak, having hit a 14-month low in February and staying well short of its target of almost 2 percent, the bank's sole mandate.

While the bloc's five-year growth run and a rapid drop in unemployment suggest that inflation will

eventually rise, its rebound is still months away, complicated by the euro's rise against the dollar, which puts a lid on price growth. Launched amid fears of deflation, the ECB's quantitative easing scheme depressed borrowing costs and induced firms to borrow and invest. While the deflation threat is long gone, the euro's volatility risks derailing the bank's efforts. Indeed, while economists polled by Reuters expect bond buying to conclude at the end of this year, a first interest rate increase is expected only in the second quarter of 2019. —Reuters

## US weekly jobless claims back off 48-year low

**WASHINGTON:** The number of Americans filing for unemployment benefits rebounded last week from a more than 48-year low, but the trend continued to point to robust labor market conditions.

That was underscored by other data yesterday showing job cuts announced by US-based employers fell 20 percent in February. Federal Reserve officials consider the labor market to be near or a little beyond full employment. The tight jobs market is seen boosting wage growth and spurring inflation. Initial claims for state unemployment benefits increased 21,000 to a seasonally adjusted 231,000 for the week ended March 3, the Labor Department said. Claims dropped to 210,000 in the prior week, which was the lowest level since December 1969.

Economists polled by Reuters had forecast claims rising to 220,000 in the latest week. It was the 157th straight week that claims remained below the 300,000 threshold, which is associated with a strong labor market. That is the longest such stretch since 1970, when the labor market was much smaller.

The claims data has no impact on Febru-

## Asia-Pacific trade deal: Life goes on without Trump

**PARIS:** A slimmed-down trade pact signed yesterday will allow eleven Asia-Pacific nations to push forward with economic integration in the face of greater US protectionism, even if the new deal will offer less benefits than originally hoped. Originally called the Trans-Pacific Partnership, it was left for dead after newly-elected US President Donald Trump pulled out to pursue his "America First" agenda before the pact could take effect.

"The world will not stop simply because of US disengagement," wrote Yoichi Funabashi, chairman of the Asia Pacific Initiative think tank said in a recent commentary published in the Washington Post. But Japan sought to revive the deal, picking up support from Canada, Australia and Chile, host to the signing of the rebaptised Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP). The signing of the deal comes just as the Trump Administration plans to slap tariffs on imports of aluminum and steel entering the United States.

It was the United States which initially pushed for the pact, signed in February 2016 when Barack Obama was still in the White House. The TPP would have covered 40 percent of the global economy and nearly one-quarter of its trade. Without the United States, the new pact is worth less than half of that value — 15 to 18 percent of global gross domestic product (GDP). The 11 nations signing the CPTPP are also only expecting half of the boost they were under the TPP.

"One point of GDP instead of two initially expected," said Julien Marcilly, chief economist at the credit insurance firm Coface.

"The impact is certainly less than expected, but the agreement deserves to exist and enter into force relatively quickly," he added.

Moreover, ratification should be quicker without Washington, he said, noting the free trade agreement between the United States and Colombia took six years to enter into force after its signature in 2006. Experts believe that notwithstanding the absence of the United States, the CPTPP is important. "It is still a huge agreement," said one international trade specialist on condition of anonymity. "More so because liberalization of global trade is blocked at the World Trade Organization and it has to take the form of successive regional agreements" like the CPTPP, said the expert. —AFP

## Business

# China Feb exports surge most in 3 years as trade war fears build

## Strong trade shows domestic, global economy resilience

**BEIJING:** China's exports unexpectedly surged at the fastest pace in three years in February, suggesting both its economy and global growth remain resilient even as trade relations with the United States rapidly deteriorate. Trade tensions have jumped to the top of the list of risks facing China this year, with planned US tariffs on steel and aluminum signalling more measures may be on the way, Zhou Hao, senior emerging markets economist at Commerzbank, told the Reuters Global Markets Forum this week.

China's February exports rose 44.5 percent from a year earlier, far more than analysts' median forecast for a 13.6 percent increase and January's 11.1 percent gain, official data showed yesterday.

Imports grew 6.3 percent, missing forecasts for 9.7 percent growth and down from a sharper-than-expected 36.9 percent jump in January. Analysts caution that Chinese data

early in the year can be heavily distorted by the timing of the Lunar New Year holiday, which fell in February this year but in January in 2017.

But combined January-February data also showed a dramatic acceleration in export growth, good news for Beijing as it tries to crack down on risks in the financial system without sharply braking economic activity. Exports rose 24.4 percent in Jan-Feb on-year, eclipsing 10.8 percent in December and up from single-digit growth in the same period last

year. The gains came despite a much stronger yuan currency which is worrying the country's exporters.

"The broad-based recovery in China's major export markets could explain part of the reason why exports were still quite strong," said Betty Wang, senior China economist at ANZ in Hong Kong.

But tension with the US "is definitely a near-term concern and a near-term downside risk to China's trade outlook," she added. China's goods surplus with the United States, a sore spot in relations between the two nations, narrowed slightly last month but is higher so far this year than at the same point last year.

China's trade surplus with the US was \$20.96 billion in February compared with \$21.895 billion in January. Boosted by a global trade boom, China's exports last year grew the fastest since 2013 and served as one of the key drivers behind the economy's forecast-beating 6.9 percent expansion.

But tough US trade talk last year is now turning into action, clouding the outlook for a repeat performance. President Donald Trump is expected to sign a proclamation on Thursday or Friday to establish the steel and aluminum tariffs, to counter cheap imports, especially from China, though close US allies may get exemptions. The measures are expected to go into effect in about two weeks, but economists see little immediate impact on China.

**Trade surplus up almost 44% in January**



**SHANDONG:** A crane loads and lifts shipping containers at a port in Qingdao in China's eastern Shandong province yesterday. China's trade surplus with the United States narrowed for a second month in a row in February. —AFP

China has already reduced steel exports to the US to a trickle in response to strong demand at home and US anti-dumping duties, and while aluminum shipments account for around 10 percent of its global exports of the metal, the number is still small compared with China's total exports, according to ING economist Iris Pang. "All in all, the direct impact on China is minimal," Pang said in a note published yesterday. While China's global steel exports have dropped by almost a third this year, tariffs on aluminum may be an easier sell for Trump, as China's

shipments increased over 35 percent in the first two months of the year. Over time, however, any additional punitive US measures and retaliations by China or its other major trading partners would reduce global trade flows, disrupt international supply chains and drag on global growth. China may be far more vulnerable to US plans to combat intellectual property theft, which could hit its sales of hi-tech, high-value products. China's global tech exports saw strong double-digit gains in the first two months of this year. —Reuters

## PNB fraud accused Choksi says Indian authorities ignoring due process

**MUMBAI:** Mehul Choksi, the jeweler accused of being a central figure in an alleged fraud of nearly \$2 billion against Punjab National Bank, criticized India's investigating agencies in a letter alleging gross abuse of due process in the ongoing probe. In a letter to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), one of the lead agencies probing the alleged loan fraud, Choksi said the seizure of his assets, bank accounts and the shutting down of all his offices in India has caused prejudice against him. In the letter dated March 7, which was reviewed by Reuters yesterday, Choksi said investigating agencies were acting with pre-determined minds and interfering with the course of justice.

In what has been dubbed the biggest fraud in India's banking history, Punjab National Bank (PNB) and police have accused two jewelry groups - one controlled by diamond tycoon Nirav Modi and the other by his uncle Choksi - of colluding with some bank employees to secure credit from overseas banks using fraudulent guarantees.

Choksi, who heads Gitanjali Gems, which operates stores under banners including Gili, Nakshatra and Asmi, said in his letter that while the CBI has seized his assets, it has yet to submit a "Seizure Memo" in court, as required by law. Choksi, who authorities say left India before the complaint against him was filed and whose passport has been suspended, said he feared greatly that he would not get "fair treatment and a fair trial" if he returned.

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. The whereabouts of Choksi and Modi, who police say also left India in January, are unknown. A spokesman for the CBI said he did not have any immediate comment on Choksi's letter. Choksi said in the letter he had travelled abroad on business before the complaints were made and his departure was not "a direct result" of the allegations against him.

Local media reported last week that a Mumbai court issued non-bailable arrest warrants against Modi and Choksi following an appeal by the Enforcement Directorate (ED), an Indian agency focused on foreign exchange and money laundering offences. Choksi said in the letter that he had undergone a cardiac procedure during the first week of February and he was unable to travel for at least four to six months as the procedure was yet to be completed. He did not say where he was. —Reuters

## No trade war yet with US due to planned tariffs: German minister

**BERLIN:** German Economy Minister Brigitte Zypries said yesterday a trade war had not yet erupted due to US President Donald Trump's planned steel and aluminum tariffs but she said they were an irritation and the European Union should respond.

Speaking on German broadcaster ARD, the outgoing minister said: "I wouldn't say it's a clear-

cut trade war now - it's not there yet if we're only talking about a few products."

But she added that the proposed tariffs amounted to "real irritation". Trump was expected to sign a presidential proclamation to establish the tariffs yesterday, but a White House official said later it could slide into today because documents had to be cleared through a legal process.

"All you can do is basically keep saying to Mr Trump: Leave it be because only free trade can ensure that the world's countries can work with each other really well and understand each other," Zypries said.

The European Union needs to respond if Trump imposes the tariffs and would have to file a complaint at the World Trade Organization, Zypries said. But she also stressed that it was important to keep talking to the US government. —Reuters

## Thai king to replace father on new banknotes

**BANGKOK:** Thailand's central bank displayed new banknotes yesterday on which a picture of King Maha Vajiralongkorn will replace one of his late father, King Bhumibol Adulyadej.

The banknotes mark another step in the transition of King Maha Vajiralongkorn, 65, who took the throne in December 2016 and has increas-

ingly asserted his power but has yet to set a date for his coronation. The king's father was widely revered in Thailand and many Thais wore black through a year of mourning that ended with his cremation last October. King Bhumibol had appeared on banknotes through the seven decades of his rule.

"In future, we will only be printing the new banknotes," Central Bank Governor Veerathai Santiprabhob told reporters. Current bank notes will remain legal tender and the new ones are the same sizes and colors. The first batch of the new notes featuring King Maha Vajiralongkorn in air force uniform, will be in circulation from April 6. —Reuters

## Business

Friday, March 9, 2018

# ACICO to distribute 10% cash dividend, 5% shares in subsidiary

## Net profit to shareholders of parent company reaches KD 5.13m

**KUWAIT:** During its FY2017 Annual General Meeting (AGM) held yesterday, shareholders of ACICO Industries Company approved the Board of Directors' recommendation to distribute 10 percent cash dividend (10 fils per share), 5 percent bonus shares (5 fils per share), in addition to 5 percent of shares owned by ACICO Industries in its subsidiary, ACICO Construction. A shareholder holding 62 shares in ACICO Industries will receive a share in ACICO Construction, which has a capital of KD13 million.

ACICO Industries had announced for the financial year ended December 31, 2017 a net profit of KD5.13 million and earnings per share (EPS) of 17.04 fils.

ACICO Industries Chairman, Abdul Aziz Ahmed Abdullah Al-Ayyoub, said: "Despite challenges that have affected the regional market throughout 2017, specifically the ongoing geopolitical instability, the Company has successfully improved its operational performance and financial position by diversifying its sources of income and maintaining the high quality of its products and services. ACICO Industries ended the year with positive results that reflect its growth journey since its establishment."



**Total  
operating  
revenues  
KD107.7m**

ACICO Industries is today one of the leading integrated construction companies in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, specializing in engineering, contracting, production of cement and building materials, as well as the development and management of properties.

For the financial year ended December 31, 2017, ACICO Industries announced:

- Net profit to the shareholders of the parent company: KD5.13 million

- EPS: 17.04 fils
- Shareholders' equity: KD115.49 million
- Total assets: KD407.71 million
- Total operating revenues: KD107.7 million, up 9 percent from 2016

- Net operating profit: KD18.36 million

On his part, ACICO Industries Vice Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Ghassan Ahmed Saud Al-Khaled, said: "The Company saw a 9 percent increase in its net operating profit, which was mainly driven by the increased demand on its cement as it became listed as a state-subsidized material provided to citizens for the construction of private houses, further boosting confidence in our



KUWAIT: ACICO Industries Chairman Abdul Aziz Ahmed Abdullah Al-Ayyoub addresses the annual general meeting (AGM) yesterday.

product and enabling us to acquire more market share. Our bottom line has however seen a slight decrease from the previous year due to an increase in financing costs and a slight decrease in revenues from properties."

### Outlook

Al-Ayyoub concluded: "The Company continues to execute its regional growth strategy for the coming years, supported by a strong

and solid foundation built over the years, taking into consideration local and regional developments and the long-term outlook in the sector. Moving forward, we've adopted a sound governance policy that sets procedures and good practices to guide, manage and control our business lines, ultimately ensuring the highest level of transparency and fairness in achieving the Company's objectives and those of our stakeholders."

## US isolationist on trade, but financially dependent on rest of the world

**LONDON:** Just as the United States is isolating itself on the global trade stage, its financial dependence on the rest of the world may be about to increase.

Figures on Wednesday showed that the US trade deficit in January was the widest in more than nine years at \$56.6 billion. A day earlier, Donald Trump's top economic adviser Gary Cohn resigned after he lost a fight over the president's plans for hefty steel and aluminum import tariffs.

With Trump determined to press ahead with his protectionist agenda, major trading partners like China and Europe are likely to retaliate. Global trade tensions are escalating rapidly. Not only is the trade deficit widening, Trump's tax cuts and spending plans will blow out the budget deficit too, requiring overseas investors to buy up larger amounts of the increased debt load Treasury will issue.

Foreigners' willingness to fund Uncle Sam's largesse has been a topic of hot debate for much of the last 20 years as the current account deficit, and to a lesser extent the budget deficit, have widened. The ebb and flow of that demand has played an important role in determining the dol-

lar's value on the world's foreign exchanges, especially in the mid-2000s when both deficits widened rapidly in tandem. US deficits may have played a diminished role for the dollar in the years following the crisis to around 2014 as these deficits shrank. The dollar rose 30 percent in the three years from 2014 to 2016, whittling away FX intervention-fueled demand for US bonds from foreign central banks.

But the deficits are widening again and the Fed is reducing its bond portfolio, meaning the market may need to absorb Treasury bond issuance worth around 5 percent of GDP or higher.

The dollar is down 15 percent in barely a year, and President Trump's desire to impose tariffs on a range of US imports has fueled talk of a global trade war. Will foreign investors, private and official sector, step up?

### Watch FX reserves

Former Treasury Secretary Larry Summers this week warned that, based on current bond yield differentials, the dollar could lose a quarter of its value against its major peers over the next decade.

"The confidence of global markets is much easier to maintain than to regain. Currency markets are sending a signal that the US is not on a healthy path," Summers said. A perception has formed that foreigners have been selling US bonds for some time, a view strengthened by the dollar's slide and spike in bond yields. The greenback fell 10 percent last year, its biggest annual fall since 2003, and the 10-year Treasury yield is up over 80 basis points since September. —Reuters

## EU says finance sector ready for disorderly Brexit

**LONDON:** Financial businesses have realistic expectations about serving European Union customers after Britain leaves the bloc next year and could deal with a so-called hard Brexit, a top EU official said yesterday. The EU was not being threatening towards Britain by preparing for a possible "cliff edge" Brexit, European Commission Vice President Jyrki Katainen told reporters in Brussels.

"It would be completely irresponsible to create an atmosphere where we can say, don't worry, everything will go well and smoothly because we simply don't know," Katainen said.

The EU has told the financial sector to prepare for a smooth or hard Brexit, even if the bloc's aim is to obtain a good trade agreement with Britain, he added. "The feedback from the financial sector itself is that they are prepared, they are realistic not to take too much risk as their duty is to serve their clients," Katainen said.

Many banks and insurance companies in Britain are applying for licenses to open or expand hubs in the EU to avoid rupturing links with customers.

"After Brexit there is a big discontinuity in all the trade and services, but we still have a large market and it's supposed to be an interesting opportunity for all the financial institutions," Katainen said.

"Also in the future, I suppose we try to keep interconnections between EU and UK-based financial sector," Katainen said. European Commission Vice President Valdis Dombrovskis told the same news conference he has not seen any financial instability due to Brexit, and an orderly departure remains the baseline scenario.

On Wednesday, Britain's finance minister Philip Hammond called on the EU to agree to a "mutual recognition" pact for financial services with the bloc and Britain accepting each other's rules to avoid fragmenting markets.

Brussels said a traditional free trade deal, which typically does not include financial services, is on the table. "Our existing trade agreements give a flavor of how it could look like, but anyway it's less than being part of the single market and it has an impact on the financial sector too," Katainen said.

It was difficult to see how any UK sector would be better placed in the EU than it is at the moment, Katainen said. "It's the first time we negotiate a trade agreement in order to make trade conditions worse. Always, when we negotiate with third countries, the aim is to improve market access and regulatory environment, and this time it's the other way round." —Reuters

# Osaka too strong for former world No 1 Maria Sharapova

## Sharapova crashes out of Indian Wells

**CALIFORNIA:** Former world number one Maria Sharapova lost her second consecutive first round match with a 6-4 6-4 defeat to Japan's Naomi Osaka at the BNP Paribas Open in California on Wednesday. Sharapova, who returned to tennis last April following a 15-month doping ban, continued to struggle to find form this season as she dug herself into an early hole and never fully recovered.

Now ranked 41st in the world, Sharapova fought back from early breaks in both sets but ultimately came up short on the key points in a performance that saw her commit six double faults and lose five service games to her 20-year-old opponent. "I knew (Sharapova) would fight for everything because I've watched her since I was little," world number 44 Osaka said in a court-side interview after winning the first meeting between the pair. "I was just really honored to play her." A two-time champion at Indian Wells, Sharapova won the Tianjin Open in October for her first triumph since returning to the WTA Tour, but has not come close to challenging for a tournament victory since.



### American teen Anisimova records breakthrough win

In earlier action, American teenager Amanda Anisimova recorded her first top-level victory with a 6-2 6-2 thrashing of Pauline Parmentier. The 16-year-old's poised and polished performance came in stark contrast to the dismal display of Canadian Eugenie Bouchard, who was humbled 6-3 6-4 by American qualifier Sachia Vickery. Anisimova, the junior women's US Open champion, was stronger than the 32-year-old Parmentier in every facet of the game on the slow hard court in Indian Wells.

"It's very exciting. I've worked really hard for this so I'm proud of myself," Anisimova told Tennis Channel, adding that adjusting to the senior ranks had been more mental than physical. "The biggest thing is being tough mentally. I've learned about how to just be stronger during matches." She will face Russia's 23rd seed Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova in the second round. Switzerland's Belinda Bencic, who was also a teenage prodigy but has had her career blighted by injury, also advanced by overcoming an awful start and seeing off a



**CALIFORNIA:** Naomi Osaka of Japan stretches to return a serve against Maria Sharapova of Russia during Day 3 of the BNP Paribas Open on March 7, 2018 in Indian Wells. —AFP

match point to beat Hungarian Timea Babos 1-6 6-1 7-6(4).

Former world number five Bouchard was outclassed by 100th-ranked Vickery in her first match since reaching a settlement with the US Tennis Association (USTA) over a locker room fall during the 2015 US Open. Her weak second serve was particularly costly as

Vickery pounced time and again in front of a sparse late-afternoon crowd on centre court. All eyes will be on Serena Williams on Thursday when the American plays in her first singles event since giving birth last September, the two-time champion starting her campaign against Zarina Diyas of Kazakhstan in a first round encounter. —Reuters

## Serena Williams eager to hit with big guns again

**INDIAN WELLS:** Serena Williams is through taking baby steps on the comeback trail after the birth of her daughter Alexis Olympia in September. The 23-time Grand Slam singles winner is ramping up her return this week by playing in Indian Wells, her first WTA Tour event since she won the 2017 Australian Open. After a couple of exhibitions and a Davis Cup doubles match, Williams is eager to hit with the big guns as she opens her campaign on Thursday night against Zarina Diyas.

"I'm ready to just jump in and get started and see what happens," the 36-year-old American told the Wall Street Journal on Wednesday. "Obviously I'm going to have a few hiccups, I would imagine, and I'm ready for that." Earlier this week she played one tiebreaker in an exhibition tournament in New York. In February she played a doubles rubber for the US Fed Cup team, and took part in another exhibition in Abu Dhabi in late December. Indian Wells features a star-studded women's field in a tournament that looks wide open.

Many of the players on Wednesday said they welcomed Serena's return. "We are all going to look to see how she is playing," said reigning Wim-

bledon champion Garbine Muguruza. "She is one of the best players so it is good that she is back, especially after being a mom. It is great." French Open champion Jelena Ostapenko said Serena's contribution to women's tennis cannot be overstated. "She is an amazing athlete," said sixth seeded Latvian Ostapenko. "She is a very special and what she has done for women's tennis is huge."

### Pliskova doubts

But Czech fifth seed Karolina Pliskova said it is going to take more than one WTA event for Serena to get back in championship form. "Obviously it is tough to get back even for a champion like her," Pliskova said Wednesday. "I don't have that experience with having a baby, but I think it changes the body and the mindset a lot. "We will see in the first round. For sure she is going to be a little bit nervous. I don't know what kind of shape she is in and if she was practicing or not practicing."

"She can play good tennis again but I don't know if it is going to be at this tournament maybe it will take her a while." The first clues to Williams' form will be displayed in Thursday's night game against Diyas, Serena's first match in Indian Wells will be Thursday night against Diyas, the 24-year-old world number 53 from Kazakhstan. Serena boycotted this event, with her sister Venus, for 14 years after she was booed in the 2001 final. She returned in 2015 but had to pull out before her semi-final against Simona Halep with a knee problem. —AFP

## Swiss star Federer showing no signs of slowing down

**INDIAN WELLS:** Roger Federer, who regained the world Number One ranking last month, is on a quest to make history in the California desert by winning an unprecedented sixth Indian Wells title. The 36-year-old Swiss marvel continues to defy the aging process, claiming his 20th Grand Slam title and sixth Australian Open crown in January. He has enjoyed a perfect start to 2018 by winning both events he has competed in and taking his career singles title tally to 97.

"He shows there is no limit," said third-seeded Grigor Dimitrov on Wednesday. "He keeps on proving it every year on the tour." Federer opens the defence of his Indian Wells title by playing a second-round match against either American Ryan Harrison or Federico Delbonis of Argentina. He also won this tournament three straight years beginning in 2004, and in 2012 as well as last year. Federer comes into the elite event as the oldest ATP Number One in history. In the Open era, only American Jimmy Connors has won more titles than Federer, with 109.

Federer has played two tournaments this year and won both—the other being the Rotterdam Open. "For me to stand right here as world Number One in San Jose is very, very special for me," Federer said at a charity event in San Jose, California on Monday. Federer is not alone in his hunt for a sixth Indian Wells crown when the men's

draw kicks off yesterday. Serbian Novak Djokovic, who is making his first return to the Tour since the Australian Open, is also a five-time Indian Wells champion and would like nothing more than to announce his return from an elbow injury by going all the way.

Both players are in opposite halves of the draw so they would not meet each other until the final. Djokovic won Indian Wells in 2008, 2011, 2014, 2015 and 2016. Djokovic, who is seeded 10th, has a bye and will face the winner of a first-round match between two qualifiers in his opener. He is in the same half of the draw as Argentina's Juan Martin del Potro, who is fresh off a win in the Mexican Open in Acapulco last weekend. Del Potro, who made the Indian Wells final in 2013, said Wednesday he is healthier than he has been in years and full of confidence from his Mexico success.

### Del Potro confident

Del Potro defeated the hard-serving Kevin Anderson 6-4, 6-4 in the final to claim his first title of 2018 and post his seventh-straight career victory over Anderson. The 29-year-old del Potro recorded his 21st career ATP title but this is one of his biggest in years and the earliest he has hoisted a trophy since the 2014 season. "I had a lot of tough opponents during Acapulco," said del Potro. "I got a lot of confidence." His tough draw in Acapulco should serve him well this week. If del Potro gets through his opening second-round match as expected, he will likely face Spaniard David Ferrer, whom he also had to beat in Acapulco. Besides Djokovic, that quarter of the draw includes Japan's Kei Nishikori, second seeded Marin Cilic and American favourite John Isner. —AFP

## Sports

# Chess victories win Pakistan's 'Queens of Karachi' freedom

## Pakistani schoolgirl winning 3rd victory in a row

**KARACHI:** Peering at the chess board from behind her spectacles, 14-year-old Pakistani schoolgirl Maleeha Ali deftly put her opponent's king in checkmate, winning her third victory in a row. With a score of 24-4, her team of blue-and-white uniformed teenagers from SMB Fatima Jinnah Government Girls School in Karachi, Pakistan's biggest city, trounced a group of boys from a prestigious private school.

"You have to watch your opponent's every move from every angle," said Ali, sitting on a high stool. With echoes of Uganda's "Queen of Katwe", the Pakistani teens have defied expectations about girls in their conservative nation by thrashing men nearly twice their age at chess. "These girls always give us a tough time," said Foad Abdullah, 15, from BVS Parsi High School who lost six of his eight games to the girls.

Like Phiona Mutesi - whose rise from a Ugandan slum to international chess championships inspired the 2016 Disney film - Pakistan's chess queens have beaten the odds to succeed. About 23 million children do not go to school in Pakistan, half of them girls who often marry before the age of 18, miss out on education because they have to work or cannot commute long distances because it is not safe. The majority of children who go to school attend government institutions, which often have dilapidated facilities and poor attendance rates by teachers.

“Maleeha Ali deftly put her opponent's king in checkmate”

### Chess master

Karachi's chess queens have a distinct advantage. They are being trained by Pakistan's former international chess master Shahzad Mirza, a keen promoter of the game in schools across the country, better known for its love of cricket. Most of the girls can outshine men in national tournaments, he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. "These girls have won the top five positions so many times, I've lost count," he said with pride. Chess is also a compulsory subject for girls in grades 4 to 8 in the school, which is in Karachi's old city Garden area.

Their success has boosted their self-belief, according to their coach Hira Sher Mohammad, 23, a former student. "When the girls win against boys, you should see how ecstatic they are," she said. "It is

the consistent victory that has brought about a change - girls have become confident and parents have come around too," she added. "When these girls go to play matches outside the school premises, they have no problem getting permission from their parents."

### Strategic thinkers

SMB Fatima Jinnah school has a second celebrity backer in the form of the Zindagi Trust, a charity run by Pakistani singer Shehzad Roy to improve the quality of education. "Chess is not just a game," he said. "It will help these girls ... when they have to make important decisions or handle tough situations in their lives." Chess can



**KARACHI:** The all-girl chess team of SMB Fatima Jinnah Government Girls School. — Reuters

help to produce "strategic thinkers and problem solvers who will tackle complex issues affecting Pakistan or even the world", said Roy, who has been honored by the government for his humanitarian work. The school is one of about 600 in southern Sindh province - one of the poorest regions of Pakistan - that is part of the Adopt-A-School program, which aims to improve facilities in government schools. One of the chess queens,

15-year-old Bushra Maqsood has been chosen to take part in the Seeds of Peace camp in the United States in June, which brings together teenagers from countries in conflict to encourage dialogue and understanding. Although she has never left Pakistan or been on a plane and speaks only a smattering of English, she is not anxious. "I think I will manage," she said, beaming confidently.— Reuters

## Things to watch in Super Rugby

**HONG KONG:** A massive clash in New Zealand tops the bill in the latest round of Super Rugby fixtures. Here are five things to look for this weekend:

### Bake-off at the Cake Tin

Reigning champions Canterbury Crusaders suffered only one defeat last year, and that was against the 2016 Super Rugby winners the Hurricanes in Wellington's Westpac Stadium, affectionately known as the Cake Tin. They head back for the great New Zealand bake-off depleted by the loss of fly-half Richie Mo'unga, who has undergone surgery on the jaw he fractured against the Western Stormers. The Hurricanes jumped straight on a plane after beating the Jaguars in Buenos Aires last weekend for the long journey home across 16 time zones as they aim to conquer jetlag and extend their home stranglehold over the Crusaders, who haven't won in Wellington since 2012.

### Sharks or Sunwolves off the mark?

Japan's Sunwolves swap Tokyo for Durban as they look for

a first victory of the season against the winless Coastal Sharks. The sides have met twice before with the Sharks, who drew at home to NSW Waratahs last week, coming out on top both times. The Sharks are desperate to get off the mark before a tough trip to face ACT Brumbies, Melbourne Rebels and Auckland Blues in consecutive away matches. "We know we have a lot to work on after last week and this game against the Sunwolves is one that we need to really nail down so that we can gain some confidence," said kicking coach Braam van Straaten on the Sport24 website.

### Star-studded Rebels

The new-look Melbourne Rebels are hoping to make it three wins in a row for the first time at the start of a Super Rugby season when they host the ACT Brumbies toady. The Rebels ran in six tries in last week's 37-17 win over the Sunwolves, but coach Dave Wessels thinks his star-studded backs featuring Wallabies Will Genia, Dane Haylett-Petty, Reece Hodge and Sefa Naivalu can do more. "We've got some firepower in our team and we need to come up with a mindset that we want to attack games," said Wessels on the team website. "There's a subtle difference between playing to win versus playing not to lose. And we want to be a team that plays to win."

### Super Mario turns on 'Tahs

The Jaguars have suffered three straight defeats under

their new coach, the Argentine forward great Mario Ledesma, but the NSW Waratahs are expecting a torrid examination from the team drilled by their former scrum guru. Ledesma was credited for turning around the Wallabies' international scrummaging woes when he was brought in by Michael Cheika from the 'Tahs, whose prop Tom Robertson is expecting a tough time in Buenos Aires. "The Argentines love their scrums so we are definitely expecting a big battle up front there," Robertson said. "Mario is one of the legends of the game. You don't play in four or five World Cups and play for your country at such a high level without learning a few things."

### 'Special' milestone for Barrett

Beauden Barrett will make his 100th appearance for the Wellington Hurricanes in front of his home fans when he lines up against Mo'unga's replacement, Mitch Hunt, on Saturday. The world player of the year in 2016 and 2017, Barrett made his Canes debut in Bloemfontein against the Cheetahs in 2011, and has scored more than 1,000 points in Super Rugby. "It was always a dream to play a game for the Hurricanes and for it to be my hundredth this weekend is very special," the 26-year-old said. He is the 12th Hurricanes player to reach the milestone after Dane Coles, Andrew Hore, Cory Jane, Ma'a Nonu, Julian Savea, Conrad Smith, Rodney So'oialo, Jeremy Thrush, Neemia Tialata, Tana Umaga and Victor Vito.— AFP

Sports

# From China to the World Cup? Oscar eyes end to Brazil exile

Former Chelsea star made it 5 goals in 2 games

SHANGHAI: Oscar said he's hoping to force his way back into the Brazil squad for this year's World Cup after the former Chelsea star made it five goals in two games for Shanghai SIPG. The attacking midfielder, who moved to the Chinese Super League (CSL) last year for an Asian-record 60 million euros from Chelsea, has not been picked for Brazil since October 2016.

But with the World Cup in Russia less than 100 days away, the 26-year-old has made a spectacular start to the new season in China, scoring a hat-trick in SIPG's opener at the weekend in an 8-0 thrashing of Dalian Yifang. He followed that up with both goals in a 2-2

home draw with Ulsan Hyundai of South Korea in the AFC Champions League on Wednesday and said afterwards: "I am very happy that I am in good form.



Oscar hoping to force his way back into Brazil squad

"I have played for the Brazilian national team for five years and this year is World Cup year so I think I have the opportunity to go for that. "What I need to do is keep in good form for SIPG and keep playing the way I am now." SIPG coach Vitor

Pereira also pushed Oscar's hopes of ending his time in the international wilderness, saying: "Oscar is a player who can make me smile all the time during the game. "Oscar's ability is beyond doubt. If I was coach of Brazil, he would

definitely be selected. "As the coach of SIPG, I am very happy working with him." Oscar has 48 caps and 12 goals for Brazil, but national coach Tite appears unconvinced and already has a wealth of attacking options.

There were suggestions that Oscar ruined his chances of playing again for his country when he moved to China. However, Tite started midfielder Renato Augusto of Beijing Guoan for Brazil's friendly against England in November, and previously selected Shandong Luneng forward Diego Tardelli. Midfielder Paulinho was a mainstay of the Brazil team when he moved from Guangzhou Evergrande to Barcelona last summer. SIPG striker Hulk has not played for Brazil since June 2016 but will also be hoping to catch Tite's eye as the clock counts down to the World Cup in June. Brazil are in Group E in Russia with Switzerland, Costa Rica and Serbia.—AFP



Matches on TV  
(Local Timings)

SPANISH LEAGUE	
Girona v Deportivo	23:00
beIN SPORTS HD 3	
ITALIAN LEAGUE	
Roma v Torino	22:45
beIN SPORTS	
GERMAN BUNDESLIGA	
FSV Mainz 05 v Schalke 04	22:30
beIN SPORTS HD 5	
FRENCH LEAGUE	
Strasbourg v Monaco	22:45
beIN SPORTS HD 6	

# Sports media course



By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: A sports media course was concluded yesterday at the Abdallah Al-Salem Leaders Preparation Center under the patronage of Director General of Sports Public Authority Dr Humoud Fulaiteh, PAS Public Relations and Information Director Khalid Al-Subaie and representative of President of the Asian Association of Sports Media. Dr Fulaiteh said he was happy with the event, urging the media to always promote sporting activities. Participants include representatives from the newspaper, radio, electronic and social media.



## Sports

# Barca begin home stretch to Liga title at freefalling Malaga

## Barcelona stretch their lead to eight points

**BARCELONA:** After seeing off their nearest challengers, Barcelona begin the home straight towards a 25th La Liga title away at bottom club Malaga tomorrow. Barca's 1-0 win over second-placed Atletico Madrid at the Nou Camp last week stretched their lead at the league's summit to eight points as well as securing a superior head-to-head record over their rivals. They now need eight wins and a draw from their remaining 11 fixtures to reclaim the title.

Malaga were the last team to beat Barca in the league, delivering the final bullet to their title aspirations in April last year with a 2-0 win in which Brazil's Neymar was dismissed for the Catalans. The Andalusian side have undergone vast changes since then, however.

Only six players who started that game remain at the club while coach Michel has also departed. He was sacked in January in a bid to revive the team's fortunes but his successor Jose Gonzalez has not managed to win a game and has lost six in a row.

They are rock bottom with 13 points, eight

adrift of the safety zone and look destined for a return to Spain's second tier for the first time in a decade. By contrast, Ernesto Valverde's Barca side are on an unbeaten run of 34 league games and have Real Sociedad's Liga record of 38 without defeat in their sights. They will have one eye, however, on their Champions League last-16 second leg with Chelsea on Wednesday, with the tie finely balanced at 1-1. They will be without right back Nelson Semedo and midfielders Denis Suarez and Andres Iniesta, with the latter battling a hamstring problem to be fit in time to play against Chelsea.

Atletico coach Diego Simeone said after the defeat at the Nou Camp that he could not envisage Barca throwing away their lead at the top of the standings, but his side will aim to keep up their faint hopes of staying in the title race when they host Celta Vigo on Sunday. Champions Real Madrid are 15 points behind Barca and seven back from Atletico but their confidence should be high after sealing their place in the Champions League quarter-finals

“Barca see off their nearest challengers”

”



**BARCELONA:** Barcelona's Uruguayan forward Luis Suarez gestures during the Spanish league football match FC Barcelona against Club Atletico de Madrid at the Camp Nou stadium in Barcelona on March 04, 2018. — AFP

by seeing off Paris St Germain 5-2 on aggregate. Zinedine Zidane's side visit tiny Eibar, who have the smallest ground in the league but have

punched above their weight to climb into eighth in the standings, one point outside the European places.— Reuters

## Bayern's relentless title march closes on destination

**BERLIN:** The Bundesliga title race has been a virtual one-horse race since Bayern Munich took over top spot in late October and the defending champions are now just a matter of days away from a record-extending sixth consecutive league crown. Bayern should make light work of relegation candidates Hamburg SV tomorrow but will need to wait at least until next week to mathematically seal a 28th German league title, their 27th since the introduction of the Bundesliga in 1963. The Bavarians, who remain on track for a league, cup and Champions League treble, are a staggering 20 points clear at the top with nine games left in the campaign. Schalke 04, who are in second place on 43 points, are in action at Mainz 05 on Friday.

“Our players need to stay healthy and fit,” Bayern coach Jupp Heynckes said this week. “They have to be more motivated and more passionate, and they have to work for each other. If we can get that out

of them, then we have a chance.” Keeping them motivated, however, is not an easy task with the Bavarians poised to lift another title as early as March. Former coach Pep Guardiola had a similar dominant season in 2013-14, also clinching the Bundesliga in March, but an inability to keep the players firing on all cylinders proved costly in their failed quest for a Champions League title.

Heynckes will not have Arjen Robben or James Rodriguez back against a Hamburg side who have not won in 12 matches, but the pair returned to training after recent injuries and will be a welcome addition to his attacking stocks in the coming weeks. Bayern travel to Turkey next week for their Champions League Round of 16 second leg against Besiktas, another virtual formality following a 5-0 victory in the home encounter. The side's league title is as certain as the departure of Heynckes at the end of the season, however, with the veteran having come out of retirement to replace sacked Carlo Ancelotti in October and instantly turning Bayern's season around.

“I came because Bayern were in a very difficult situation and in the short term could not sign a coach the club wanted,” the 72-year-old Heynckes said. “I will do this until the end of the season and then they will have to see how to go on. That was my agreement. I am always in favor of clear facts.” —Reuters

## USA down England to win SheBelieves Cup

**ORLANDO:** An own-goal from goalkeeper Karen Bardsley sent England spinning to defeat as the United States clinched the SheBelieves Cup on Wednesday with a 1-0 win over the Lionesses. England manager Phil Neville's first tournament in charge ended in disappointment after Megan Rapinoe's low cross took two deflections on its way into the net. Neville's side only needed a draw to win the competition outright but were ultimately overpowered by the reigning world champions who were deserving winners. England had arrived in Orlando in buoyant mood following a comprehensive win over France and a battling draw with Germany in early rounds of the four-nation tournament. The USA however were a bridge too far and the hosts dominated possession in the opening stages.

US star Carli Lloyd, who has scored goals in a World Cup final as well as the Olympic gold medal matches in 2008 and 2012, won her 250th cap here though was kept quiet early on. England finally made inroads into the hosts' defence on 20 minutes

when Fran Kirby wriggled free in the area but her cross was cleared to safety before Rapinoe flashed a shot wide as the game began to open up. The hosts pushed hard towards the end of the first half, England skipper Lucy Bronze keeping Lindsey Horan away from a cross while keeper Bardsley was on hand to divert a Rapinoe center away from danger. US midfielder Mallory Pugh then embarked on a dazzling run only to see her effort hit the outside of the post. And she went close two minutes after the restart, forcing Bardsley into another excellent stop. Neville threw on Barcelona forward Toni Duggan on 51 minutes in the hope of adding some impetus to an attack which was seeing little of the ball. It was Bardsley though who kept England in the game, this time denying the dangerous Rapinoe from close range following a mistake from captain Bronze. Duggan curled wide on 57 minutes though just a minute later, the US took the lead with a freakish own goal. Rapinoe's cross flew into the area and hit Abbie McManus on the back before Millie Bright's attempted clearance missed and the ball diverted in via Bardsley. England pushed hard in the closing stages and Ellen White hit the post with four minutes left yet the USA held firm. In the early game, France finished their campaign on a victorious note on Wednesday, defeating Germany 3-0.

Amandine Henry, the French captain, had put her side ahead on 10 minutes, unleashing an unstoppable shot from 20 yards after being teed up by Eugenie Le Sommer. —AFP

# Conor Sheary lifts Penguins over Philadelphia Flyers 5-2

## Flames overwhelm Sabres 5-1

**PHILADELPHIA:** Conor Sheary scored two goals to lift the Pittsburgh Penguins past the Philadelphia Flyers 5-2 Wednesday night at the Wells Fargo Center. Jamie Oleksiak, Phil Kessel and Evgeni Malkin also scored for the Penguins. Pittsburgh goaltender Tristan Jarry stopped 26 shots in the win. Travis Konecny and Jakub Voracek each scored one goal for the Flyers. Petr Mrazek was the starting goaltender for Philadelphia and he struggled with only 23 saves on 27 shots.

### Flames 5, Sabres 1

Mark Giordano, Sam Bennett and Mark Jankowski all collected one goal and one assist as Calgary thumped Buffalo. The Flames snapped a four-game losing skid with the win at KeyBank Center, dominating the lowly Sabres from the drop of the puck. The only disappointment for the Flames was that goalie David Rittich, who made 25 saves, lost his bid for the first shutout of his NHL career with 17.1 seconds left in the affair.

### Coyotes 2, Canucks 1

Clayton Keller scored a goal and assisted on

the winner as the Arizona Coyotes edged the Vancouver Canucks 2-1 on Wednesday night. Derek Stepan's goal with :58 left in the third period gave the visiting Coyotes their ninth win in the past 13 games. With the win, Arizona moved out of a tie for last place overall with Buffalo. "We're really starting to play our systems and we're playing the right way," Keller told Sportsnet after the victory. Stepan put in a high shot from the slot after taking a long pass from Keller after he worked the puck along the boards.

### Coyotes edge the Vancouver Canucks 2-1

New York Islanders. The Canucks thought they had scored a shorthanded goal late in the first period as Brandon Sutter lifted a backhand over Darcy Kuemper on a breakaway. But the goal was waved off after a video review showed that the puck hit the crossbar and then slid along the goal line and out. Kuemper picked up the win in goal for the Coyotes as he blocked 16 of only 17

Vancouver shots. Jacob Markstrom took the loss while stopping 32 of 34 fired on his net. Despite the strong showing, he also got lucky as Arizona hit the post three times.

Keller officially opened the scoring on a power play at 18:22 of the first period as he put

his own rebound past Markstrom. Initially, it appeared that Markstrom had caught the puck as he made a sensational save, but the puck came loose and Vancouver defenseman Alex Edler could not cover the disk in time before Keller poked it in. — Agencies

## NHL results/standings

Calgary 5, Buffalo 1; Pittsburgh 5, Philadelphia 2; Arizona 2, Vancouver 1.

Eastern Conference							Western Conference						
Atlantic Division							Central Division						
	W	L	OTL	GF	GA	PTS							
Tampa Bay	46	17	4	245	186	96	Nashville	43	14	9	216	168	95
Boston	41	15	8	215	163	90	Winnipeg	40	17	9	223	175	89
Toronto	39	22	7	223	195	85	Minnesota	38	22	7	210	192	83
Florida	32	25	7	193	204	71	Dallas	37	24	6	195	176	80
Detroit	26	29	11	175	199	63	Colorado	35	24	7	206	195	77
Montreal	25	30	11	171	206	61	St. Louis	35	26	5	180	176	75
Ottawa	23	32	10	177	227	56	Chicago	29	30	8	190	196	66
Buffalo	21	35	11	160	219	53	Pacific Division						
Metropolitan Division							Las Vegas	42	19	5	226	184	89
Pittsburgh	39	25	4	224	205	82	Anaheim	34	21	12	190	183	80
Washington	37	22	7	203	197	81	San Jose	35	22	9	196	184	79
Philadelphia	34	22	11	199	198	79	Los Angeles	36	25	5	192	165	77
New Jersey	34	25	8	199	203	76	Calgary	33	25	10	193	200	76
Columbus	34	28	5	180	187	73	Edmonton	28	34	4	187	219	60
Carolina	29	27	11	178	204	69	Vancouver	25	33	9	181	219	59
NY Islanders	29	29	9	216	241	67	Arizona	21	34	11	160	214	53
NY Rangers	30	31	6	189	212	66	<b>Note:</b> Overtime losses (OTL) are worth one point in the standings and are not included in the loss column (L).						

## Tiger inspired by Mickelson, eyes Masters challenge

**MIAMI:** Tiger Woods is drawing inspiration from fellow veteran Phil Mickelson's win in Mexico last weekend as he plots the latest stage of his comeback this week ahead of next month's Masters. The 42-year-old former world number one will tee off in the PGA Tour's Valspar Championship on Thursday hoping to get more rounds under his belt heading into Augusta in three weeks' time. Woods has endured mixed results since returning to the tour this season, finishing tied for 23rd at Torrey Pines in January before missing the cut at Riviera in Los Angeles last month.

He followed that up with a 12th-place finish at the Honda Classic and is playing the Valspar at Tampa, Florida this week in an attempt to hone his game before the Masters. Woods missed all of 2016 and most of 2017 because of debilitating back trouble that culminated in spinal fusion surgery last April. He said the 47-year-old Mickelson's victory at the WGC Championship in Mexico on Sunday encouraged him to believe he could still add to his collection of 106 professional wins.

"What Phil's doing is showing that we can still do it later on in our careers," Woods told reporters on Wednesday. "Davis won at 51, Phil at 47," he said, referring to Davis Love III. "There are a few guys who can do it late in their career." Woods, who has missed the last two Masters, is also not ruling out a member of the old guard prevailing at Augusta next month. "The favorites are the guys who've always done well there," Woods said, insisting that himself and former champions such as Fred Couples,



Tiger Woods

Bernhard Langer, Bubba Watson and Mickelson were all capable of challenging.

"I'm not going to put it out of the realm if Freddie feels good, he's still in the mix. Bernhard is still in the mix. Phil is in the mix. Myself, Bubba. There's a few who know how to play the golf course and it fits us," Woods said. "There's definitely going to be some young guys who've been playing well up there. But Augusta is one of those courses that favors the vets. It's a hard test."

### 'Here I am'

At this stage of the season, however, Woods is simply happy to be back on the circuit. "I'm just ecstatic to have a chance to play again and to have a chance to win golf tournaments and compete," he said. "There was a while there where I didn't know if I was ever going to be out there again in the capacity of a professional player. But here I am, and it's a lot of fun." Woods said he hopes to use Valspar to fine-tune his game while building up his endurance. — AFP

## North, South Korea to march separately at Paralympics

**PYEONGCHANG:** North and South Korean athletes will march separately at the Winter Paralympics opening ceremony, organizers said yesterday, despite a recent Olympics-driven detente between the neighbors. International Paralympic Committee (IPC) president Andrew Parsons said the body was "disappointed" but did not give a reason for the decision. The opening ceremony will take place Friday. The two Koreas had marched together at the opening of last month's Winter Olympics under a neutral "unification flag", part of an intense rapprochement that also saw the North send hundreds of cheerleaders and leader Kim Jong Un's sister to the ceremony.

Seoul responded by sending President Moon Jae-in's special envoys—including his spy chief—to Pyongyang, where leader Kim told them he was willing to discuss denuclearization with the U.S. Seoul has since announced plans to hold a historic summit between the North's leader and Moon. The detente came after tensions had soared last year when Pyongyang dramatically ramped up its weapons program. The North is sending two cross-country skiers—Kim Jong Hyon and Ma Yu Chol—to the Winter Paralympics, the first time it has ever sent athletes to the event, and the IPC had offered athletes from the neighbors the chance to march together at the opening ceremony. — AFP

## Sports

# Rockets streak on; DeRozan leads Raptors into playoffs

## Lakers overcome Magic 108-107

**NEW YORK:** Chris Paul converted a spin move in the paint to help stave off a rally and the Houston Rockets extended their winning streak to 17 games with a 110-99 victory over the Milwaukee Bucks on Wednesday at BMO Harris Bradley Center. With the Bucks riding a 7-0 run that cut the Houston lead to five points, Paul made a short jumper over Jason Terry to reestablish control. After an empty possession by Milwaukee, Paul sank two free throws to seal the win. Paul finished with 16 points and 11 assists as Houston pulled within five victories of matching the franchise record for consecutive wins set in 2008.

James Harden tallied 26 points while Eric Gordon added 18 off the bench for the Rockets, who extended to a 16-point lead early in the second half before Giannis Antetokounmpo caught fire. Antetokounmpo scored 16 of his 30 points in the third quarter, singlehandedly bringing the Bucks to within four points. But Gordon followed with consecutive 3-pointers before P.J. Tucker added a third trey, and the Rockets reclaimed a double-digit lead at 87-76 entering the fourth.

### Raptors 121, Pistons 119 (OT)

Fred VanVleet made a jumper with 1.1 sec-

onds remaining in overtime, allowing Toronto to extend its winning streak to six games with a victory over Detroit. The Raptors also became the first team to clinch a playoff spot with the victory. DeMar DeRozan poured in 42 points and set up the go-ahead shot for the Eastern Conference-leading Raptors. Kyle Lowry posted 15 points, six rebounds, 15 assists and four steals, Norman Powell had 17 points and Jonas Valanciunas added 14

points and 11 rebounds for Toronto. Blake Griffin's 31 points led Detroit, which has dropped four straight and 10 of 12. Reggie Bullock contributed 21 points, Ish Smith and James Ennis added 14 points apiece and Andre

Drummond had 10 points and 21 rebounds.

### Cavaliers 113, Nuggets 108

LeBron James fired in a game-high 39 points, carrying Cleveland over host Denver. Nine of his 39 came in the final 1:41, including a fadeaway jumper from the left corner with Wilson Chandler draped all over him with 9.5 seconds left. James also added 10 assists and eight rebounds. Nikola Jokic dazzled in defeat for Denver with 36 points, 13 rebounds and six assists.

“LeBron fires in a game-high 39 points”

## Infidelity claim puts India bowler Shami's contract on hold

**NEW DELHI:** India's cricket board has declined to renew fast bowler Mohammad Shami's contract pending an investigation into "unsavoury" allegations that he cheated on his wife. Shami, who represented India during the tour of South Africa in January, has dismissed the accusations of infidelity as "part of a big conspiracy" to defame him. The Board of Control for Cricket in India dropped Shami from a list of contracted players unveiled Wednesday, which saw skipper Virat Kohli and other top Test players awarded salaries just above \$1 million. A supervisory committee overseeing BCCI affairs said the allegations against Shami put them in a difficult position and that his contract was on hold pending review.

"We are in a bit of Catch 22," Vinod Rai,

chairman of the committee, told cricket website ESPNcricinfo. "Ordinarily you would distinguish and say that is a personal issue and the contract is a professional issue. 'But someone could easily point out and say this allegation is an unsavoury one and you are still rewarding him.'" A source from the BCCI confirmed the board's position when contacted by AFP. Shami's wife Hasin Jahan, a former model, went public Tuesday with a series of messages that Shami, 27, allegedly sent to women during their four-year marriage.

She also accused the cricketer, whom she married in 2014, of domestic violence. India media reported that Jahan went to the police in Kolkata but did not file an official report against her husband. Shami vented his frustration at his wife's accusations and sought to clear his record. "What is being said about my personal life is completely false," he wrote on Twitter on Wednesday. "It's definitely a part of a big conspiracy against me. This is just an attempt to defame me." The board elevated Kohli, Rohit Sharma, Shikhar Dhawan, Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Jasprit Bumrah to a new "A+" category for the highest salaried players. Former captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni, Cheteshwar Pujara and Ravichandran Ashwin were placed in the next grouping and will receive an annual salary of \$777,000.—AFP

### Lakers 108, Magic 107

Brook Lopez nailed two free throws with six-tenths of a second remaining, allowing host Los Angeles to thwart an Orlando rally. Aaron Gordon capped a 10-0 flurry with a go-ahead basket with five seconds remaining in a frantic Orlando rally, before Lopez, fouled on a shot attempt by rival center Nikola Vucevic, calmly dropped in his game-winning foul shots. Lopez finished with a team-high 27 points and Kyle Kuzma added 20 as the Lakers won for the sixth time in their last seven games overall and seventh time in 11 games since trading for Isaiah Thomas last month.

### Pelicans 114, Kings 101

Nikola Mirotic came off the bench to score a game-high 26 points as New Orleans won its 10th consecutive game with a victory over host Sacramento. Jrue Holiday added 23, Anthony Davis scored 17, E'Twaun Moore had 15 and Ian Clark 11 as the Pelicans finished sweeping a four-game road trip to extend the second-longest current win streak in the NBA. Buddy Hield scored 20 points, Zach Randolph had 19, Frank Mason III scored 16 and Justin Jackson and Skal Labissiere had 14 each to lead Sacramento, which split the season series against New Orleans as the road team won all four games.

### Jazz 104, Pacers 84

Rudy Gobert scored 23 points and collected 14 rebounds to lead Utah to over Indiana at Bankers Life Fieldhouse in Indianapolis. Gobert earned his fourth straight double-double in leading the Jazz to their fourth straight win and ninth straight road victory. Donovan Mitchell added 20 points and six assists. Ricky Rubio had 18 points, six rebounds and seven assists. Jae Crowder added 16 points off the bench, and Joe Ingles chipped in 11 points and a career-high 10 assists. Myles Turner had 24 points to lead Indiana while Victor Oladipo and Bojan Bogdanovic added 13 points apiece. The Pacers shot just 3-of-23 (13 percent) from the perimeter.

### Bulls 119, Grizzlies 110

Lauri Markkanen scored 22 points on 8-for-14 shooting, and Chicago held on for a win over Memphis at the United Center. Zach LaVine and Kris Dunn each added 21 points for the Bulls, who won for the second time in the past three games. Bobby Portis posted his ninth double-double of the season with 15 points and 10 rebounds. Dillon Brooks scored 29 points, including 20 in the fourth quarter, as the Grizzlies nearly rallied from a 21-point deficit. Memphis lost its 15th game in a row, which is the longest losing streak in the NBA this season.—Agencies



**KOLKATA:** In this file photo, India's Mohammed Shami bowls during the final day of the first Test between India and Sri Lanka at the Eden Gardens cricket stadium in Kolkata. — AFP

# Sport Times

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CALIFORNIA: Maria Sharapova of Russia after losing a point against Naomi Osaka of Japan during Day 3 of the BNP Paribas Open on March 7, 2018 in Indian Wells. — AFP

## Sharapova crashes out of Indian Wells

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