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# GCC sets up company to facilitate money transfers

Hashel calls for cautious response to challenges • Zayani urges banking coordination



KUWAIT: HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives Governor of the Central Bank of Kuwait Mohammad Al-Hashel, GCC Secretary General Abdullatif Al-Zayani and governors of GCC central banks and monetary institutions at Bayan Palace yesterday. — KUNA

**KUWAIT:** The Gulf Cooperation Council is setting up a company to facilitate direct money transfers among its six members. The Riyadh-based Gulf Payments Company will allow Gulf states to transfer money "without reliance on international currencies", Kuwait Central Bank Governor Mohammad Al-Hashel told reporters yesterday following the 69th meeting of the GCC Committee of Governors of Monetary Agencies and Central Banks.

The chief executive officer has been picked and all member states have agreed to contribute initial capital, Hashel said. "After that the company has to go out and borrow from the Gulf market or use the capital it has generated," he said. The countries' central bank governors will sit on the board and a secondary office will be set up in the United Arab Emirates, he said, without saying when the company would start operating.

Hashel said the commission members lauded the formation of the company and predicted its key role in creating safe and rapid means for financial trans-

fers among the GCC countries. The company is being started even though GCC members Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates have been boycotting a fourth member, Qatar, since June. They accuse Qatar of supporting terrorism, a charge it has denied.

During the meeting, Hashel affirmed the necessity of Gulf countries' cautious response to challenges facing the region to ensure sustainable economic prosperity. He said these challenges and changes have become "a part of our contemporary reality". He clarified that regional changes come at the same time with huge global economic changes, adding monetary policies and openness of the Gulf region to global markets have also affected the GCC countries' economies.

Hashel affirmed the need of taking into consideration precautionary measures to predict and face these changes through studies and researches that would help in strengthening and stabilizing "our financial and monetary status". Central banks of the GCC countries must

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KUWAIT: Health Minister Sheikh Dr Basel Al-Sabah (right) takes part in a groundbreaking ceremony of the Dhaman Hospital in Amghara yesterday. — Photo by Fouad Al-Shaikh

## Dhaman begins work on second expat hospital

**KUWAIT:** Health Assurance Hospitals Company (Dhaman) celebrated the start of construction of the company's second hospital in Jahra governorate during a groundbreaking ceremony held under the patronage of Health Minister Sheikh Dr Basel Al-Sabah. In 2017, Dhaman broke ground on its first hospital in Ahmadi governorate, and is expecting to complete both hospitals in 2020.

In support of the country's Vision 2035 to provide world-class healthcare services to a large segment of the population, Dhaman is

creating a network of three hospitals offering secondary care geographically spread across Kuwait, the first of which is in Ahmadi and second in Amghara in Jahra.

The Dhaman Hospital in Jahra will be a five-storey hospital with a built-up area of 87,536 sq m, offering secondary healthcare services including a capacity of 300 beds, 13 intensive care units and 11 operating rooms, in addition to trauma and rehab centers, diagnostic centers, delivery rooms and accident and emergency services.

"During this ceremony, I would like to emphasize the ministry of health's full support towards the development of the healthcare system under the public-private partnership agreement to provide comprehensive healthcare coverage through three hospitals and primary healthcare centers covering all areas across Kuwait. The ministry is keen about

cooperating and coordinating with the company to provide outstanding healthcare," Sheikh Basel said.

"Dhaman's projects will also positively affect and ease the pressure at health ministry facilities and reduce the congestion experienced by citizens and residents receiving healthcare. The Dhaman Hospital in Jahra will serve a wide range of expatriates and is equipped with various medical specialties. The latest technologies and specifications have been taken into consideration as part of the overall development of the healthcare sector," he added.

Dr Ahmad Mohammed Al-Saleh, Dhaman CEO and Board Member said: "Dhaman is steadily working towards executing its projects and achieving its vision as part of the country's development plan.

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KATHMANDU: Nepali rescue workers gather around the debris of an airplane that crashed near the international airport yesterday. — AFP

## Nepal plane crash kills 49; Amir sends condolences

**KATHMANDU:** Forty-nine people were killed when a Bangladeshi plane crashed and burst into flames near Kathmandu airport yesterday, in the worst aviation disaster to hit Nepal in nearly three decades. Officials said there were 71 people on board the US-Bangla Airlines turboprop plane from Dhaka when it crashed just east of the runway and skidded into a nearby football field. Rescuers cut apart the mangled and charred wreckage of the upturned aircraft to pull people out, while other passengers were found buried under debris that scattered as the plane hit the ground.

"Forty people died at the spot and nine died at two hospitals in Kathmandu," police spokesman Manoj Neupane told AFP, adding another 22 were being treated in hospital, some in a critical condition. Survivor Sanam Shakya, who climbed out of a window of the smoldering plane, said he didn't realize the aircraft was in trouble until it hit the ground. "The plane was going up down, right and left, up down... so I thought that was some air traffic only. But I came to know that the aircraft had a problem only when it forcibly landed," the 33-year-old said from a hospital bed.

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PARIS: In this file photo taken on July 3, 1995, French fashion designer Hubert de Givenchy poses at the office of his fashion house. — AFP

## 'Little black dress' designer Givenchy dies

**PARIS:** Hubert de Givenchy, the aristocratic French fashion designer famous for the "little black dress" and styling Audrey Hepburn and Jackie Kennedy, has died aged 91, his partner said yesterday. Givenchy set the template for lady-like chic in the 1950s and 1960s, dressing everyone from Princess Grace of Monaco to Jane Fonda. His longtime partner, the former haute couture designer Philippe Venet, announced his death through the Givenchy fashion house, saying he had died in his sleep on

Saturday. "It is with huge sadness that we inform you that Hubert Taffin de Givenchy has died," a statement said.

With his perfect manners and old-school charm, the tall and handsome count was the very acme of French elegance and refinement. But it was his 40-year friendship with his muse Hepburn, whom he met while she was making Billy Wilder's Oscar-winning comedy "Sabrina" in 1953, that helped make him a fashion legend. The narrow-collared suits and slim woollen dresses Givenchy designed for the gamine actress in "Funny Face" and "How to Steal a Million" made both of them style icons.

The black sheath dress Givenchy created for the opening scenes of "Breakfast at Tiffany's" was perhaps the most famous "little black dress" of all

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## Nod to panel to screen expats' driving licenses

By B Izzak

**KUWAIT:** The National Assembly's interior and defense committee yesterday approved a proposal requiring the interior ministry to set up a permanent panel to investigate whether driving licenses of expatriates are in line with the laws and rules. The proposal, which was submitted by MP Waleed Al-Tabtabaei, said the proposed committee should screen all driving licenses of expatriates at the time of issuance or renewal.

Under Kuwait's traffic law, expatriates living and working in Kuwait must meet a series of conditions to be able to apply for a driving license, including earning a monthly salary of at least KD 600, have completed two years of residence in the country and possess a university degree. There are several exemptions, including students studying at universities in Kuwait, private drivers of families, doctors, judges, engineers and several other senior professionals, in addition to housewives with children, those working as messengers and others.

But those who obtain a driving license based on one of the exemptions must relinquish the license once they lose these conditions. The stringent conditions for obtaining a license has given rise to corruption, with expatriates paying hundreds of dinars in bribes to obtain a license. Due to menacing traffic jams, especially in the morning and evening, several MPs, officials and activists are blaming expats rather than the government for not constructing enough roads.

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# Amir patronizes, attends PAAET students' honoring ceremony

Sponsorship reflects Amir's keenness on young citizens' future



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah poses for a group photo with Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) graduates and staff. — KUNA

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah patronized and attended a ceremony held yesterday to honor outstanding students of the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET).

Excellent students, who were part of the batch of graduates, expressed pride of His Highness the Amir's patronization of ceremonial conclusion of their studies. In remarks after the graduation ceremony, the students said they were honored with His Highness' presence and sponsorship which reflected his keenness on future of young citizens. They underscored His Highness' support for higher education institutions.

Student Sara Al-Kandari, who studied Islamic Education, said she was elated for her honoring by His Highness. Abbas Al-Bloushi of the High Energy

Academy said he was overwhelmed with the ceremony, particularly His Highness' presence. Kawthar Murtadah, accounting graduate, expressed gratitude to the state's care for the non-Kuwaiti students and allowing them to acquire higher studies in the country.

Upon his arrival to the venue, His Highness was received by Minister of Education, Minister of Higher Education and Board Chairman of PAAET Hamid Al-Azmi, PAAET's acting director general Hajraf Al-Hajraf and members of the teaching committee. The ceremony was also attended by His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, senior state officials and the students' families. —KUNA



## Students appreciate Amir's support



Academics pose with His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and top state officials.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives a memento during the ceremony.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah join PAAET officials in cutting a cake during the ceremony.



Public Authority for Applied Education and Training staff offer flowers to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Niaz Mohammad Khajeh, the assistant undersecretary for engineering affairs at the Amiri Diwan. — KUNA

## Amir receives honored Diwan undersecretary

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace yesterday Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah, head of the financial and administrative affairs at the Amiri Diwan Abdulaziz Ishaq and Niaz Mohammad Khajeh, the assistant undersecretary for engineering affairs at the Amiri Diwan. The meeting came on the occasion of Khajeh's reception of the

award for pioneers of engineering, granted by the Gulf Engineering Union, in appreciation for her role at the level of joint engineering activities in the Gulf. The guests granted His Highness the Amir a group of cultural and artistic works held by Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Center.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received National Security Apparatus Chief Sheikh Thamer Ali Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah at Bayan Palace yesterday. In other news, Turkmenistan's President Gurbanguly Berdimukhammedov and his accompanying delegation are set to arrive in Kuwait today in an official visit, where he will have official talks with His Highness the Amir. — KUNA

## Amir sponsors Kuwait Conference of Chemistry

KUWAIT: The 5th Kuwait Conference of Chemistry (KCC 2018) kicked off yesterday patronized by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. Deputy Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah represented His Highness the Amir at the opening session. The KCC 2018 is themed 'Chemistry for Better Future.'

Since 2010, the Kuwait Chemical Society (KCS) has held the conference biennial under generous patronage of His Highness the Amir, KCS representative Huda Al-Nassar told the session. She lauded His Highness the Amir's support to science and scientists. Nassar added that the KCS has been keen through the conferences on emphasizing the role of chemistry in life, as well as its basic contribution to solving several scientific issues on the local, regional and global levels.

Focus areas of the March 12-14 conference includes: Future trends in Chemistry Education; Sustainable Industrial Chemistry; Advance Material Chemistry. Subtitles will cover Chemistry Teaching Competencies; Advance in Chemistry Education; Advance in Lab practices; Renewable and Alternative Energy Resources; Advance in Chemistry of Oil and Gas Industry; Green Chemistry and



KUWAIT: Deputy Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah and other officials pose with young chemists during the conference. — KUNA

Waste Management; Advancement in Analytical Instrumentation; Nano and Composite Materials; Biodegradable Materials, and Advanced Medical Materials. On Sunday, the KCS presided over the 37th Session of the Supreme Council of the Union of Arab Chemists, she noted.

Head of the organizing committee Dr Haider Bebehani addressed the session saying that the topics on the conference agenda are of prime importance as chemistry and its

application intersect with all aspects of life, which prompted "us to show its multi effects and roles." Bebehani noted that leading local, regional and international research agencies has responded to the pivots of the conference. Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah opened the scientific exhibition which is held on the sidelines of the conference. Chair of the KCC 2018 Scientific Committee Dr Hassan Al-Rabiah said that the conference would discuss up to 156 papers, from 25 countries. — KUNA



Local

# Cabinet forms committee to review corruption, transparency indices

## Arrangements to promote Kuwait's status on Corruption Perceptions Index

**KUWAIT:** The cabinet has formed a committee to review indices of governance reform, sustainable development and transparency. It will also design necessary mechanisms and make due arrangements to promote Kuwait's status on the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI).

This will be conducted in line with the criteria of transparency and integrity and respect of the law and freedoms to which Kuwait is committed. During a routine meeting at Bayan Palace yesterday, chaired by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, the cabinet expressed indignation over Kuwait's decline on the CPI 2017, which has harmed the State of Kuwait's reputation. The committee has been formed out of keenness on promoting indices of governance reform, sustainable development and transparency as well as other relevant ones, said Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh after the meeting. The Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha) will lead the newly-formed committee that will comprise, as members, representatives from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Finance, Justice, Social Affairs, Commerce and Industry, and Information. It will also include the General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development (GSSCPD), the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT), the Kuwaiti Financial Intelligence Unit (KwFIU) and other related state agencies. Yesterday the ministers reviewed a letter from Nazaha (Integrity) on the authority's efforts for preparing and executing the National Anti-Corruption Strategy, in line

with an agreement signed between the UN Development Program (UNDP) and the GSSCPD. The cabinet ordered government bodies to present all forms of support to Nazaha to realize the aspired goals.

### Free trade zone

The ministers were briefed about a recommendation by the public services commission regarding a report by Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) about the free trade zone in Al-Nuaiseeb. The cabinet decided to entrust KDIPA with coordination with the Fatwa and Legislation Department, as well as other authorities it may deem competent, to take technical and legal measures to press ahead with "the option stipulated in the commission report."

Moreover, the ministers examined the National Assembly session agenda and outcome of last week's session when confidence was renewed in Minister of State for the National Assembly Adel Al-Kharafi following a debate of the interpellation motion, filed by

MPs Riad Al-Adsani and Dr Adel Al-Damkhi.

They congratulated minister Kharafi for the earned confidence manifested by the MPs. He in turn admired the lawmakers for renewing their trust, as well as the support accorded to him by His Highness the Prime Ministers, the ministers and others, pledging to spare no efforts for serving the homeland and the citizens. The cabinet lauded the cooperation between the two top authorities as well as the free and democratic atmosphere that distinguished the parliament sessions.



### Coordination over free trade zone



**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah chairs the cabinet's meeting yesterday. — KUNA

### Arab League

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meanwhile briefed the ministers about his participation in the 149th session of the Arab League Ministerial Council, recently held in Cairo. The minister addressed the fellow executives about discussions and their outcome for tackling diverse Arab issues. He also informed them about his participation in a sideline meeting of the ministerial Arab Peace Initiative Committee, during which the conferees discussed Arab efforts aimed at ending the

Israeli occupation of Arab and Palestinian territories as well as Kuwait's efforts, exerted when the state presided over the Security Council in February.

Meanwhile, the ministers welcomed the President of Turkmenistan, Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedow, who is due to arrive in Kuwait today. The visit by the president, to be accompanied by officials, would be in line with the approach to cement bilateral relations between the two friendly countries. Furthermore, the executives discussed a host of political issues in light of reports on the Arab and international political arenas.

Meanwhile, the cabinet expressed condolences at Sunday's crash of a Turkish plane in southwestern Iran, resulting in death of all passengers. The cabinet expressed sincere condolences to Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and the friendly Turkish people, praying to souls of the deceased. All 11 people on board the private Turkish aircraft which crashed in southwestern Iran were killed. The Canadian-made Bombardier plane fell into a mountainous region in southwestern Iran killing eight passengers and three crew members. The ill-fated aircraft was flying from Sharjah, the UAE, to Istanbul, Turkey. — KUNA



**KUWAIT:** Kuwaiti First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah meets with relatives of late cadet Faisal Al-Obaid. — KUNA

### Defense minister honors late cadets, fallen soldier

**KUWAIT:** Kuwaiti First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received yesterday at Bayan Palace the

families of three officers who have lost their lives. As he met with the relatives of late cadets Faisal Al-Obaid and Mubarak Al-Azmi, the Kuwaiti defense minister expressed his deepest condolences over their deaths, saying the armed forces are proud of their contributions. Meanwhile, in his encounter with the family of deceased chief warrant officer Rakan Al-Enezi, Sheikh Nasser Al-Sabah said the soldier "sacrificed his life for the good of the nation." —KUNA



**Kuwaiti First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah meets with relatives of late cadet Mubarak Al-Azmi.**



**Kuwaiti First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah meets with relatives of the late chief warrant officer Rakan Al-Enezi.**

# Kuwait Times

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## Local

# First Deputy Premier commends Islamic Treasures exhibition

Organized in cooperation with the National Council for Culture, Art and Letters



KUWAIT: First Deputy Premier and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah inaugurates the Islamic Treasures Exhibition. — KUNA



First Deputy Premier and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah tours the exhibition.

KUWAIT: Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah praised Sunday the Islamic Treasures Exhibition, which included Mahmoud Al-Nouri's private collection.

Sheikh Nasser said he was very happy to have visited the exhibition "which includes an important collection of our relics and Islamic history." The National Council for Culture, Art and Letters (NCCAL) opened the Islamic Treasures Exhibition, which was held under auspices of Sheikh Nasser. The Defense Minister called on the public

to visit the exhibition and enjoy the collection "which will educate them about Islamic relics."

Nouri, the oldest relics' collector in Kuwait, said cooperation with NCCAL resulted in the organization of the exhibition. He thanked Sheikh Nasser and his spouse Sheikh Hessa Sabah Al-Sabah for their support and passion to antiquities in general. The exhibition includes rare copies of Holy Quran, coins, manuscripts, carpets, jewelry, textile and pottery. Nouri collected

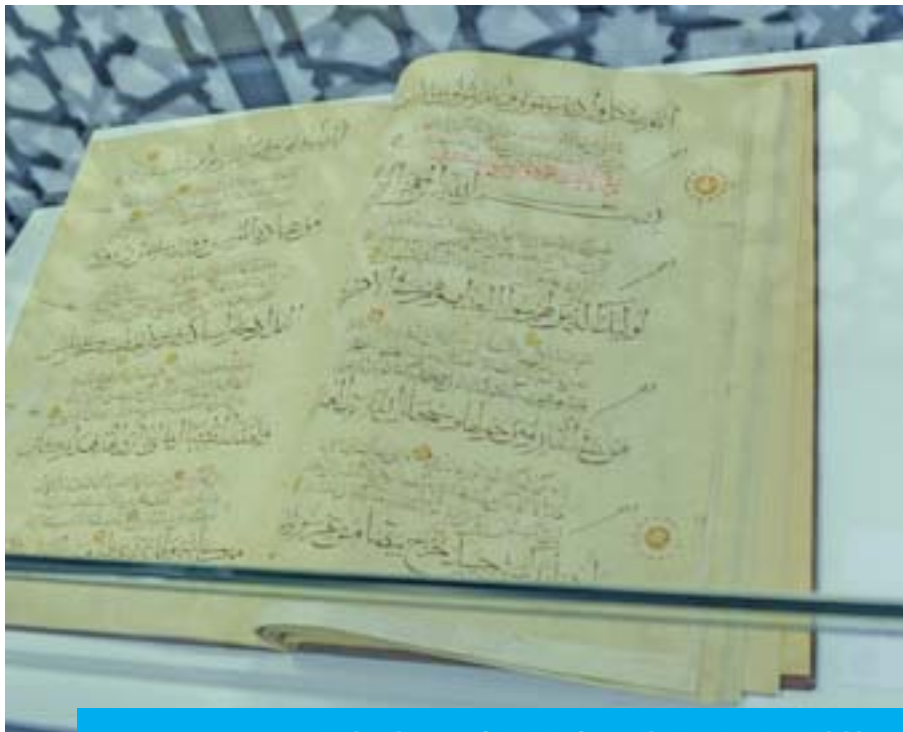
this treasure from different parts of the world over three decades.— KUNA



## Rare collection of Islamic antiquities, arts



Pages from copies of the Holy Quran written in different styles of Arabic calligraphy.



A historic copy of the Holy Quran displayed at the exhibition.



Antiquities showcased in the Islamic Treasures Exhibition



Mahmoud Al-Nouri

## Zain platinum sponsor of Model UN Conference

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading telecommunications company in Kuwait, announced the conclusion of its platinum sponsorship of the Model United Nations Conference organized by Kuwait's International Law Society during March 2018, which was held at the United Nations House in Mishref with the presence of the Ambassador of the United States Lawrence Silverman.

Zain's support to this competition came as part of the company's ongoing efforts to contribute to the development of various areas, ultimately reflecting the country's advanced position in all fields. Zain's sponsorship also comes as an extension of the company's continuous support to the activities and programs of Kuwait's International Law Society.

The conference provided an opportunity for young students to learn about the international situation, where students given the role of a diplomatic representative in the United Nations in various organs to make decisions, solve key problems, and research on the real international issues presented to them. The conference



KUWAIT: Zain is honored during the Model United Nations Conference.

ference helped to enhance the skills of the art of speech and persuasion in students, with the aim of developing the corresponding skills to raise student awareness and to encourage meaningful and productive debates.

The company's sponsorship came from its keenness to develop various sectors that contribute to raise the cultural image of Kuwait and its pioneering role in many fields, which complemented Zain's efforts to support the activities of the Kuwait International Law Society, which included the Dal Talks Dialogue and the Moot Court Competition.

Zain firmly believes in the importance of mutual cooperation between the private sector and entities that support the youth through initiatives and programs that aim at developing and nurturing their academic skills and capabilities. Through supporting

such initiatives, Zain reflects its commitment towards the development of the youth, ultimately achieving a more sustainable future.

Zain will remain a main supporter of such innovative initiatives that cater to the academic achievements of Kuwaiti youth. The company will remain dedicated to the further progress of education in the country, and will spare no efforts in supporting any entities that exert efforts in advancing the advancement of the educational sector in Kuwait. It is worth noting that the Model United Nations Conference is a world-class conference in universities and student bodies. It was established in 2013 by the Kuwait International Law Society and held annually, and provide the opportunity for participation of students from different majors, universities and schools locally and internationally.

## Ooredoo concludes 'Adasa 3' sponsorship

KUWAIT: Reiterating its commitment to supporting youth and empowering them to reach their potential, Ooredoo Kuwait concluded its sponsorship to the third edition of Adasa Festival for the third consecutive year, in collaboration with the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs. The three-day festival featured a star-studded lineup of Kuwaiti artist and performers, and was aimed at supporting youth and local talent in addition to highlighting the most talented in Kuwait.

Commenting on this sponsorship, Ooredoo Kuwait's Senior Director of Corporate Communications Mijbil Alayoub noted that Adasa has become the most sought-after platform for local youth talents and audiences alike, lauding the festival for its success since its first edition. "We at Ooredoo Kuwait are proud of being supporters of this festival since it first started; we believe in youth and in supporting them to reach their potential, and we're proud to be continuing our efforts with the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs, the main sponsor and incubator of all youth success."

The festival included a lineup of folklore and patriotic performances by some of Kuwait's most talented

youth artists, including Hamad Al-Ammari, Alaa Al-Hendi, Hamad Al-Qattan, Abdullah Al-Ahmadi, Fahad Al-Salem, and Abdullatif Ghazi. Additionally, the festival featured a photography exhibition that showcases a number of works by professional and amateur Kuwaiti photographers. The festival also included roundtable discussions, including a discussion about Kuwaiti drama writing featuring Kuwaiti dramatist Dr. Hamad Al-Roumi and TV critic Abdulsattar Naji, and a discussion on Saudi cinema with CEO of International Film Distribution Company, and film critic



Mijbil Alayoub



KUWAIT: Shafiq Al-Sayed Omar, Assistant Undersecretary for Youth Projects Sector at Ministry of State for Youth Affairs (left), honors a youth talent.

Alfarouq Abdulaziz. Ooredoo's support for youth is part of the company's year-long corporate social

responsibility strategy which aims to support youth and empower them to fulfill their potential.



Local

# Assembly panel sets deadline for public sector jobs' 'Kuwaitization'

'Expats in state departments should be replaced with citizens by 2023'

By A Saleh

**KUWAIT:** The replacement and employment committee at the National Assembly set 2023 as a deadline to complete replacing expats working in state departments with citizens. The committee set a comprehensive plan urging various government bodies, represented by the Civil Service Commission, Public Authority for Manpower, Kuwait Investment Authority and the General Secretariat for Planning and Development to set their own plans for the coming five years. The committee also urged the education ministry to set its own five-year plan in terms of the educational process' outcome in a way that meets local labor market needs of certain jobs.

**Egyptian elections**

Egyptian Ambassador to Kuwait Tareq Al-Qouni

said Egyptians in Kuwait are invited to vote in the Egyptian presidential elections on Friday, Saturday and Sunday (March 16, 17 and 18, 2018). Speaking at a press conference yesterday, Qouni stressed that the polling committee will remain open on these three days until the very last voter in line casts their vote. "It is a constitutional right for Egyptians abroad to vote in the presidential elections and they ought to maintain and use this right," he stressed, urging Egyptian community members to intensively take part in the presidential elections and practice their constitutional rights freely



## Egyptians in Kuwait invited to vote



The National Assembly.

and in a most civilized manner. "Intensive participation will reflect the true essence of Egyptians to the entire world," he added, noting that participation shows expatriate Egyptians' attachment to their home country and concern for its future.

Qouni said the number of Egyptian voters in Kuwait is the largest worldwide and that around 66,000 voters had taken part in the 2014 presidential elections, while those who took part in the 2015 parliamentary elections numbered over 15,000. Speaking of the preparations made by the embassy for the elections, Qouni stressed that coordination was made with relevant official Kuwaiti bodies and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor to make sure Egyptians receive their passports. He added that the private sector and various employers had been contacted through the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry to facilitate the participation

of Egyptians working for them. He also noted that coordination was made with the Interior Ministry to secure the polling center and that special buses would be available at the Green Island parking lot to take voters to and from the embassy premises all day long, in addition to shaded areas and special services for senior citizens and women.

**'Shuoon children'**

Manager of the family custody department at the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor Dr Khaled Al-Ajmi said 10 'shuoon children' (parentless children and those from broken families) had been granted Kuwaiti citizenship on turning 18 in 2017, in addition to three who got it since the beginning of this year. He added that procedures start with an application filed by the foster family, if any, or by the department to the citizenship and pass-

ports directorate to get article 1 citizenships a week later. Ajmi said over 600 such children are living with foster families.

**Mega projects**

The Ministry of Public Works is currently considering excluding all international and local companies failing to meet the schedules mentioned in the agreements and contracts signed with them, with the result of delaying the executions of mega projects such as those of the Ministry of Education and Jaber Hospital. Informed sources also expected the Ministry of Public Works to blacklist those companies and stop dealing with them in any future projects. They added that the Ministry of Public Works will accordingly notify Central Agency for Public Tenders and the State Audit Bureau.

## Visa regulations

Legalese



By Attorney Fajer Ahmed

This week I read news reports that Kuwait's new visa regulations will not permit newcomers to the country to receive a visa if they have diseases such as high blood pressure, diabetes or cancer. I must say I have not seen any regulations similar to this proposed regulation and do not think it is fair for those who have non-infectious disease and want to work in Kuwait to provide for their families and themselves.

I have chosen today to write about visa regulations again, as it seems there is a lot of confusion on the matter by both expats and nationals and employees and employers. But we are lucky in Kuwait to have a diverse society, as I often say.

**New changes**

**Question:** What are the new changes in visa laws? Is it true that no expats under 30 will be provided with a work visa to work in Kuwait?

**Fajer:** I know that 'visa laws' can be confusing, especially since it is not just one law but different bylaws and ministerial decisions. The latest decisions state that starting from Jan 1, no work permits will be provided to expats younger than 30 in the private and oil sectors. I do not understand the logic behind this decision, although I hope that the government based this decision on a need. I see a lot of hardworking expats in Kuwait who are younger than 30, like teachers, construction workers or journalists.

There have been other changes as well. New visit laws now allow businessmen (or women) to enter Kuwait on a business visa valid for up to one year. Visas will also allow foreign students to study in private universities in Kuwait, and medical visas will be provided to those seeking treatment in Kuwait.

**Tourist visa**

**Question:** I have many friends working in Kuwait on a tourist visa or on their husbands' visas - is this legal?

**Fajer:** No. It is not legal to work under a tourist visa in Kuwait or on a dependent visa. With that said, I have seen this many times, especially with teachers. It does not make sense that schools are allowing such practices - teachers need to be qualified to be teaching our students and there have to be strict regulations in place. If you are going to do so, be prepared to be deported for violating visa regulations, as it is a violation to work under tourist visas in many countries, resulting in deportation or even a ban from the country or region.

**Dependent visa**

**Q:** I am a dependent visa holder as my husband is my sponsor - does this permit me to work in Kuwait?

**Fajer:** As a dependent visa holder, you need to transfer your residency from 'dependent' to 'work'. To apply for the new residency, you need to submit the following documents:

1. Application form for residency transfer (to be signed by the former and the new sponsors).
2. Two personal photos (light blue background - 6x4).
3. Original civil ID.
4. A certificate of health insurance.
5. A certificate of criminal status.
6. Work permit (to be issued by the Public Authority for Manpower).
7. Original signature approval of the new sponsor.
8. A form of personal photo.
9. Prescribed fees.
10. Original passport.

If you ever have confusion about the requirements and the documents that you need, I would suggest that you visit the shuoon (Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor) office closest to you and inquire about the administrative side of things. I want to also make it clear that even though unlike other countries there are no clear laws on visas and whether married women can volunteer, start a business or work part-time in Kuwait, I see no complications with such women volunteering or working with their artistic skills, as in taking/selling photos or having an exhibition of artworks, writing poetry, etc.

I hope the above helped. If you have a concern, please email us at info@ftl-legal.com

## EQUATE promotes safety during GCC Traffic Week



**KUWAIT:** One of the main values that EQUATE, a global producer of petrochemicals, upholds is creating a safe and sound work culture and environment. In an effort to promote safety in the real world for the benefit of everyone living in Kuwait, EQUATE partnered with the Ministry of Interior (MOI) in the 34th Gulf Traffic Week Members of EQUATE and the MOI visited Al-Razi Orthopedic Hospital to promote traffic safety as well as safe and responsible driving in an aim to decrease roadside accidents.

EQUATE's partnership in Gulf Traffic Week that was launched in Al-Shaheed Park on March 11, 2018, is part of EQUATE's Sustainability Strategy that invests in initiatives to positively impact society and our shared environment. This particular initiative includes lectures on traffic safety. This was followed by a tour through Al-Razi's wards where officials from EQUATE and MOI distributed gifts to the hospital's patients. Officials from EQUATE and MOI were joined by representatives from the Ministry of Health (MOH), local celebrities and social media influencers. As part of the partnership, EQUATE also supported the production of a video raising awareness about traffic laws and safe driving.

EQUATE's Corporate and Government Services Leader, Yaqoub Al-Kandari, said, "We are proud to partner in initiatives that not only have a positive impact on our society, but also reflect our core values and principles at EQUATE. Safety is a

culture for EQUATE; it has become a habit that we implement in every moment of our day in all parts of our lives. Traffic safety is one of them, and we want to extend that culture to others to save lives. We are honored to partner with the MOI once again in such a pertinent cause and we look forward to supporting them in their endeavors."

The visit was concluded by recognizing all participants in the initiative including Sheikh Awwad Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, MOI's Undersecretary Lieutenant-General Mahmoud Al-Dousari, MOI's Assistant Undersecretary for Traffic Affairs Major-General Fahad Al-Shuwaie, Director of Mubarak Al-Kabeer's Traffic Department and the campaign's general coordinator Colonel Ibrahim Al-Jallal, Al-Razi's Orthopedic Hospital Director Dr Mona Abdulsamad, Orthopedic Specialist Dr Fahad Al-Khalaf, Orthopedic Specialist Dr Bader Al-Adwani, Orthopedic Specialist Dr Saleh Al-Khaldi, Al-Razi's Public Relations Manager Fahad Al-Saeed and Al-Razi's Public Relations Deputy Manager Khalaf Al-Saeedi.

Recognitions were also extended to participating actors Abdulrahman Al-Aqul, Hayat Al-Fahad, Huda Hussain, Ibrahim Al-Sallal and Suad Abdullah. Social media influencers included Abdullah Al-Jasser also known as Aboelka, Hamad Al-Ali known as Hamad Qalam, Meshari Bu Yabis, Meshari Al-Shallahi, Mohammad Sari Al-Mutairi, as well as the founder of London Kitchen Abdullah Al-Saeed.

## KIB sponsors 2018 GCC Traffic Week

**KUWAIT:** As part of its leading social responsibility program, Kuwait International Bank (KIB) sponsored the 2018 GCC Traffic Week; an initiative aimed at spreading awareness of safe driving and road safety. This year's GCC Traffic Week highlighted a number of key issues concerning road safety awareness for road users, not only as preventative methods to avoid traffic violations. Additionally, flyers in both Arabic and English were distributed, which detailed new road safety tips that were also displayed across various media platforms and social networking sites. Nawaf Najia, Manager of the Corporate Communications at KIB, said: "KIB always strives to sponsor important initiatives such as these that aim at supporting government efforts to spread road safety awareness across the nation.

We are particularly adamant on lending our support to initiatives that aim at maintaining the security and safety of everyone, seeing as that Kuwait has a high rate of traffic accidents. We believe that this year's theme 'Your life is precious' is extremely important, as it comprises valuable information for the safety of road users and encourages them to adhere to traffic laws and regulations for protec-

tion against dangerous accidents. Traffic safety is something that concerns us all and, accordingly, it is the responsibility of each one of us to spread awareness and participate in these events that affect the safety of all road users. By adopting safety measures while driving, we can reduce the number of road accidents and related injuries and fatalities."

Najia also lauded the efforts of the Ministry of Interior and the General Directorate of Traffic, which strive to promote awareness of good driving behavior and the culture of road safety amongst road users, through both direct and indirect means. Moreover, they aim at introducing the community to new traffic regulations that ensure the safe and smooth flow of vehicles and pedestrians.

Through this week, Najia hoped the initiative will achieve its objectives in reducing the rate of traffic-related incidents to their lowest figures in Kuwait and across the GCC. Accordingly, this will avoid further traffic-related deaths, damage to public and private property, as well as grave consequences from accidents that may result in disabilities and family crises; all of which can be avoided with careful adherence to traffic laws and regulation.

It is worth noting that KIB continues to play an active role in supporting key community-based initiatives and activities. The Bank particularly focuses on awareness initiatives that serve diverse segments of the local community, thereby promoting the nation's sustainable development.

## New postpaid envelope for civil ID renewal

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

**KUWAIT:** The Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI) recently issued a new white envelope for civil ID renewal that can easily be obtained from the PACI headquarters and service centers around Kuwait and government malls in various areas, PACI Director MUSAED Al-Assoussi announced. Assoussi added that unlike the previous prepaid envelope, the new envelope will be a postpaid one and that the 250 fils fee will be paid on doing the transaction along with the ID issue fees, as people used to purchase the old envelopes and sometimes not use them. Assoussi added that the new envelope project was launched at PACI's website at e-envelope.paci.gov.kw and that transactions using it can be done within 40 seconds without even having to visit PACI offices.

**Temporary health permits**

Public Authority for Food and Nutrition's Director Essa Al-Kandari urged all vendors working in temporary locations and dealing with food products to check with relevant inspection departments to get temporary health permits to sell seasonal food products by April 1, 2018, after which the sites would be closed down if the vendors have no licenses.

**CRIMES**

**43,000 violators availed amnesty**

**KUWAIT:** The number of residency law violators who have taken advantage of the grace period issued by the interior minister have exceeded 43,000 expatriates, a security source said. The number of expats who left the country without having to pay fines with the possibility to return is around 30,000, while 13,000 corrected their status after paying fines totaling KD 8 million, the source added. Director General of the Residency Affairs Department Maj Gen Talal Maarafi and his assistant Maj Gen Abdullah Al-Hajiri have instructed to speed up transactions of violators.

**Fatal accident**

**KUWAIT:** A bedoon student lost her life under the wheels of a bus driven by one of her relatives. The body was recovered by the coroner, while the driver was sent for questioning. The 12-year-old student was returning home from school in a bus driven by a relative, but she got off before the bus came to a complete stop and fell under the wheels, causing her death.

**Thief 'disappointed'**

**KUWAIT:** A thief was disappointed when he entered the police treasury department and did not find anything other than papers and documents. Fingerprints were lifted to identify the culprit.

—Translated from the Arabic press





Japan's PM, finance minister under fire

## North Korea silence speaks volumes on US talks

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KAFR BATNA, Syria: A wounded Syrian man is seen at a makeshift hospital following government bombardment in Kafr Batna in the rebel-held enclave of Eastern Ghouta yesterday. —AFP

# Syrian war leaves over half a million dead

## War, conflict fuel arms imports to Middle East, Asia

**BEIRUT:** The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a British-based war monitor, said yesterday about 511,000 people had been killed in the Syrian war since it began seven years ago. The Observatory, which tracks death tolls using a network of contacts inside Syria, said it had identified more than 350,000 of those killed, and the remainder were cases where it knew deaths had occurred but did not know the victims' names.

The conflict began after mass protests on March 15, 2011, dragging in regional and global powers and forcing millions of people - more than half the pre-war population - to flee their homes. About 85 percent of the dead were civilians killed by the forces of the Syrian government and its allies, the Observatory said. The Syrian military, joined by its ally Russia since 2015, has used air power extensively. As the war approaches its eighth year, intense fighting continues in several areas, including eastern Ghouta near the capital Damascus and Afrin near the Turkish border.

Meanwhile, Syria's rebel-held city of Douma faces a "catastrophic" situation after becoming the main haven for thousands of people fleeing advances by government forces into eastern Ghouta, its local council said yesterday. Hundreds of people have been killed in the Syrian army's fierce air and artillery bombardment of eastern Ghouta since Feb 18 as President Bashar al-Assad's government seeks to crush the last major rebel stronghold near the capital Damascus. Government forces have now captured more than half of the rebel enclave and have entirely besieged Douma, the largest urban centre in eastern Ghouta, cutting it off from neighbouring areas with advances on Saturday and Sunday.

The opposition-run council in Douma said thousands of

families were now sheltering in open streets and public gardens as existing basements and shelters were already overcrowded. "After more than 20 days of the barbaric campaign and mass annihilation of eastern Ghouta...this has led to a deterioration of the humanitarian and food situation to a catastrophic level," it said in a statement. One man covering in a heavily damaged shelter in Douma said: "It is completely uninhabitable. It is not even safe to put chickens in. There is no bathroom, just one toilet, and there are 300 people." He declined to give his name for fear of reprisals if the army relaxes the area.

The Douma council appealed for international help, saying even burials of the dead at the main city cemetery had been suspended due to the intensity of aerial strikes. At least 70 people were buried in a public park in Douma as the aerial strikes made it difficult to reach the main burial grounds on the outskirts of the city.

### Arms imports

Weapons imports to the Middle East and Asia have boomed over the past five years, fuelled by war and tensions in those regions, a new study showed yesterday. In the period between 2013 and 2017, arms imports to the conflict-ridden Middle East

more than doubled, jumping by 103 percent compared with the previous five-year period, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) calculated.

And the Middle East accounted for 32 percent of all arms imports worldwide, SIPRI, an independent institute, monitors arms deliveries by volume over periods of five years in order to iron out short-term fluctuations. Saudi Arabia—which is waging a war against Shiite Houthi rebels backed by its regional rival Iran—is the world's second largest importer of arms after India, SIPRI said. The United States accounts for 61 percent of arms imports to Saudi Arabia and Britain for 23 percent. On Friday, Britain signed a preliminary multi-billion-pound order from Saudi Arabia for 48 Eurofighter Typhoon fighter jets, military equipment maker BAE Systems announced.

The deal sparked heated debate and protests in the UK where the NGO, Save the Children, placed a life-size statue of a child near parliament "to draw attention to the violence that is being fuelled, in part, by British-made bombs." "Widespread violent conflict in the Middle East and concerns about human rights have led to political debate in Western Europe and North America about restricting arms sales," said senior SIPRI researcher Pieter Wezeman. "Yet the US and European states

remain the main arms exporters to the region and supplied over 98 percent of weapons imported by Saudi Arabia."

### Growing demand in India

Nevertheless, Asia and Oceania was the biggest region for arms imports, accounting for 42 percent of the global total between 2013 and 2017, the institute calculated. And India was the world's largest weapons importer, with Russia its main supplier accounting for 62 percent of its imports. At the same time, arms deliveries to India from the US, the world's top weapons exporter, increased more than six-fold in the five-year period, SIPRI calculated.

"The tensions between India, on the one side, and Pakistan and China, on the other, are fuelling India's growing demand for major weapons, which it remains unable to produce itself," another SIPRI researcher Siemon Wezeman said. "China, by contrast, is becoming increasingly capable of producing its own weapons and continues to strengthen its relations with Pakistan, Bangladesh and Myanmar through arms supplies," he added.

Beijing, whose weapons exports rose by 38 percent in the five-year period, is the main arms supplier for Myanmar, accounting for 68 percent of imports. It also accounted for 71 percent of weapons imports to Bangladesh and for 70 percent of imports to India's nuclear-armed rival, Pakistan. Myanmar's violence against the Rohingya Muslim minority has caused some 700,000 of the people to flee over the border to Bangladesh since August, taking with them horrifying testimony of murder, rape and arson by soldiers and vigilante mobs. The atrocities have triggered international condemnations, including EU and US sanctions, against Myanmar. —Agencies



## Douma faces catastrophe as assault grinds on

## Indonesia university revokes niqab ban after criticism

**YOGYAKARTA:** An Indonesian university whose ban on niqab face veils made global headlines has reversed the policy following criticism that it trampled on personal choice. Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University in Indonesia's cultural capital Yogyakarta issued the edict last week to more than three dozen niqab-wearing students—and warned they could be expelled for non-compliance. The school, which has about 10,000 students, had said the now-cancelled rule was aimed at countering religious extremism in the world's biggest Muslim majority country.

"The guidance concerning students using a face veil will be revoked in order to maintain an academic climate that is conducive to fairness," said a statement issued by the university at the weekend. Backers of the new rules said wearing the full veil with a small slit for the eyes was not a religious obligation, but critics saw the anti-niqab appeal as impinging on individual rights. Another school in Yogyakarta, Ahmad Dahlan University, has also urged students not to wear the niqab—without penalty for non-compliance—while several Indonesian universities have issued niqab bans in the past.

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 mil-



YOGYAKARTA: A student wearing a niqab face veil stages a protest against the ban on wearing niqabs on university grounds at the Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University in Yogyakarta. —AFP

lion people have traditionally followed a moderate form of Islam, and are often seen as an unwelcome Arab export. 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. —AFP

## It is complicated: Beijing torn on Trump-Kim talks

**BEIJING:** When China called on the United States to engage in direct talks with North Korea, it probably never imagined it would be absent from the table. Beijing, which chaired failed international talks on North Korea that collapsed a decade ago, has long seen itself as central to the negotiations to end Pyongyang's nuclear programme. But when US President Donald Trump agreed last week to hold a historic meeting with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un at a yet-to-be-decided day and place, China was nowhere to be seen.

Chinese President Xi Jinping has not even met Kim since the young North Korean autocrat took power following his father's death in 2011. While China remains North Korea's only ally and main economic lifeline, relations between the two neighbours have soured as Xi, under pressure from Trump, has backed a slew of UN sanctions to punish Pyongyang for its nuclear and missile tests. In a Friday phone call with Trump, Xi praised the US leader's "positive" move, saying he hoped the US and North Korea would start talking as soon as possible and that China was devoted to solving the nuclear issue through dialogue.

But not everyone was so happy: China's top-selling nationalist tabloid the Global Times dashed out an editorial aimed at soothing the jangled nerves of Chinese patriots afraid that the country would be sidelined by a Trump-Kim love-in. "Chinese people should stay calm and remain poised, and avoid the mentality that China is being marginalised," it said. "China's prime interest on the Korean peninsula is its denuclearisation and peace, both of which are more important than China's relations with North and South Korea and power politics."

### Nuclear fears

Trump's surprise agreement to meet Kim appears to have shocked many in China, who wonder if the Asian giant—which is increasingly trying to put itself at the centre of global diplomacy—has been cut out of the loop by Pyongyang. "Given that parts of Trump's own national security team were not informed of this major change in policy, I'm doubtful that President Trump informed the Chinese, and definitely not with any significant lead time," said Oriana Skylar Mastro, an expert on China, North Korea relations at Georgetown University and the American Enterprise Institute.

While Washington is happy to use China to squeeze North Korea economically, it is not as interested in involving Beijing in the more delicate work of negotiations. "The Trump administration sees China as primarily an obstacle to the peaceful resolution of the DPRK nuclear issue and not so much as a critical diplomatic interlocutor," Skylar Mastro said.—AFP



International

# Rise of violent Buddhist rhetoric in Asia defies stereotypes, image

## Hardline monks upend the religion's tolerant image

**HONG KONG:** Buddhism may be touted in the West as an inherently peaceful philosophy, but a surge in violent rhetoric from small but increasingly influential groups of hardline monks in parts of Asia is upending the religion's tolerant image. Buddhist mobs in Sri Lanka last week led anti-Muslim riots that left at least three dead and more than 200 Muslim-owned establishments in ruins, just the latest bout of communal violence there stoked by Buddhist nationalists.

In Myanmar, ultra-nationalist monks led by firebrand preacher Wirathu have poured vitriol on the country's small Muslim population, cheering a military crackdown forcing nearly 700,000 Rohingya into Bangladesh. And in neighbouring Thailand, a prominent monk found himself in hot water for calling on followers to burn down mosques. What has prompted this surge in aggressive rhetoric from followers of a faith that is so often equated, rightly or wrongly, with non-violence?

For many in the West, schooled in Buddhism via the beatniks, Hollywood, meditation classes, tropical holidays and inspirational Dalai Lama quotes, the visceral response of these monks can be a shock. But Michael Jerryson, an expert on religion at Youngstown State University who has just completed a book exploring Buddhism and violence, says throughout history some Buddhists-like any faith-have used religion to justify violence. "There's a common mindset, whether it's Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand... that Buddhism is somehow under threat," he said, describing the latest incarnation of violent Buddhist rhetoric. "Each area has its own history, its own causes and instigators, but these instigators are also interlinked."

### Invasive Islam

In many recent cases around Asia, this aggression has been targeted toward Muslims. After the Taliban's destruction of the Bamiyan Buddha statues in Afghanistan and the "war on terror" rhetoric, Jerryson says, warped historical grievances have "collided with recent Islamophobia". Despite centuries of largely peaceful co-existence and trading, Buddhist fundamentalist groups portray Islam as invasive, toppling ancient Buddhist empires in Malaysia and Indonesia and now threatening the same for modern Buddhist nations through jihad or

high birth rates. Myanmar's Wirathu has built a following railing against Muslims in incendiary sermons both in person and on Facebook-which closed down his page in January. While Muslims make up less than four percent of Myanmar's population, Wirathu paints a millenarian portrait of an Islamic plot to eradicate Buddhism.

His Ma Ba Tha group was instrumental in pushing laws to restrict interfaith marriages and changing religion. In Sri Lanka, Buddhist militancy has gone mainstream, with clergy seen clashing with riot police and leading anti-government protests. During the brutal 26-year civil war, the ire of ultra-nationalists among the mainly Buddhist Sinhalese majority was focused on the island's Tamil Hindus. But after the Tamil Tigers were beaten in 2009, hardliners turned on Muslims, who make up some 10 percent of the population.

Monk Galagodaatte Gnanasara, the movement's most prominent leader, is on bail facing hate speech charges and insulting the Quran. "The Quran should be banned in the country," he said recently. "If you don't, we will go from house to house and campaign till it is banned." His movement BBS-Buddhist Force-hosted Wirathu and his followers in September 2014. In Thailand, anti-Muslim hardliners have had less success. Thai columnist Sanitsuda Ekachai says years of corruption scandals have undermined faith in the clergy.

"Subsequently, local monks' ethnic prejudices carry far less weight with the public and state authorities than their counterparts in Myanmar and Sri Lanka," she said. But there have been flashes of tension such as in the country's Malay Muslim-majority south, where a brutal insurgency has killed more than 6,500 civilians in the last decade. Most of the dead are Muslim civilians, but Buddhist monks have also been targeted by militants, fuelling animosity towards Islam. Maha Apichat, a young and influential ex-monk, used Facebook to call on followers to burn down a mosque for every monk. He was later defrocked.

### 'Kill communists'

Experts say Buddhist clergy can trigger violence without directly participating. "With a couple of very rare exceptions Buddhist monastic groups don't carry out the violence themselves," explains Iselin Frydenlund, from the



**YANGON:** Myanmar monk Wirathu (center) attends a meeting of Buddhist monks at a monastery outside Yangon. —AFP

Norwegian School of Theology, who has written extensively about what she dubs "Buddhist protectionist" movements in Myanmar and Sri Lanka.

"But what they will do is provide the justification for the use of violence carried out by others, be they vigilante groups, civilians, police or soldiers." It is not just global Islamophobia fuelling these groups, she adds-colonial history, globalisation and the advance of secularism play their part. "People feel they are losing their traditions." Puangthong Pawakapan, a politics expert at Bangkok's Chulalongkorn University, points to an earlier threat to

monks from the recent past-communism. During the height of the Cold War in the 1970s, one of Thailand's most prominent right-wing monks-Kittiwuttho-famously told followers it was "no sin to kill communists". Jerryson says he fears the recent religious communalism could spread to vulnerable minorities, such as Buddhists in Bangladesh's Chittagong Hill Tracts. "By labelling Muslims as adversaries to Buddhism, which historically has not been true, it solidifies the perception that the relationship is adversarial," he warns. "The damage is being done, there is a breakdown of trust, a building of fears." —AFP

## Slovak deputy prime minister quits after journalist's murder

**BRATISLAVA:** Slovak Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Robert Kalinak announced his resignation yesterday following tensions sparked by the murder of an investigative journalist probing links between the government and the mafia. "I think to fulfil my mandate I have to do everything to preserve stability in Slovakia," Kalinak told reporters. "For this reason I have decided to resign as deputy prime minister and interior minister."

Last month's murder of Jan Kuciak and his fiancée prompted huge protests against the government of Prime Minister Robert Fico, with tens of thousands of Slovaks turning out for rallies in Bratislava on Friday. Fico's Smer-SD party, to which Kalinak also belongs, came under fire from small coalition partner Most-Hid, which threatened to quit if the minister stayed, questioning the impartiality of the investigations under Kalinak's lead. The bodies of Kuciak and his fiancée Martina Kusnirova, both 27, were found on February 25 at their home near Bratislava.

The couple, who were to have married in May, had both been shot dead. Police have said Kuciak's death was "most likely" related to his investigation resulting in an article on ties between Slovakia's top politicians and Italy's notorious 'Ndrangheta mafia, which his employer posthumously published. The murder and the article sparked a wave of anti-government sentiment in the EU and NATO member of 5.4 million people. On Friday, some 40,000 people gathered in Bratislava to protest against Fico and his government, making it Slovakia's biggest protest since the 1989 Velvet Revolution that toppled Communism in former Czechoslovakia. Thousands of others also rallied in other cities across Slovakia, with parallel demonstrations also taking place in Prague and Berlin.

### Not enough?

Kalinak said he would stay on to complete unspecified tasks before formally stepping down, without giving a date. On March 1, Slovak police detained seven Italians named by Kuciak in his story but released 48 hours later.



**BRATISLAVA:** Protesters holds placards during a rally under the slogan 'For a Decent Slovakia', against corruption and to pay tribute to murdered Slovak journalist Jan Kuciak and his fiancée Martina Kusnirova at the Slovak National Uprising (SNP) square in Bratislava, Slovakia. —AFP

The Most-Hid party was expected to meet later on to decide whether Kalinak's step was enough to keep it in the coalition which also comprises the rightwing Slovak Nationalist Party (SNS). Pavol Babos, a Bratislava-based political analyst, said the question of who would replace Kalinak was key.

"If another minister designated by Smer-SD party continues as interior minister, it might not be enough for Most-Hid to ensure the impartial investigation of the double murder," he told AFP. Fico's alleged link to the mafia was his close aide Maria Troskova, a former model and Miss Universe contestant who used to be close to businessman Antonino Vadalà, one of the detained Italians. Troskova and another Fico aide have both stepped down for the duration of the investigation.

### Political crisis

Fico met Most-Hid leader Bela Bugár at the weekend, but they declined to speak about their talks. Slovak President Andrej Kiska, who has called for sweeping government changes or even snap elections in the wake of the Kuciak murder, was also in talks with party leaders in a bid to put an end to the political crisis. Fico initially blasted the president's call as "an attempt to totally destabilise our country," but he backed down last week. "We will offer solutions that will enable Most-Hid to continue in the government. I perceive the reality and I am ready for talks," Fico said last week. If Most-Hid leaves the three-party coalition, the most likely outcome is a minority government led by Fico-or early elections. —FP

## In shelters, terrified Syrians await the next bomb, attack

**BEIRUT:** As the Syrian army pushes deeper into eastern Ghouta under cover of a hammering bombardment, the 400,000 civilians the United Nations says live in the enclave have crowded into dark basements to cover from the ceaseless bombs. Under cracked ceilings that bulge downwards from the force of previous strikes, they string sheets across the basement to partition off rooms for entire families. "Look at it. It is completely uninhabitable. It is not even safe to put chickens in. There is no bathroom, just one toilet, and there are 300 people," said a man in a shelter in the region's biggest urban centre, Douma.

Like the other people in the shelter he did not want to give his name for fear of reprisals as the army attempts to retake the rebel enclave, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and his strongest ally Russia have said the onslaught on eastern Ghouta is needed to end the rule of Islamist insurgents

over civilians there and to stop mortar fire on nearby Damascus. But the intensity of the offensive, which the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights says has killed 1,160 people in three weeks, has provoked condemnation from Western countries and pleas from UN agencies for a humanitarian halt.

The assault began with one of the fiercest bombardments of the war, as war planes, helicopters and artillery rained down a near-constant stream of missiles, bombs, rockets and shells. It targeted an area that has been besieged since 2013, and where dire shortages of food and medicine have caused severe malnutrition and ravaging illness. After the bombs began to fall three weeks ago, people feared to leave the shelters even to seek the meagre remaining supplies of food.

### Children

The shelter was in two storeys of a basement and very crowded. Small children were everywhere, chattering and playing in the maze-like corridors between the hanging sheets. Inside the makeshift rooms, thin mattresses and blankets lay on the floor. Some people tried to sleep. In one corner, a man sat up for the arrival of a medic, there to treat his injuries from a previous bomb attack. Long cuts were visible on his shoulder and the crown of his head, which the medic cleaned.



**SAQBA:** Smoke billows following Syrian government bombardment on the rebel-controlled area of Saqba, in the besieged Eastern Ghouta region on the outskirts of the capital Damascus. —AFP

Small children helped with washing up - rinsing foamy detergent off stainless steel dishes with dirty water from a small jug. In such conditions, hygiene becomes increasingly hard to maintain. "Three hundred people living in danger and we are forced to live like this... old and young and sick," said the man. From another part of the shel-

ter, a man could be heard calling for the mother of a boy who had soiled himself, something people there said had grown more common as fear set in. Many of the people huddled in Douma's shelters had already fled from other parts of the enclave, some of them many times over to escape the ever-shifting front lines. —Reuters

## 'Sisters' help women sex-trafficked from China flee from US

**NEW YORK:** Susan Liu canvasses the streets in front of massage parlors in New York City once a month. Her goal: to befriend the women who work there, many of whom she believes are being sex trafficked. Liu is the director of women's services at Garden of Hope, an organization that provides trafficked women in massage parlors with counseling and access to lawyers. "Many people do not know the background of these women, who are so brave to come over the ocean to a new place to find ways to support their families," she said. "It's about looking for a better life, just like any immigrant or any citizen in any country."

Liu is part of a growing number of advocates finding innovative ways to overcome cultural and language barriers to help trafficked women forced to sell sex in more than 9,000 massage parlors across the United States. The anti-slavery group Polaris estimates that traffickers make \$2.5 billion a year from the trade, which mainly involves women from China and Korea working behind storefronts along highways and in strip malls, and living in fear of deportation. After escort services, it is the second most common type of trafficking reported to the charity's national hotline, which received almost 14,000 calls last year.

Many of the women are illegal immigrants who are recruited by traffickers promising legitimate jobs and later asked to perform sex acts, campaigners say. They speak little or no English and often face pressure to repay debts and support their families, according to advocates, who said it is hard to help the women because they are kept quiet with threats and moved among locations every few weeks. "The response to American-born pimp-controlled victims isn't going to be the same as foreign-born victims who don't just have different vulnerabilities, but also different cultural backgrounds," said Rochelle Keyhan, a director at Polaris.

As discussing sex is taboo in China and domestic violence is not taken seriously, victims are more likely to talk about labor exploitation than reveal sexual abuse, she said. Websites like Rubmaps.com, where men review massage parlors that offer sexual services, are helping to fuel the crime but identifying traffickers and their victims is difficult, police and campaigners say. Globally, human trafficking earns profits of roughly \$150 billion a year for traffickers, according to the International Labour Organization. That figure includes profits from sexual exploitation and forced labor.

### Beaten up

Trafficked women in massage parlors are often assaulted by their customers but they feel helpless because they fear the police and cannot speak English, advocates say. "What we were hearing from those women is when they said 'no', the customers would beat them up, they would rape them, they would try to strangle some of our clients," said Lori Cohen, director of Sanctuary for Families, a support group.

One survivor recalled finding a massage parlor job online, and being told that she would not have to offer "full service" - meaning intercourse - or other sexual services. "When I started working, I was asked to compensate for the fees lost if I refused to provide 'full service' to the customer," the woman, who declined to give her name, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. "I have been beaten up by customers ... I had also been threatened by a customer with a knife before when I refused to provide 'full service'."

Still, she said that she was afraid of losing the job because she did not have a work permit, needed to repay the agent who applied for her tourist visa, and support her son. —Reuters



## International

# British PM weighs response to nerve attack on double agent

## Britain tells public: Wipe down items, wash clothing

**LONDON:** Prime Minister Theresa May held a meeting of Britain's top ministers and security officials yesterday to weigh up how to respond to a nerve agent attack on a former Russian spy who passed secrets to British intelligence. Sergei Skripal, 66, and his daughter Yulia, 33, have been in hospital in a critical condition since March 4 when they were found unconscious on a bench outside a shopping centre in the southern English cathedral city of Salisbury.

May has warned that if Russia is behind the poisoning of Skripal, a former colonel in GRU military intelligence, then Britain will respond robustly. Russia has denied any involvement in the attack which also struck down a British policeman. The chairman of the British parliament's foreign affairs committee, Tom Tugendhat, said the attack looked like state-sponsored attempted murder and he expected May to blame Moscow after chairing a meeting of the National Security Council. "Frankly I would be surprised if she did not point the finger at the Kremlin," Tugendhat told BBC radio.

Even though Britain has not officially blamed Russia, the affair has hit the already poor relations between the two. Russia's foreign ministry said London was whipping up anti-Russian hysteria while state TV went further, accusing Britain of poisoning Skripal as part of a special operation designed to spoil Russia's hosting of the soccer World Cup this summer. Tugendhat said Russia's so-called oligarchs, who have amassed fortunes during President Vladimir Putin's 18-year rule, should be denied entry to the luxuries of London and the West.

The British capital has been dubbed "Londongrad" due to the large quantities of Russian money that have poured in since the

collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. British counter-terrorism police say a nerve agent - usually a small molecule based on phosphorus that interferes with the transmission of nerve signals - was used on Skripal and his daughter. But they have refused to specify which poison was used. A British policeman who was one of the first to attend to the stricken spy was also

to "justify itself". May last year said Putin was seeking to undermine the West and the international order by meddling in elections. She promised to ensure corrupt money does not flow into Britain from Russia. Putin, who took over as Kremlin chief from Boris Yeltsin on the last day of 1999, has denied allegations that Russia meddled in the 2016 US presidential election and says the West has repeatedly tried to undermine Russian interests. Skripal betrayed dozens of Russian agents to British intelligence before his arrest in Moscow in 2004. He was sentenced to 13 years in prison in 2006, and in 2010 was given refuge in Britain after being exchanged for Russian spies.

Russian state television said Skripal had been recruited by the British when working as Russia's military attaché in Spain and that he had handed over 20,000 pages of secret documents to MI6, Britain's foreign spy service. British Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson also drew parallels between the poisoning of Skripal and the murder of former KGB agent Alexander Litvinenko, who died in London in 2006 after drinking green tea laced with radioactive polonium-210.

### 'Baby wipes'

A British public inquiry found the killing of Litvinenko had probably been approved by Putin and carried out by two Russians, Dmitry Kovtun and Andrei Lugovoy - a former KGB bodyguard who later became a member of the

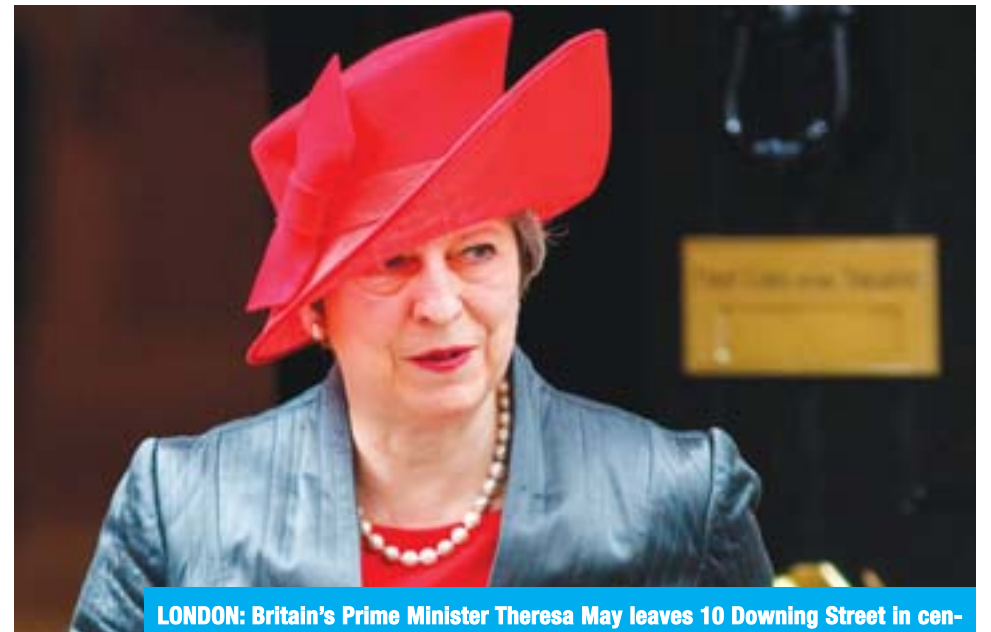


## Russia denies involvement in Skripal attack

affected by the nerve agent. He is now conscious in a serious but stable condition, police said.

### World Cup threat

In a broadcast on Sunday, Russian state TV suggested Britain itself had poisoned Skripal to upset the soccer World Cup which Russia is hosting in June and July. "They tried to pin the blame on Russia, but if you think it through the poisoning of the GRU (military intelligence) colonel was only advantageous to the British," Dmitry Kiselyov, the country's top pro-Kremlin presenter said. "An excellent special operation," said Kiselyov. "Skripal is cheap expendable material," he said, and after the special operation Russia would then have



**LONDON:** Britain's Prime Minister Theresa May leaves 10 Downing Street in central London yesterday, to attend a Commonwealth Day Service at Westminster Abbey. —AFP

Russian parliament. Both denied responsibility, as did Moscow. After Skripal was found slumped on a bench in Salisbury, health officials in Britain said there was no wider risk to public health. But some police investigators wore full chemical and biological suits and the army was later deployed to help remove items from the scene.

On Sunday, hundreds of people who visited the city's Zizzi restaurant or the Bishop's Mill pub were told to wash their clothes after traces of the substance used to attack Skripal

were found at both sites. Jenny Harries, deputy medical director at Public Health England, suggested there may be a very small health risk associated with repeated contact with belongings that may have been contaminated. "Wipe personal items such as phones, handbags and other electronic items with cleansing or baby wipes and dispose of the wipes in the bin," Harries suggested. "Wash other items such as jewellery and spectacles which cannot go in the washing machine with warm water and detergent." —Reuters

### News in brief

#### Copter crashes, 5 die

**NEW YORK:** Five people have died after a helicopter owned by a tour group plunged into Manhattan's East River, police said yesterday. The red chopper, which is owned by tourism group Liberty, was carrying six people including the pilot when it crashed into the river near the upscale Upper East Side neighborhood shortly after 7:00 pm on Sunday. "Five people are deceased," a New York Police Department spokesperson said, saying the dead were all passengers on the helicopter. Following the crash, "the pilot freed himself, the other five did not," Fire Commissioner Daniel Nigro told reporters during an earlier press conference. —AFP

#### Knifeman shot dead

**VIENNA:** A 26-year-old Austrian was shot dead outside the Iranian ambassador's residence in Vienna on Sunday night after he attacked a guard with a knife, police said. The assailant "died on the spot" after the soldier opened fire, police spokesman Harald Soeres said, adding that the attack took place just before midnight local time. The motive for the attack is not yet known, police said. The soldier, who was standing guard outside the building, suffered a wound to his upper arm in the attack. "He initially used pepper spray" against the assailant, Soeres said, before opening fire. He was believed to have fired his weapon at least four times. —AFP

#### Cambodia arrests 100

**PHNOM PENH:** Cambodian police yesterday arrested 100 Chinese people suspected of running a telecoms scam to defraud victims in China, a senior official said. China has been battling telecoms fraud for years, with the losses to victims running into billions of dollars, authorities in Beijing say. Hundreds of suspected scammers were arrested in Cambodia last year. Yesterday's arrests at a seven-story condominium in the capital of Phnom Penh included 81 Chinese men and 19 women, said General Uk Haiseila, chief of the Immigration Investigation Bureau. Police video of the raid showed the suspects seated in front of laptops on rows of desks in a room with curtains drawn. —Reuters

#### Ai Weiwei unfazed

**SYDNEY:** China's removal of presidential term limits, effectively letting President Xi Jinping hold office for life, will have no impact on its culture, artist Ai Weiwei said yesterday, as he unveiled a giant artwork in Sydney depicting asylum seekers. Ai, one of China's most high-profile artists and political activists, has become a vocal campaigner on migration as the number of people forced from their homes - largely by violence and war - has reached a record 65 million. In Sydney, Ai presented his 60-metre (197-ft) -long inflatable raft, carrying about 300 oversized human figures, a day after China removed the term limits from its constitution, raising concerns about a return to strongman rule. —Reuters

#### Taliban takes district

**LASHKAR GAH:** Taliban fighters have captured a district centre in Afghanistan's western province of Farah bordering Iran, where they have battled government security forces fiercely in recent months, officials said yesterday. Naser Mehri, a spokesman for the provincial governor, said a large group of fighters had captured the centre of Anar Dara district on Sunday night after hours of fighting, though police and intelligence service forces were still holding out in their headquarters. The Taliban released pictures that appeared to show fighters in the town, where skirmishes were taking place yesterday. —Reuters

## Harmless nostalgia or worrying nationalism? Germany split over new ministry

**BERLIN:** Is it about lederhosen, bratwurst and beer? Will it stir a healthy patriotism? Or does it hark back to the darkest chapter of German history by championing nationalism and excluding minorities? A new "Heimat", or homeland, ministry to be launched tomorrow by Chancellor Angela Merkel's new government has left Germans deeply divided. Some have poked fun at the term, which can evoke Alpine vistas and black forest cake, on new "Heimat" Twitter accounts that recommend "plain German fare" with "a chilled beer". But critics charge that using the loaded term means pandering to far-right populists pushing a xenophobic agenda and can only serve to isolate migrants and other minorities.

Championed by Merkel's conservative Bavarian allies the CSU, the revamped "Ministry of the Interior and Heimat" is set to combine public security and sports with new areas such as housing. More than simply denoting homeland, the concept of "Heimat" also conjures up a cultural belonging and a sense of nostalgia. As Germany's new Foreign Minister Heiko Maas put it, it is "an important bit of happiness". But few words are as politically loaded in post-war Germany as Heimat, a word that to many still carries a whiff of the era of Adolf Hitler's racist regime.

### 'Blood and soil'

"Heimat was the central building block of the Nazis' blood and soil ideology," author Daniel Schreiber wrote in Die Zeit weekly, noting that the term "has never existed without being politically instrumentalised". No party has leapt on the concept as wholeheartedly as the far-right and anti-immigration Alternative for Germany, which in

## Rich Communist in Kremlin race offers 'strawberry' socialism

**LENIN STATE FARM:** A debonair businessman who boasts million-dollar earnings, Pavel Grudinin came as a surprise choice as Russia's Communist candidate for president. Nicknamed the "strawberry king", the 57-year-old has a pick-your-own fruit farm and dairy herd on a chunk of valuable real estate on Moscow's outskirts. The grey-haired politician with his ready smile is the first fresh face in years to stand for the red-flag-waving party led by 73-year-old stalwart Gennady Zyuganov. In a predictable March 18 presidential election, Grudinin is likely to be runner-up to President Vladimir Putin, though he lags far behind in state-run opinion polls at around seven percent.

He appears to have all the credentials for a Communist candidate: he runs an agribusiness named after Vladimir Lenin and has praised Stalin, to whom he bears a passing resemblance. Yet he is not a member of the Communist party and much of his wealth comes from renting and selling highly valuable land bordering the Moscow ring road to supermarkets. "My earnings over the last six years were 157 million rubles (2.2 million euros, \$2.7 million). I don't earn badly," he told reporters recently. He hit controversy in March when the

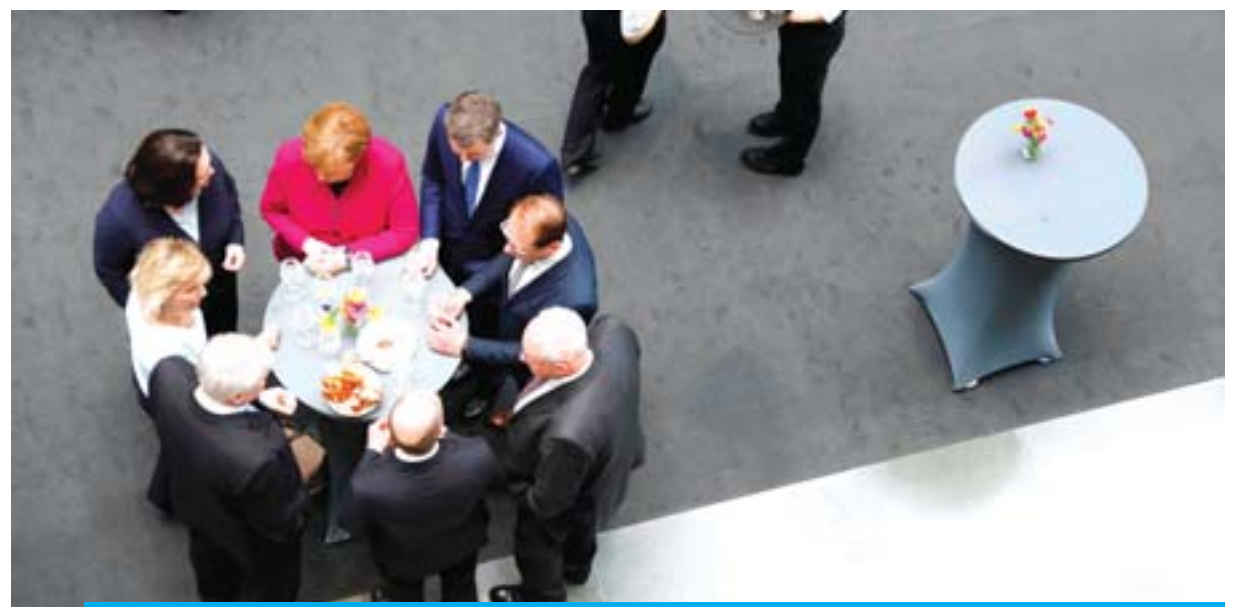
Central Electoral Commission ruled that he failed to declare Swiss bank accounts containing \$1 million before registering his bid.

The commission finally ruled there were no grounds to deselect him but decided to display notices in polling stations saying he provided unreliable information. Analysts see his role in the Kremlin scenario as boosting turnout-but not taking votes away from Putin. Grudinin is willing to criticise policies but not the strongman himself. "This is not a battle between people, it's a battle of ideologies," he said. In the past he publicly supported Putin and even joined the ruling party.

### Lenin State Farm

Communist leader Zyuganov has praised Grudinin for enacting socialist principles, from building a turreted Disney-style kindergarten to paying workers above-average wages. The Sovkhoz Imeni Lenina, or Lenin State Farm, covers a whole district, entered through elaborate gates decorated with strawberry motifs. Zyuganov calls it a "territory of social optimism".

Inside are strawberry sculptures, a cafe called Berry and street lights in the shape of the red berry. The farm was founded in 1918 as a showcase for Soviet agriculture. In 1995, it became a limited company with Grudinin as director. Journalists on a recent tour were shown how he has modernised the operation, with lasers zapping cows' udders in an automated Dutch milking parlour. Profits are ploughed back into community facilities that look much better than state-provided ones. At the school that opened last year, children study computer modelling and Ancient Greek democracy



**BERLIN:** German Chancellor Angela Merkel (center, top) stands around a table with (clockwise) German government spokesman Steffen Seibert, CSU politician Alexander Dobrindt after the signature of the coalition treaty of the conservative CDU/CSU party and the Social Democrats to form a new government yesterday. —AFP

September's election ran a campaign with slogans such as "Our country, our Heimat". Describing themselves as "patriots," and railing against an influx of mostly Muslim foreigners, the AfD has vowed to help voters "Get your country back". Almost 13 percent of Germans voted for the AfD last September, while the "establishment" parties, Merkel's bloc and the centre-left SPD, scored their worst results in decades.

The new super ministry is part of a push by the mainstream parties to reclaim the term from the extremists. President Frank-Walter Steinmeier said in a speech on German Reunification Day: "We must not leave to the nationalists our longing for Heimat, for security, for a slower pace in society, for cohesion and recognition." Germany's large ethnic Turkish community

was among the first to criticise the new ministry. "We fear that it would not bring about cohesion and togetherness, but exclusion and division," the chairman of the Turkish community association, Gokay Sofuoğlu, told Berliner Zeitung.

NDO, an umbrella group for migrant rights groups, also slammed the new ministry as "symbolic politics for potential right-wing voters". In the 1950s, wholesome Heimat films set in an idealised countryside were produced by West Germany to wipe out the Nazi association. On the other side of the Wall, East German children were taught communist ideology during Heimat history classes, noted Schreiber. Today, he said, the word has been seized upon by those who, in the fast-paced age of globalisation, want to return to an idealised past. —AFP



**MOSCOW:** Russian Communist Party (CPRF) supporters shout slogans during a pre-election rally for their presidential candidate Pavel Grudinin in Moscow. Russia will hold presidential elections on March 18. —AFP

while the spotless kindergarten has a whole room of Lego. Grudinin may be a "capitalist", but his treatment of workers and the local community play well with Communists too, said political analyst Konstantin Kalachev. Communist MP Valery Rashkin insisted there was "no schism" in the party over Grudinin's candidacy, calling him "our man, flesh of our flesh".

### 'Negative stuff and dirt'

Grudinin is a "dark horse" and the only candidate who could do better than the Kremlin intends, analyst Andrei Kolesnikov

while the Carnegie Moscow Center told Vedomosti business daily. According to state pollster VTsIOM, Grudinin's public support stood at 7.1 percent in early March, while Putin's was 69.7 percent.

At the start of the year 73.8 percent of respondents had said they would back the Kremlin strongman. The downward trend for Putin prompted a wave of hostile coverage of Grudinin in pro-Kremlin media, his supporters say. "It's going badly," said MP Rashkin, complaining that "everyone has turned on Grudinin and they're chucking negative stuff and dirt at him". —AFP



## International

# Japan PM, finance minister under fire over suspected cover-up of cronyism

## Documents show Abe, wife, minister names removed

**TOKYO:** Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and his close ally, Finance Minister Taro Aso, faced growing pressure yesterday over a suspected cover-up of a cronyism scandal that has dogged the premier for more than a year. Copies of documents seen by Reuters showed that references to Abe, his wife and Aso were removed from finance ministry records of the discounted sale of state-owned land to a school operator with ties to Abe's wife, Akie.

Abe, now in his sixth year in office, has denied that he or his wife did favours for the school operator, Moritomo Gakuen, and has said he would resign if evidence was found that they had. Excised references seen by Reuters did not appear to show that Abe or his wife intervened directly in the deal.

Suspicion of a cover-up could slash Abe's ratings and dash his hopes for a third term as leader of his Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). Victory in the LDP September leadership vote would put him on track to become Japan's longest-serving premier. The doubts are also putting pressure on Aso to resign. "It could shake confidence in the administration as a whole. I strongly feel responsibility as the head of administration," Abe told reporters after the finance ministry reported on the altered documents. "I apologise to all of the people."

Abe said he wanted Aso to make every effort to clarify all the facts and ensure such things do not happen again. Aso told a separate news conference that several officials at his ministry's division in charge of the sale were involved in altering the documents to make them conform with testimony in parliament.

ment by the then-head of the division. "It has become clear that there was a cover-up and falsification," opposition Democratic Party leader Yuichiro Tamaki told reporters. He said Aso should resign and parliament hold hearings on the matter.

The 77-year-old Aso, who is also deputy premier and whose backing is vital for Abe, apologised for his ministry's actions, but said that he had no intention of stepping down.

The risk for Aso and Abe, experts said, is that the suspected cover-up does more damage than the land sale itself. "The cover-up is now a bigger issue than the original incident," said Koichi Nakano, a professor at Sophia University. A finance ministry official said that 14 items had been altered in the documents after February last year - when the scandal broke - at the instruction of the ministry's financial division to match testimony in parliament.

### Finance Minister Aso apologises for altered documents

#### Aso's survival?

One such reference was to Akie's visit to the school at the heart of the suspected scandal. Also removed was a reference to ties by Abe and Aso to a conservative lobby group, Nippon Kaigi. The records include a comment from Yasunori Kagoike, the former head of Moritomo Gakuen, citing Akie Abe as telling him: "This is good land so please proceed." A kindergarten run by Moritomo Gakuen taught a nationalist curriculum in line with views espoused by Nippon Kaigi. "At the very least, it seems that Aso's chances of surviving as finance min-



**TOKYO:** Protesters stage an anti-Abe demonstration near the prime minister's official residence in Tokyo yesterday. Japan's finance ministry admitted to doctoring key documents related to a favouritism scandal dogging Shinzo Abe, a ruling lawmaker said yesterday, as a new poll suggested the affair is hitting the prime minister's popularity. —AFP

ister are diminishing rapidly," wrote Tobias Harris, vice president of consultancy Teneo Intelligence, in an email. He said there was no "smoking gun" showing direct intervention by Abe or his wife. But Harris added: "It now seems to be more a question of whether Abe can manage an orderly exit at the end of his term in September or whether he'll resign hastily again - but I don't see how he can win a new mandate amidst the Abe fatigue that will surely grow after these revelations." A Sankei newspaper poll over the weekend said 71 percent of

respondents said Aso should go. On Friday, National Tax Agency chief Nobuhisa Sagawa resigned over remarks in parliament last year about the case.

Sagawa headed the ministry division that submitted the documents before he was tapped as tax agency chief in July, an appointment critics saw as a reward for his efforts to diffuse the issue with his statements to parliament last year. Some LDP members said politicians should not pass the buck to bureaucrats. —Reuters

## Bangladesh ex-PM granted bail; party mulls poll boycott

**DHAKA:** A Bangladeshi court granted bail yesterday to former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, who was jailed last month for five years for graft, raising a chance her party might take part in a December general election. Zia is a two-term prime minister whose bitter rivalry with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has defined Bangladeshi politics for years. Their feud hangs over the run-up to a December election with Zia's Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) vowing to boycott the polls in a protest against what it has said was Zia's unfair jailing on trumped up charges.

"The High Court granted her bail for four months," Moudud Ahmed, a lawyer in the case and also a senior leader of Zia's party, told reporters after the court ruling. The decision to release Zia on bail could open the door to her party's participation in the general election, party secretary-general Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir said. "We can not say just now. Let our chief come out and then we will sit with her and we'll discuss it," Alamgir said. "We are always in favour of elections, but there must be a congenial atmosphere."

It was not immediately clear when Zia would be released from detention. Earlier yesterday, Alamgir said an election without Zia would be "meaningless". He also said that unless the judgement against her was overturned, she would not be able to contest the election even if she got bail. Under Bangladesh electoral rules, anyone jailed for more than two years cannot contest an election for five years. The BNP boycotted the last polls, in 2014, in a protest against Hasina's scrapping of the practice of having a caretaker government oversee elections.

A boycott in December would again give the prime minister's Awami League a clear run at power when the opposition could be benefiting from voter frustration with prices, unemployment, power cuts and anger over what many see as heavy-handed government tactics against opponents.



**DHAKA:** Supporters of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) celebrate after opposition leader Khaleda Zia was granted bail in Dhaka yesterday. —AFP

Another boycott would also dash any hopes of stability, and raise risks for the country's garment industry, which accounts for 80 percent of exports, which could face disruption by transport blockades in the event of unrest.

#### 'Toxic' politics

At the same time, efforts to combat Islamist militants behind a string of bloody attacks in recent years risk being hampered by turmoil. "Politics could become even more toxic," the International Crisis Group think-tank said in a recent note. "The government's continued marginalisation of BNP and its forcing underground of opponents like Jamaat-e-Islami, risk sapping resources from efforts to disrupt jihadists." Jamaat, Bangladesh's largest Islamist party

and an ally of the BNP, has been accused of inciting militancy. It denies that and opposition parties have denounced the crackdown on Jamaat leaders as a way to silence rivals.

The BNP says the case against Zia is politically motivated by a ruling party riding roughshod over human rights and the rule of law. "This is a totally one-party-rule here and it is totally dictatorial. Under these circumstances she's been convicted," Alamgir said. Law Minister Anisul Huq said the court decision to grant Zia bail proved that the government did not interfere in court matters. Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan, a senior member of Hasina's party, denied that the government had any role in Zia's conviction, and said the BNP was merely trying to score political points with its accusations. —Reuters

## Chinese leader calls for joint efforts to advance reforms

**KUWAIT:** Chinese Premier Li Keqiang called for joint efforts to advance reform and opening-up, promote innovation, sustain economic growth and improve people's livelihood on the ongoing national legislative session. Joining deputies to the 13th National People's Congress (NPC) from southern Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, Li stressed following the guide of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era.

Li said as this year marks the 40th anniversary of China's reform and opening-up drive, local governments should not only fully implement national reform policies, but launch tailored measures of their own to create a business-friendly environment for the benefit of enterprises and the public. Local governments were also told to practise frugality but increase spending on programs for people's livelihood and focus on poverty alleviation.

Senior leaders including Wang Yang, Wang Huning and Han Zheng, all members of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, also joined panel discussions of political advisors and NPC deputies Tuesday. Joining political advisors from ethnic minority groups, Wang Yang called for concrete efforts to secure victory in building a moderately prosperous society in all respects in areas with large ethnic minority populations. He asked them to focus on targeted poverty reduction and environment protection.

While attending discussions of NPC deputies from Hong Kong and Macao special administrative regions, Wang Huning stressed implementation of the spirit of the 19th CPC National Congress on work related to the two regions, urging efforts to act in strict compliance with China's Constitution and the basic laws of the two special administrative regions, support the governments and chief executives of both regions in exercising law-based governance. Speaking to NPC deputies from Shaanxi Province, Han Zheng encouraged people to strive to achieve more efficient, fairer, and more sustainable development with better quality by following the philosophy of innovative, coordinated, green, and open development that is for everyone. — (Article provided by the Embassy of China)

## North Korea silence speaks volumes on US nuclear talks

**SEOUL:** Pyongyang has maintained a deafening silence as news that US President Donald Trump will meet its leader Kim Jong Un made global headlines and analysts say the nuclear-armed North is keeping its powder dry, retaining room to manoeuvre. Trump last week agreed to meet with Kim by the end of May to discuss Pyongyang's denuclearisation-which it put on the table in exchange for security guarantees-and predicted the talks would be a "tremendous success". But the unorthodox announcement was made on the White House lawn by a South Korean envoy, with no American officials in attendance, and only confirmed by Washington afterwards. More than 72 hours later, there has been no comment by the North, and nothing on the subject in its official media.

"It was a unilateral statement by Trump," said Koh Yu-hwan, a professor at Dongguk University. "Kim Jong Un just sent him a verbal message" through Seoul's intermediaries. "To North Korea, it's not an official agreement," he told AFP. "Nothing's for sure yet. For them, an official announcement has to be based on a government-level agreement that includes the agenda and location." The same applied to the North's summit with the South that Seoul announced for April, he added. In addition, Pyongyang would not want to give the South credit for brokering the talks with Washington, he said, and would hold off on any announcement until its own direct contacts with the US.

In stark contrast, the US president has been itching to share his prospective meeting. Trump has given himself a pat on the back for bringing the isolated regime to the negotiating table, showing confidence that the North was "looking to de-nuke" and that its



**US President Donald Trump**

leaders were ready to "make peace". But analysts warn that Pyongyang's silence gives it "maximum optionality" on its next move. "It's not tying its own hands or making any commitments," said Van Jackson, a defence expert at the Victoria University of Wellington. "We should be wary about believing anything we're told in private-whether by North or South Korea."

#### Options A, B, C and D

The stunning turnaround comes after a year of high tensions over the North's nuclear and missile programmes during which Trump and Kim traded personal insults and threats of war. The summit-if it materialises-will be the first between a sitting US president and a North Korean leader and they will have to navigate through decades of mistrust. Possible locations mooted in the media include the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) that divides the two Koreas, the South's Jeju Island, Switzerland-where Kim studied as a teenager-Sweden, and even Washington DC. But critics warn that the talks, entered into by an impulsive, inexperienced US president, carry high risks and could create more rumbles in an already volatile region. They are scheduled to take place without the months of groundwork that usually precedes such meetings, and reports say Trump accepted Kim's summit invitation without consulting his top national security advisers. —AFP

### News in brief

#### Indian farmers protest

**MUMBAI:** Tens of thousands of Indian farmers protested in Mumbai yesterday after walking more than a hundred kilometres to demand better crop prices and land rights. The farmers, wearing red caps and carrying red flags, arrived in the city following a six-day trek from Nashik, situated 165 kilometres north of India's financial capital. Officials estimated that up to 30,000 demonstrators, including elderly women and young children, had gathered at Azad Maidan playing field in the south of Mumbai to press their demands. "We have made arrangements including setting up of emergency medical facilities and potable drinking water," Tanaji Kamble, a spokesman for Mumbai's civic authority said. —AFP

#### Forest fires kill 9 hikers

**NEW DELHI:** Nine trekkers died and 18 others were left with serious burns as wildfires swept through a popular hiking spot in India's Tamil Nadu state, officials said yesterday. The group were hiking through Theni district, a hilly region in southern India thickly forested and dotted with tea plantations, when they were forced to flee a fast-approaching fire. They apparently became separated while trying to find a safe way to escape the oncoming blaze. "It seems that the victims deviated from the regular trail. This is a popular trekking spot," Theni district official S Kandasamy said. "Nine people lost their lives and 27 others were rescued." Of those rescued, 18 were injured, Kandasamy said. —AFP

#### Vietnam arrests policeman

**HANOI:** Vietnam has arrested a senior police official in charge of tackling illegal online betting after he was accused of having links to a gambling ring in the communist nation. The now-former chief of the "high-technology department" at the powerful Ministry of Public Security (MPS) is the most senior police official to be targeted amid a sweeping crackdown on rampant corruption. Police Major General Nguyen Thanh Hoa, 60, was arrested on Sunday evening in a Hanoi hospital where he was reportedly receiving medical treatment, according to state-run Tuoi Tre newspaper. He is being investigated for "organising gambling" in northern Phu Tho province, MPS said in a statement Sunday. —AFP

#### Blow for HK democrats

**HONG KONG:** Hong Kong's (HK) democracy camp failed to claw back all their lost seats yesterday in controversial by-elections as the city's pro-Beijing establishment further cements its grip. The result is the latest blow to the democratic movement as China ups pressure on the semi-autonomous city to fall into line after unprecedented challenges including mass rallies calling for reform and the emergence of an independence movement. Sunday's vote was triggered after Beijing forced the disqualification of six rebel lawmakers who had swept to victory in citywide elections in 2016. Four of the six vacant seats were contested in the tense by-elections which saw China loyalists hurl insults at young democracy activists near a polling station. —AFP

#### Philippine activist killed

**BANGKOK:** Authorities must thoroughly investigate the murder of an indigenous activist in the Philippines, where defenders of land and environment are increasingly under attack, said a group of Southeast Asian lawmakers yesterday. Ricardo Mayumi was shot dead March 2 in his home in Ifugao Province in the country's north. He was one of the leaders of the Ifugao Peasant Movement (IPM) and had opposed a hydroelectric dam project, according to IPM. His killing requires "a prompt and thorough investigation", said ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights (APHR), a group of politicians from countries in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. —Reuters



## Analysis

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ADVERTISING : 24835616/7  
FAX : 24835620/1  
CIRCULATION : 24833199 Extn. 163  
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P.O.Box 1301 Safat, 13014 Kuwait.  
E MAIL: info@kuwaittimes.net  
Website: www.kuwaittimes.net

## Between poverty and slow growth, Russia's economic future uncertain

Outside a metro station in Saint-Petersburg, 70-year-old Irina Semyonova is selling homemade tomato-and-aubergine preserves as a way to supplement her pension which she says is just not enough to live on. After paying her bills and buying medicine, she says only 4,000 rubles (\$70) are left out of her monthly pension of 12,000 rubles. "Can one live on 4,000 rubles, especially in an expensive city like Saint-Petersburg?" Her lifeline is a country house outside the former imperial capital where she grows vegetables in her garden. "I go there in the summer, I have a vegetable plot and I sell what I grow, which helps me survive," she said.

Vladimir Putin, who is set to win a fourth historic term in March 18 polls, oversaw a period of economic growth during his first two mandates (2000-2008) that boosted personal incomes in the wake of the financial instability of the 1990s when many Russians lost their savings. But his third stint in the Kremlin, which began in 2012 after four years serving as prime minister, saw a decline in ordinary people's quality of life.

Russia has seen purchasing power decrease continuously for the past four years after the economy was hit with international sanctions punishing Moscow for its annexation of Crimea in 2014 followed by a fall in global oil prices in 2016. The country's poverty rate, which had fallen from 29 percent in 2000 to 10.7 percent in 2012, inched back up to 13.5 percent in 2016, according to the most recent annual official figures. In November, the World Bank released a report in which it said less than half of the population, 46.3 percent, was secure from sinking into poverty - citing a figure which was 10 percent lower than in 2014.

### 'Can't afford anything'

The situation is particularly dire in provincial Russia, where ordinary people subsist on extremely low salaries and young families often have to be helped by retirees' meager pensions. "The prices are crazy," said Vyacheslav, a retired mechanic living in Maloyaroslavl, a town in the Kaluga region southwest of Moscow. "I cannot afford anything." Tatyana Kuznetsova, 47, who lives in a nearby village of Ilyinskoye, says she already knows her pension will be less than 100 euros when she retires in several years, despite "breaking her back" at work since childhood.

Employed at a fish processing plant, she will never save enough to replace her sputtering old car, she said bitterly. According to a study by Credit Suisse bank, the richest 10 percent of Russians control 77 percent of the wealth, placing the country on the same level of inequality as the United States in a ranking of developed countries. "Between 2000 and 2013 the government didn't need to worry too much about the economy," said Chris Weafer of Macro Advisory consultancy. "The combination of annually rising oil wealth, plus the strong growth in disposable income and available credit, almost drove the economy without much government intervention," he said.

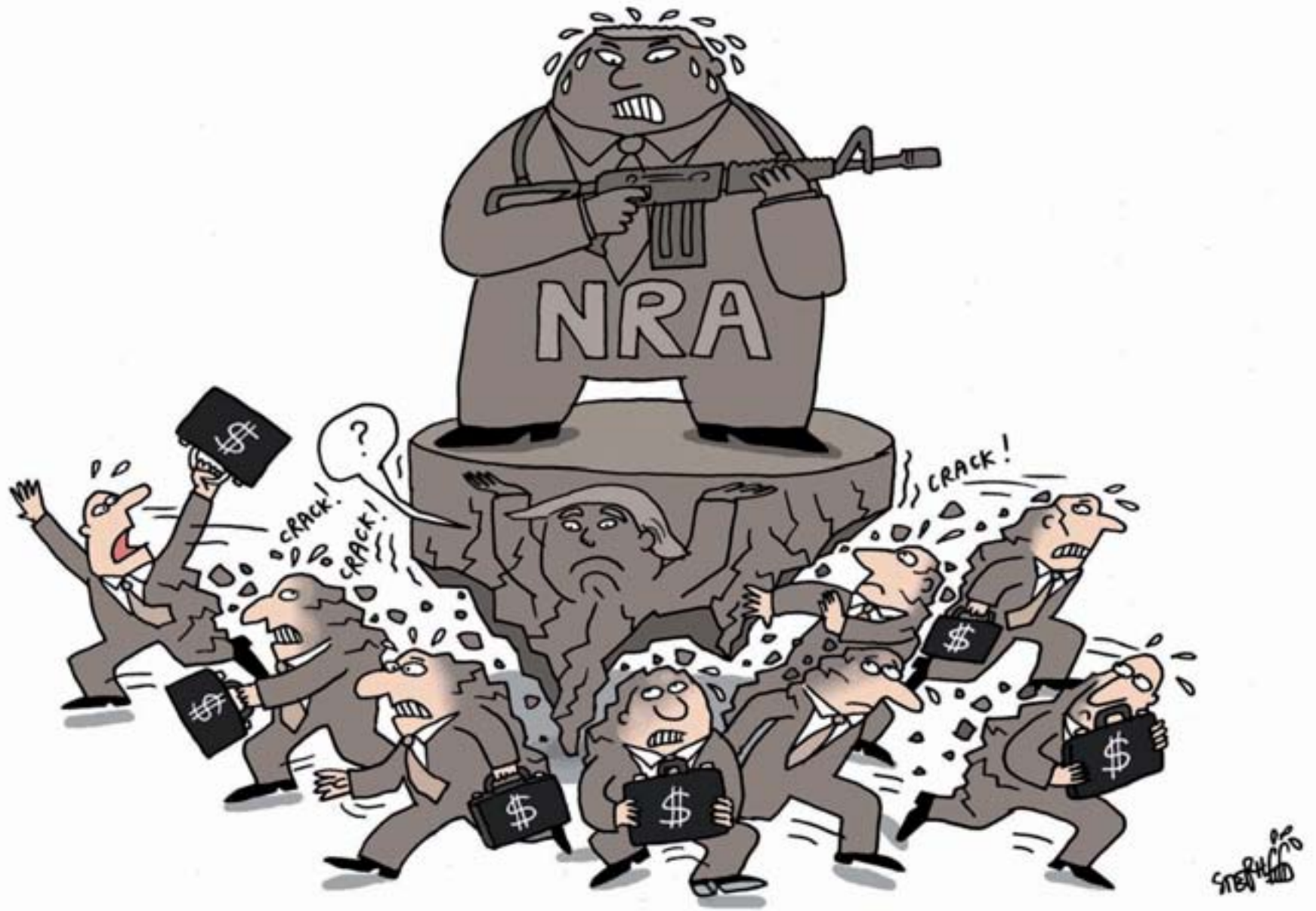
But the economic model reliant on energy extraction seems to have come to the end of the road, he said. Although the Russian economy has come back into the black last year, medium-term forecasts for growth don't exceed one or two percent, far from the successes of the early 2000s. "It is not enough to improve people's lifestyles or provide more funding for education, healthcare, etc.," Weafer said.

### Future prospects

Although poverty does not seem to have greatly affected Putin's popularity in the country, the Russian president devoted part of his speech earlier this month to the problem. He has vowed to halve "unacceptable" poverty figures in six years and boost growth to four percent. But while he has promised investment into infrastructure, health and housing, he was hazy with details about where the money would come from and did not mention any future reforms that would address the country's structural challenges like demographics. "Throughout all of the last decade, we heard these warm words on reform and that has never really amounted to anything," said Neil Shearing, an economist with Capital Economics.

Natalia Orlova, an economist with Alfa Bank, said last year's growth could be attributed to large-scale investment in huge infrastructure projects like the Power of Siberia pipeline and the bridge connecting the Crimean peninsula to Russia, factors that have run their course. "The best strategy is to focus on budget stability since sanctions are hampering all the rest," she told AFP.

The government has made low inflation its goal over the past several years, with the Central Bank maintaining a strict fiscal and monetary policy that some say has hampered prospects of growth. But Oleg Kouzmin, an economist at Renaissance Capital, says this hawkish approach has helped avoid the worst. "While standards of living are still lower than they were, the economy has de-risked substantially," he said, pointing out low inflation, lower capital flight and a cleanup of the banking sector. This "should contribute to further sustainable development," he said. —AFP



## Congressional race is national barometer

In a Pennsylvania district Donald Trump swept in 2016, the unfathomable has become the possible: A Democrat could win today's special election, sparking fears among Republicans about their ability to keep control of Congress with hugely consequential races in November. With anti-Trump fervor simmering, voters troop to the polls in the closely watched 18th congressional district, the working-class corner of southwestern Pennsylvania, to replace a Republican ousted by scandal.

It is coal country, and steel country too. Its recent reliably red status had diminished the drama about local elections. Suddenly it's under a political microscope, with the battle between culturally conservative Trump-backed state representative Rick Saccone, 60, and Democratic newcomer Conor Lamb, a 33-year-old former prosecutor and US Marine lawyer, taking on national implications.

"If the Democrats are able to come close, or win this, it will send shockwaves across the political world," Kevan Yenerall, a political science professor at Clarion University, said in an interview in the town of Mount Lebanon. "It'll mean the Democrats will likely pick up in fundraising and recruitment, and give them momentum going into the mid-term elections." Republicans control both the Senate and the House of Representatives. Analysts say that if White House chaos continues and Democratic field action surges, Democrats have a chance of flipping both chambers in November. Such is the potential significance of the latest race that the president himself stumped on Saturday for Saccone in District 18, which Trump won by 22 percent in 2016.

### 'Vote like crazy'

"He has a tough race," Trump acknowledged to thousands at a raucous rally in Moon Township. "The whole world, remember that, they're all watching," he said. "Go out on Tuesday and just vote like crazy." A president's endorsement and powers of persuasion can be valuable assets for a congressional candidate. But Lamb's surprisingly strong performance - polls show him tied or

within the margin of error against Saccone - has boiled down to Trump's polarizing presidency, according to Democratic Congressman Michael Doyle. "Lo and behold, they're fighting for their lives here," Doyle told AFP, referring to Republicans. "I think what's happening is, there's some buyer's remorse going on."

Trump's fiery populism, which included pledges to curb immigration, re-open shuttered factories, and strengthen the military, helped win the White House. But after a contentious - even toxic - first year, the Trump political brand is being tested. "Make no mistake: This race is a referendum on Trump's presidency," the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, the

The new face of a blue-collar family with political roots, Lamb is socially conservative and economically moderate, and backs the tariffs that Trump announced he is slapping on steel and aluminum imports.

At a recent rally at the United Steelworkers union, which has endorsed Lamb, he was restrained and soft-spoken. "In a time when they are trying to divide us, when our country is so divided already, we are united in this district for the first time in a long time," Lamb told the steelworkers. Saccone sounded more fervent as he stood alongside Trump at their rally. "This is the time to close the deal," Saccone implored to supporters. "We've got two days left."

### 'Snowball' effect?

Colleen Wooten, a Steelworkers staff representative, said Lamb has connected with the region's working class. "We're not out trying to get rich. We're just trying to have the American dream, and I think Mr. Lamb understands that and is going to bring our message forward," she said. "And if we can win big in our state, we can start a snowball effect."

Democrats could be forgiven for fretting about today's outcome. Their candidates made strong showings last year in special congressional elections in Georgia, Kansas and Montana, but ultimately fell short in those Republican strongholds. Democrats nonetheless take heart that those candidates performed better in their districts than Hillary Clinton did against Trump in 2016.

And several successes in state legislature races across the country, notably Virginia, have hinted at the potential for a blue wave. Some local Republicans suggested Democratic exuberance might be misplaced once again. Armand Castelli, a 58-year-old insurance agent from Pittsburgh, gave Democrat Lamb credit for having "a fairly decent resume", but suggested it would not be enough to upset Saccone, or to trigger a national political shift. "Let's see what happens on Tuesday," Castelli said. —AFP

### Lamb within striking distance of Saccone

national group that works to elect Democrats to the House, said Sunday. Republicans have pumped millions of outside dollars into the race, overwhelming the Democrats by seven to one, Yenerall said.

But Lamb's local campaign has pulled in more money than Saccone's, and is riding a tide of grassroots enthusiasm that has brought Lamb within striking distance of his more experienced opponent. His army of volunteers has fanned out knocking on doors, pressing into areas once considered so conservative that a Democrat could have little hope of breaking through. But Lamb has resonated with voters, including some centrist Republicans.

## For Venezuelans, food box may sway vote for Maduro

A bag of rice on a hungry family's kitchen table could be the key to Nicolas Maduro retaining the support of poor Venezuelans in May's presidential election. For millions of Venezuelans suffering an unprecedented economic crisis, a monthly handout of a box of heavily-subsidized basic food supplies by Maduro's unpopular government has offered a tenuous lifeline in their once-prosperous OPEC nation. The 55-year-old successor to Hugo Chavez introduced the so-called CLAP boxes in 2016 in a signature policy of his rule, continuing the socialist government's strategy of seeking public support with cash bonuses and other giveaways.

Now, running for re-election on May 20, Maduro says the CLAPs are his "most powerful weapon" to combat an "economic war" being waged by Washington, which brands him a "dictator" and has imposed sanctions. Mariana, a single mother who lives in the poor hillside neighborhood of Petare in the capital Caracas, says the handouts will decide her vote. "I and other women I know are going to vote for Maduro because he's promising to keep giving CLAPs, which at least help fix some problems," said the 30-year-old cook, who asked not to give her surname for fear of losing the benefit. "When you earn minimum wage, which doesn't cover exorbitant prices, the box helps."

Maduro's rule since 2013 has coincided with a deep recession caused by a plunge in global oil prices and failed state-led economic policies. Yet the worse the economy gets, the more dependent some poor Venezuelans become on the state. Life in the South American country's poor 'barrios' revolves around the CLAP boxes. According to the government, six million families receive the benefit, from a population of around 30 million people.

Venezuelans, many of whom are undernourished, anxiously wait for their monthly delivery, and a thriving black market has sprung up to sell CLAP products. The government sources almost all the CLAP goods from abroad, especially from Mexico, since Venezuela's food production has shriveled and currency controls restrict private imports. Critics, including Maduro's main challenger for the May 20 vote, Henri Falcon, say the CLAPs are a cynical form of political patronage and are rife with corruption. Erratic supply and control of distribution by government-affiliated groups have sown resentment among others. "I can't count on it. Sometimes it comes, sometimes not," said Viviana Colmenares, 24, an unemployed mother of six struggling to get by in Petare.

### 'Instrument of the revolution'

Stamped with the faces of Maduro and Chavez, the CLAP boxes usually contain rice, pasta, grains, cooking oil, powdered milk, canned tuna and other basic goods. Recipients pay 25,000 bolivars per box, or about \$0.12 at the black market rate. That is a godsend in a country where the minimum monthly wage is less than \$2 at that rate - and would be swallowed up by two boxes of eggs or a small tin of powdered milk.

Inflation, at more than 4,000 percent annually according to opposition data, is pulverizing household income. The administration of the CLAP - the Local Supply and Production Committees - does not hide its political motivation. "The CLAPs are here to stay. They are an instrument of the revolution," said Freddy Bernal, CLAP chief administrator. "It has helped us stop a social explosion and enabled us to win elections and to keep winning them," he told Reuters, referring to government victories in 2017 local polls.

Sometimes, though, the tactic backfires, as it did when promised free pork failed to arrive over Christmas, prompting street protests. Maduro's inability to halt rising hunger has jarred with the experience of many under Chavez, who won the presidency in 1998 and improved Venezuela's social indicators with oil-fueled welfare policies. Even though Maduro's approval rating is only around 26 percent, according to one recent poll, his re-election looks likely as

Venezuela's opposition coalition is boycotting the vote on accusations it is rigged.

His most popular rivals are banned from standing and the election board favors the government. Former state governor Falcon has broken with the coalition to stand. One survey by pollster DataAnalysis in February showed that in a two-way race, he would defeat Maduro by 45.8 percent to 32.2 percent of likely voters. Falcon's critics counter that those numbers mean nothing in the face of electoral irregularities that could arbitrarily tip the balance in favor of Maduro. Several other minor figures have registered for the single-round election, but have little chance of making an impact.

### 'Can't depend on the box'

Juan Luis Hernandez, a food specialist at the Central University of Venezuela, estimates the country generates just 44 percent of the basic food supplies it produced in 2008. Meanwhile, food imports fell 67 percent between the start of 2016 and the end of 2017 as the crisis bit, he said. Almost two-thirds of Venezuelans surveyed in a university study published in February said they had lost on average 11 kilograms (24 lbs) in body weight last year. Eighty-seven percent were assessed to live in poverty.

The same study found that seven out of 10 Venezuelans had received CLAPs. "They (the government) don't care about the food issue, just about getting people something to eat while they get through the elections," said Susana Raffalli, a consultant with charity Caritas. Some Venezuelans fear they would be found out should they vote against Maduro and be punished by no longer receiving food bags.

Already handouts are far from guaranteed. A dozen recipients told Reuters that often they arrived half-full and would only come every few months. Outside of the capital Caracas, delivery was even more sporadic. "I can't depend on the box, otherwise I would die from hunger," said Yuni Perez, a 48-year-old rubbish collector and mother of three. Perez, who lives in a ramshackle house made from breeze blocks and corrugated steel at the top of Petare, said a CLAP box provided her family with food for a week. Often they would receive one every two months. —Reuters



News

## Dhaman begins work on second...

Continued from Page 1

We have set out a roadmap to develop a digital infrastructure system to provide the beneficiaries with

smart healthcare services, and also formed strategic partnerships in the medical field to ensure meeting world-class health standards."

The groundbreaking ceremony of Dhaman's second hospital in Jahra coincides with the preparatory works of Dhaman's primary healthcare centers in Farwaniya, Hawally and Dajeej, which are expected to start welcoming patients soon. This includes the implementation and transfer of residents from the current health ministry facilities to Dhaman. — Press release

## Nod to panel to screen expats'...

Continued from Page 1

As a result, several MPs have made proposals to clamp down on expatriates, with some proposing to prevent them from driving, others calling to impose expensive fees on obtaining a driving license or owning a car while others calling for allowing expatriates to own only one vehicle. But the interior and defense committee has rejected those proposals. The new proposal

will pave the way for withdrawing a large number of driving licenses obtained in violation of the law.

Meanwhile, MP Omar Al-Tabtabaei yesterday said the government should resign if it cannot operate a company established to recruit domestic helpers from abroad in a bid to cut exorbitant costs. He also called on the interior ministry to monitor private recruitment offices and withdraw the licenses of offices involved in money laundering. The lawmaker said that the employment contract of maids must include a provision that they cannot leave the country without prior permission from the employer, and called for rejecting demands by the Philippines that the maid's passport should remain with the embassy, describing this as extremely dangerous.

## 'Little black dress' designer...

Continued from Page 1

time - even if fellow Coco Chanel is credited with inventing the garment. "His are the only clothes in which I am myself. He is far more than a couturier, he is a creator of personality," Hepburn once said of him. "To dress a woman is to make her beautiful," Givenchy once said. "In haute couture, we are cosmetic surgeons, erasing imperfections and refining the silhouette... for isn't a couturier a magician of sorts, who creates illusion and perhaps beauty itself?"

Givenchy was one of the first big designers to use black models, and in 1986 used only black models for one collection. US first lady Jacqueline Kennedy adopted the Givenchy look for her White House years, sticking to a uniform of shift dresses, pillbox hats and low-heeled pumps. The red coat she wore on the campaign trail for the 1960 presidential election was a Givenchy copy. On a state visit to France the following year, Jackie made a famously grand entrance in a Givenchy white silk faille dress at a state dinner at the Palace of Versailles, looking as regal as any European monarch's consort.

"Hubert de Givenchy was a symbol of Parisian elegance for more than half a century... who revolutionized fashion," his label said yesterday. Legendary Italian-

born creator Valentino told AFP that he tried to get a job with Givenchy when he was 17. "Unfortunately he did not hire me... but I kept admiring his vision, his perfection of cut and elegance. Like me he always respected the woman's body, never inflicting what was cool but only what was flattering."

Givenchy's current British-born designer Clare Waight Keller said that its founder was "not only one of the most influential fashion figures of our time, whose legacy still influences modern-day dressing, but he also was one of the chicest, most charming men I have ever met". "The definition of a true gentleman that will stay with me forever," she added.

Givenchy was forced to retire in Oct 1995 when his contract was not renewed by the giant LVMH group which had bought his house nearly eight years before. He was replaced by John Galliano, who was soon to leave for Dior, handing over to fellow Brit Alexander McQueen. With typical discretion, Givenchy made no comment, only that he had not been consulted about the appointments.

Yet two decades on his restrained style still informs the way Britain's Queen Elizabeth II and older American and Chinese socialites dress. Givenchy's final couture show in July 1995 was an emotional moment, with his fellow couturiers Yves Saint Laurent, Paco Rabanne, Christian Lacroix and Valentino taking front-row seats in a packed salon in the opulent Grand Hotel at the Paris Opera. Givenchy took his bow on the catwalk in his atelier's smock, and with characteristic modesty brought on all his loyal "petites mains" seamstresses to share the applause. — AFP

## GCC sets up company to facilitate...

Continued from Page 1

continue playing an active role toward facing these challenges through ensuring immunity of Gulf states' economies, solidifying monetary and financial stability and supporting economic and structural reforms aimed at creating economic diversification, Hashel proposed.

Hashel said strong policies depend on reducing reliance on oil resources, developing national human resources, creating an investment climate and increasing private sector participation in boosting the economy. "This meeting represents a new step towards further achievements in the field of Gulf economic, monetary and financial work," he said. Hashel also stressed the importance of the role played by the supervisory and control committee and the committee of payment and settlement systems in increasing the efficiency of banking and financial sectors and protecting them against risks, as well as enhancing their ability to face new sudden circumstances.

The conferees were graced with a meeting with HH

the Amir, who gave guidance about cooperation among GCC monetary institutions and banks, Hashel said, adding that the meeting also addressed combating money laundering and funding terrorism. He revealed that a technical team was formed for exchanging financial techniques among the GCC countries.

GCC Secretary General Abdullatif Al-Zayani said financial and banking coordination and cooperation among the GCC member states are likely to help consolidate pan-GCC economic integration. They also serve the final goal of achieving economic unity of the bloc by 2025, Zayani told the meeting. The GCC Supreme Council had approved linking payment systems in member countries as a major complementary project of the GCC, Zayani added, and also tasked GCC states with establishing an independent company for GCC payments.

Zayani stressed the role of the committee for enhancing cooperation and integration among the bloc's monetary agencies and central banks, as well as abolishing difficulties and promoting performance and financial and banking procedures. The committee's tangible efforts have contributed to the development and growth of the vital financial and banking sector, pushing it to a prominent regional and international status despite the economic and political challenges the GCC states are facing, Zayani said. — Agencies

## 11 killed as Turkish jet carrying hen party crashes in Iran

TEHRAN: Eleven women died when a private plane crashed in Iran while flying the daughter of a prominent Turkish businessman and her friends home from a hen party, officials and media reports said yesterday. The Bombardier Challenger 604, carrying Mina Basaran and seven of her friends from Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates to Istanbul, went down in southwestern Iran on Sunday. Three crew, all women, were also on board.

Iran's Civil Aviation Organization said the plane crashed at 6:09 pm (1439 GMT) on Sunday after the pilot had asked to descend due to a "technical problem". The business jet went down in the Zagros mountains, about 400 km south of Tehran. The aviation agency said six of the eight passengers were Turkish citizens and the other two Spanish.

Iranian news agency ISNA reported that the bodies of all 11 on board had been found by rescue teams. The remains were being brought down from the mountainside by helicopter to the Shahr-e Kord airport in the local provincial capital. IRNA, another Iranian news agency, reported that a group of those close to the victims had arrived at Shahr-e Kord, accompanied by a Turkish diplomat. It said all the bodies had been identified except two, which were badly burned. The Turkish army said it had sent a plane and emergency personnel to Iran to assist in salvage efforts.

### Black boxes found

Turkish media reported that Mina Basaran, the 28-year-old daughter of business tycoon Huseyin Basaran, had spent several days in the UAE with friends, celebrating ahead of her wedding next month. A graduate of Istanbul's Koc University, she had since 2013 been on the board of her father's company, Basaran Holding, and was reportedly being groomed as his successor. The hen party was also intended for three other women on board who were due to marry this summer. Several of the victims, like Mina, had successful careers in the fashion industry. Turkish media reported that at least one was pregnant.

Photographs reprinted from social media showed the



SHAHR-E KORD, Iran: Members of the Iranian Red Crescent carry yesterday caskets with the bodies of victims of a Turkish plane that crashed. — AFP

women lounging at a resort at the UAE and posing with the two pilots inside the plane. The two female pilots were reportedly Beril Gerbes and Melike Kuvvet, who was one of the first female pilots in the Turkish armed forces but left to work in civil aviation.

Turkish media reports said Mina Basaran was to marry her fiance Murat on April 14 at the Ciragan Saray, an Ottoman-era palace by the Bosphorus and one of the most prominent wedding venues in Turkey. Mina's father Huseyin had named a massive residential property development on the Asian side of Istanbul in the district of Fikirtepe after her - Mina Towers.

Basaran Holding is one of many family-owned conglomerates that have dominated Turkish industry since the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. The company grew out of northeastern Turkey's hazelnut trade and has since invested in multiple sectors including finance, construction, energy, cement, tourism, clothing and yachts. Huseyin Basaran, the company's third generation chief, is also the former deputy chairman of Turkey's Trabzonspor football team.

There was no immediate indication as to the cause of the crash. The aircraft's black boxes were found and will be handed to Turkish authorities, IRNA said. The crash comes less than a month after a twin-engine passenger plane of Iran's Aseman Airlines crashed in the Zagros range, killing all 66 people on board. That plane had disappeared off the radar after taking off from Tehran on a domestic flight as a snowstorm battered the mountains. — AFP

## 49 dead in Nepal plane crash...

Continued from Page 1

HH the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable yesterday to Bangladeshi President Mohammad Abdul Hamid, expressing his deepest sympathies over the victims of the plane crash. The Amir wished all those who were injured a speedy recovery. HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent similar messages.

The cause of the crash was not immediately clear, but a statement from airport authorities said the plane was "out of control" as it came in to land. Meanwhile, the CEO of US-Bangla Airlines Imran Asif laid blame on Kathmandu's air traffic control, saying the controller "fumbled" the landing. "Our pilot is an instructor of this Bombardier aircraft. His flight hours are over 5,000 hours. There was a fumble from the control tower," Asif told reporters outside the airline's offices in Dhaka.

An airport source, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said there may have been confusion between air traffic control and the pilot over which end of Kathmandu's sole runway - referred to as 'Runway 02' and 'Runway 20' - the plane was meant to land on. A recording purportedly of the conversation between the controller and pilot has been published online. AFP could not independently verify the recording.

Eyewitnesses said the plane - a Canadian-made Bombardier Dash 8 Q400 turboprop - crashed as it made a second approach towards the airport, shuddering violently as it lost height before hitting the ground and bursting into flames. "It should have come straight but it went in the other direction... then it crashed towards the field," said airport cleaner Sushil Chaudhary,

who saw the crash. Desperate relatives searched for the names of their loved-ones on a list of casualties hung outside a hospital where most of the victims were taken. One woman collapsed in tears after checking the list. Another bewildered-looking survivor, 27-year-old Basanta Bohara, told AFP at a hospital that he couldn't remember how he escaped from the burning wreckage. "I remember the accident. Nothing else. I don't know how I got out," Bohara said.

Airline spokesman Kamrul Islam said 33 of the passengers were Nepali, 32 were Bangladeshi, one each from China and the Maldives. Local media reported that many of the Nepali passengers were college students returning home for a holiday. Kathmandu airport briefly closed after the accident, forcing inbound flights to divert, but it has since reopened. It is Nepal's only international airport and experts say the mountainous landscape with the towering Himalayas to the north poses difficulties for pilots coming in to land.

"The landing at Kathmandu because of the terrain is a little challenging," said Gabriele Ascenzo, a Canadian pilot who runs aviation safety courses in Nepal. Depending on the direction of approach, pilots have to fly over high terrain before making a steep descent towards the airport, Ascenzo added. The accident is the deadliest since Sept 1992, when all 167 people aboard a Pakistan International Airlines plane were killed when it crashed as it approached Kathmandu airport. Just two months earlier, a Thai Airways aircraft had crashed near the same airport, killing 113 people.

Nepal's poor air safety record is largely blamed on inadequate maintenance and substandard management. Accidents are common and Nepal-based airlines are banned from flying in European Union airspace. The Dhaka-based US-Bangla Airlines launched just four years ago and made its first international flight in May 2016 to Kathmandu. It has since expanded with routes to South Asia, the Middle East and Southeast Asia. In 2015 one of its planes overshot the runway on landing at Saidpur in northwest Bangladesh. There were no reports of injuries. — Agencies

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Sports

# US basketball coach Johnson holds training session for disabled

Johnson to share his experiences especially with people with disabilities



KUWAIT: US Ambassador to Kuwait Lawrence Silverman attends training sessions at the Kuwait Sporting Club for Disabled in Hawally. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



By Ben Garcia

**KUWAIT:** US basketball coach Lawrence Trooper Johnson held a training session at the Kuwait Sporting Club for the Disabled in Hawally. Johnson, a captain of the Golden State Warriors wheelchair basketball team, is a current youth sports program and recreation opportunities coordinator for individuals and people with disabilities and visual impairments. The session was attended by US Ambassador to Kuwait Lawrence Silverman, who thanked the organizers for the successful event and everyone for their cooperation as they hone their basketball skills despite their condition.

"Last month, the world lost the great Kuwaiti humanitarian Moudi Sultan Bin Essa, who spent a lifetime serving the disabled community, supporting education and advocating for social integration for all," he said. Silverman quoted bin Essa, saying: "Everyone does good and loves what is good." He said this is a positive way of understanding humanity. "Those qualities, dedication and belief in humanity are what we hope to discover and build upon with the US Department of State Sports Envoy Program," he said.

Silverman explained athletes and coaches who travel overseas are told to inspire and lead sports programs of all kinds. "They hold sports clinics for athletes of all abilities, participate in community outreach activities and engage youth in conversations on the importance of leadership and respect for diversity," he added.

Johnson led two national championships and has earned

NWBA MVP awards. His main programs include wheelchair basketball, sled hockey, adaptive cycling, power cycling and junior adventure programs. He has been named as the Head Coach for the USA Women's National Team from 2017 to 2020, leading to the Paralympic Games in Tokyo in 2020.

Shafi Al-Hajri, president of Kuwait Disabled Sport Club, said the club's partnership with the US Embassy in sport, social and cultural domains will contribute to multifaceted development of the club. Hajri said this partnership began when former US President George Bush visited the club in 1995. He also noted that many Americans living in Kuwait exercise in the club.

Johnson said he hopes to share his skills and experiences, especially with people with disabilities. "I met a car accident when I was 17, but even before that, I was very active in sports. After that accident, I went back to sports because it's a natural thing to do, despite the disability. Basketball is the only team sport that is offered to people with disabilities, so I stuck to it. I ended up in the national team and competed in the US national team for 15 years. I also competed in the Paralympic Games," he said.

Johnson said since 1981, there have been lots of opportunities for people with disabilities in the United States. He also mentioned that he was impressed with the facilities for people with disabilities in Kuwait and also noticed how fortunate people with disabilities in Kuwait are, not to mention the unwavering support of the government and the community in particular.

“Everyone does good and loves what is good”



Subhi Al-Gharabally

## Kuwait Ninth Tennis Open 2018 results

By Abdellatif Sharaa

**KUWAIT:** The ongoing activities of Kuwait Ninth Tennis Open 2018, which started on March 4th under the patronage of President of Arab and Kuwait Tennis Associations, Honorary President of Asian Tennis Association Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Abdallah Al-Sabah continued at the Tennis Center of KTA, in Yarmouk Sports Club.

This is the biggest tennis tournament organized and supervised by KTA during the entire tennis season, and attracts a large number of players both citizens and expats in various age groups of both genders including members of the diplomatic core.

Results of the matches of Kuwait Ninth Open Tennis Tournament organized by Kuwait Tennis Federation and will continue until March 18.

**In the Under 11 category:**  
- Abdelwahab Al-Sarraf def Abdullah Al-Mubayy 9-4  
- Abdelrahman Ali def Fahad Al-Daihani 9-0  
- Ibrahim Al-Tarkeet def Saud Bu Abbas 9-3  
- Yousuf Burhan def Fadi Michael 9-0.

**In the Under 17:**  
- Talal Antar def Hassan Al-Bahrani 9-2  
- Mohammad Al-Shatti def Yousuf Al-Hairi 9-0  
- Mohammad Al-Dousary def. Yousuf Al-Arbeed 6-0, 6-2 while salom shaker def Hassan Al-Duwaision 9-0.

**In the Girls Under 18:**  
- Munira Al-Duajj Danya Ibrahim 9-3  
- Ritaj Hussein def Saihar Edvi 9-6

**In the women individual:**  
- Aseel Al-Kandary def. Salma Al-Zafiri 9-1  
- Muna Al-Saad def. Haya Al-Khalid 9-0

**In the men individual:**  
- Abdullah Al-Qallaf def. Ali Al-Qallaf 6-4, 6-4  
- Ali Murad def Rasheed Al-Bader 9-6  
- Rashid Al-Jaafar def Tariq Al-Qadiri 9-2  
- Daniel namour def Ahmad Murad 2-0

**In the men's doubles:**  
- Yaqoub Al-Foudary and Abdallah Burahma def Shareed Kiwan and Wael Hosni 6-2, 6-1.  
- Hussein Al-Sarraf and Allam Rasoul def Rajendran and Shibo 6-1, 6-0.

## Federer wins rain-delayed match, Djokovic crashes out

**INDIAN WELLS:** World number one Roger Federer finished off Federico Delbonis in a rain-disrupted match on Sunday to reach the third round at Indian Wells as five-time champion Novak Djokovic was toppled. Federer returned to stadium court on Sunday afternoon and needed an hour to finish off his second round victory 6-3, 7-6 (8/6).

"It's been a long time since I have been interrupted at night and have to come back the next day," Federer said. "His title defence got off to a soggy start Saturday night when play was suspended because of rain showers with Federer up a set and tied 2-2 in the second.

The clouds rolled in just before the start of their match on Saturday and after a short delay to start the first set they managed to play until the skies blackened and the heavy rains came in the second. After another 90-minute delay organizers suspended play for the night. Federer is making his 17th appearance in the

California desert and is assured of remaining world number one if he makes it to the semi-finals. He extended his 2018 win streak to 13 matches and has only dropped three sets from 34 played this year.

Federer hit five aces and won 74 percent of his first serve points in the match which took a total of one hour and 41 minutes over the two days. Federer started quickly hammering a backhand winner to take the lone break of the first set and he would deny a pair of break chances when serving for the opener at 5-3.

In the tiebreaker, Federer took a 5-2 lead but Delbonis battled back to win a long rally and tie it 5-5. Federer won the final three points to take the match by forcing Delbonis to dump all three of those shots into the net.

Federer will face 25th-seed Filip Krajinovic in the third round. Federer and 10th seed Djokovic both came into the tournament seeking to become the first six-time winner of the event. But Djokovic fell at the first hurdle with a shock loss to Japanese qualifier Taro Daniel. Daniel sent an out-of-sorts Djokovic tumbling with a hard-fought 7-6 (7/3), 4-6, 6-1 victory.

It was another snag in the return for the world number 13 Djokovic who admitted he lacked composure while playing in just his second event of 2018 and first since having surgery.

**'VERY WEIRD'**

"For me it felt like first match I ever played on the tour. Very weird," Djokovic said. "I mean, I just com-

pletely lost rhythm, everything. "Just struggled also a little bit with the health the last couple of weeks."

The Serb is making a cautious return to the ATP Tour after stopping his 2017 season following Wimbledon, due to a right elbow injury. He lost to Chung Hyeon in the Australian Open fourth round in January before undergoing the surgery.

Djokovic scrambled to win the second set on Sunday but the rust from the layoff was evident as he made 62 unforced errors compared to 29 for Daniel. Djokovic had four aces but served poorly overall making four double faults and winning just 65 percent of his first-serve points.

Federer said he understands well how even a champion like Djokovic could be struggling to find his game so soon after having surgery. "To me, it's not that surprising," Federer said. "When you go away from the game for over a two-month period it starts feeling a little bit that way."

"When you do come back from injury or when you haven't played in a long time, it just takes extra effort. "It is still early stages for Novak coming back and the first one after surgery. He's only going to get better from here."

Daniel, who is ranked 109th in the world, advanced to the third round where he will face Gael Monfils of France who outlasted American John Isner 6-7 (5/7), 7-6 (7/3), 7-5. In other men's matches, David Ferrer of Spain defeated Teyss Sandgren of the US 6-2, 7-6 (7/3). — AFP

## Training Centers Project for promising talents a success

By Abdellatif Sharaa

**KUWAIT:** Director of Training Centers Project of the Public Authority for Sports (PAS) Mohmoud Abul said he was satisfied with the success of the project as the closing festival for all males and females centers will be held soon.

He said, during a meeting with the supervisors at Abdallah Al-Salem Leaders Preparation Center, that PAS Director General Dr Humoud Fulaiteh is keen on the success of the project and discovery of promising talents in various games, as many were discovered this year and will join clubs, and may represent Kuwait in the future.

Abul said there is great hope in the women training centers and may be increased next year. He conveyed thanks of Dr Fulaiteh to all and asked them to be ready for the closing festival on March 20 for boys and March 21 for girls at Kazma Sports Clubs.





## Sports

# Rabada takes centre stage as South Africa beat Australia

## Rabada suspended for rest of Australia series

### SCOREBOARD

**PORT ELIZABETH, South Africa:** Final scores on the fourth day of the second Test between South Africa and Australia at St George's Park yesterday.

**Australia, first innings, 243**  
**South Africa, first innings, 382**

#### Australia, second innings (overnight 180-5)

C. Bancroft b Ngidi	24
D. Warner b Rabada	13
U. Khawaja lbw b Rabada	75
S. Smith c De Kock b Maharaj	11
S. Marsh c De Kock b Rabada	1
M. Marsh b Rabada	45
T. Paine not out	28
P. Cummins c De Bruyn b Rabada	5
M. Starc c De Kock b Rabada	1
N. Lyon c De Kock b Ngidi	5
J. Hazlewood c Ngidi b Maharaj	17
Extras (b2, lb10, w2)	14
Total (79 overs)	239
Fall of wickets: 1-27 (Warner), 2-62 (Bancroft), 3-77 (Smith), 4-86 (S. Marsh), 5-173 (Khawaja), 6-186 (M. Marsh), 7-202 (Cummins), 8-204 (Starc), 9-211 (Lyon).	
Bowling: Philander 18-5-56-0, Rabada 22-9-54-6 (1w), Maharaj 23-2-90-2, Ngidi 13-5-24-2, Markram 3-1-3-0.	

#### South Africa, second innings

A. Markram c Smith b Hazlewood	21
D. Elgar c and b Lyon	5
H. Amla c Paine b Cummins	27
A. de Villiers c Bancroft b Lyon	28
F. du Plessis not out	2
T. de Bruyn not out	15
Extras (b4)	4
Total (4 wks, 22.5 overs)	102
Fall of wickets: 1-22 (Elgar), 2-32 (Markram), 3-81 (Amla), 4-81 (De Villiers).	
Bowling: Starc 3-0-15-0, Hazlewood 6-0-26-1, Lyon 9-0-44-2, Cummins 4.5-0-13-1.	

Result: South Africa won by six wickets.  
Series: The four-match series is level at 1-1.

**PORT ELIZABETH:** Fast bowler Kagiso Rabada took 11 wickets in the match but may yet turn from hero to villain as South Africa beat Australia by six wickets in the second Test yesterday to level the four-match series.

South Africa made heavy work of reaching their modest target before captain Faf du Plessis (2) and Theunis de Bruyn (11) guided them to 102 for four. Rabada was suspended for two Test matches and will miss the rest of the series against Australia, hours after being named man of the match in his team's six-wicket win yesterday.

Rabada was found guilty of a level two International Cricket Council (ICC) code of conduct offence of "inappropriate and deliberate physical contact with a player" after shoulder-charging Australia captain Steve Smith when he dismissed him in the first innings, an ICC statement said.

The 22-year-old Rabada, who took 11 wickets to

“We were outplayed in all aspects”

help South Africa level the series 1-1, was fined 50 percent of his match fee and given three demerit points, which took him past the tally of eight that triggers an automatic suspension. Cricket South Africa said it was seeking legal counsel over a possible appeal.

"It's a disappointment for the series because you want to have your best players in the series," said captain Du Plessis, suggesting he already knew the outcome of the hearing which is due to be made public later. The 22-year-old Rabada was the outstanding performer yesterday as he ripped through Australia, who started on 180-5 with a 41-run lead. He completed figures of 6-54 and a match aggregate of 11-150, the fourth time he has taken 10 or more wickets in a test.



**PORT ELIZABETH:** South Africa batsman Aiden Markram plays a shot during day four of the second Cricket Test match between South Africa and Australia at St George's Park in Port Elizabeth, yesterday. — AFP

"Australia were never going to give in easily so you had to go to the reserve tank and give of your best," Rabada said after being named man-of-the-match.

#### UPROOTED STUMP

The tourists lost Mitchell Marsh (45) in the first over as Rabada uprooted his middle stump before Pat Cummins (5) was well caught in the gully by De Bruyn.

Rabada got his third in quick succession as Mitchell Starc (1) edged a drive to wicketkeeper Quinton de Kock. Lungi Ngidi (2-24) had Nathan Lyon (5) caught

by De Kock, before Tim Paine (28 not out) and Josh Hazlewood (17) added 28 for the final wicket as Australia were dismissed for 239.

South Africa lost wickets regularly with opener Dean Elgar (5) going cheaply to be followed after lunch by Aiden Markram (21), Hashim Amla (27) and AB de Villiers for 28.

"We were outplayed in all aspects," Smith said. Australia won the first Test in Durban by 118 runs. The final two matches in the series will be played in Cape Town and Johannesburg. — Agencies



## UEFA Champions fixtures live and exclusive on beIN

**DOHA:** The UEFA Champions League round of 16 wraps up and the competition's final eight teams will be determined by the end of this week. As always, beIN will bring you live, exclusive and multi lingual coverage of all the match-ups throughout the week as well as the quarter-final draw, which takes place on Friday.

Manchester United host Sevilla at Old Trafford today after their first leg encounter ended in a goalless draw. Join Angus Scott who will be in the company of Ruud Gullit and Karl-Heinz Rummeniggein the English studio on beIN SPORTS HD11 starting at 22:00

Mecca time. If you wish to watch Roma against Shakhtar Donetsk instead, you can tune in to beIN SPORTS HD12. Tomorrow, it's the highly anticipated clash between Barcelona and Chelsea. English studio coverage will also begin at 22:00 Mecca time on beIN SPORTS HD11. The match will also be available in Arabic, French and Spanish on beIN SPORTS HD1, HD14 and HD17 respectively.

Before that, though, Besiktas host Bayern Munich. Kick-off for that one will be at 20:00 Mecca time on beIN SPORTS HD12. Don't miss the quarter-final draw on Friday to find out who will face who as the competition heats up. Live coverage gets underway at 14:00 Mecca time on beIN SPORTS HD11.

It's football's top club competition and definitely one you won't want to miss. Visit beIN.net/subscribe and picking one of many available packages. That includes the beIN Elite package, which brings you free CONNECT subscription, beIN's over the top (OTT) offering that allows viewers to watch matches anytime and anywhere.

## Lone woman fights it out in tough Paralympics sledge hockey

**PYEONGCHANG:** Norway's Lena Schroeder zips over the ice strapped onto a sledge, colliding with other players and taking shots—the only woman player in the toughest sport at the Winter Paralympics.

Unlike Olympic ice hockey, which has separate men's and women's teams, "sledge ice hockey" played at the Paralympics is technically mixed. But the 24-year-old is the first woman to compete in the discipline at the Games since 1994, and the only female player out of 135 at the Pyeongchang Paralympics in South Korea.

Sledge ice hockey is the most fast and furious sport—and the most popular among spectators—at the Winter Paralympics. Athletes who have lost full or partial use of their legs are strapped into small sledges with two blades on the bottom, and use two short sticks to push themselves across the ice and shoot. The sport can be just as violent as the able-bodied version. Vicious tackles and clashes on the ice are common, and participants are kitted out with heavy padding and helmets. But Schroeder does not consider her gender a barrier to participation at the highest level.

At a practice session Sunday, she happily zipped across the ice, her blonde hair flowing from the back of her helmet, passing the puck and taking shots. "I'm so used to being the only female player," she said. "I think everyone is so used to it—I've been part of the team for so many years."

#### 'BOY OR GIRL, IT'S THE SAME'

For the other players on the 18-strong squad, she is just another member of the team. "If she's a boy or girl, it's the same," team-mate Magnus Bogle told AFP. "There is no difference—if you are in the locker room, you are in the locker room."

Schroeder was born with spina bifida, which



**PYEONGCHANG:** In this photo taken on March 11, 2018, Paralympic ice hockey player Lena Schroeder (L) of Norway attends a training session at the Gangneung Hockey Centre in Gangneung during the Pyeongchang 2018 Winter Paralympic Games. — AFP

occurs when the spine and spinal cord don't form properly, and has lost most use of her legs. After trying out several sports for disabled athletes, she finally settled on sledge ice hockey at the age of 15.

It was no easy task for her to win a coveted spot on the national team in winter sports—mad Norway, which is the most decorated team in the history of Paralympic hockey. She trains five times a week, for both the national team and her local outfit in Oslo, and has deferred her university medical studies so she can take part in the Paralympics.

As well as the national and Oslo teams, she plays on a European squad that includes players from several countries who team up for showdowns against heavyweights the USA and Canada. The USA are current Paralympic champions, while Canada are reigning world champions. The two are expected to fight it out for gold and silver in the final on Sunday.

Norway and a handful of other teams will

likely be left battling for bronze, although the Norwegians got off to a disappointing start with a 3-2 loss to Italy at the weekend. It is hard for the Paralympians to match the success of their compatriots in the Winter Olympics—Norway, with a population of just five million, topped the medals table at last month's Games in Pyeongchang. By contrast, Norway only came 11th in the medals standings at the 2014 Paralympics.

However, the hockey team is hoping it can be one of Norway's success stories at the Games. They want to bounce back in Pyeongchang after coming fourth in Sochi in 2014, failing to win a hockey medal for the first time at a Paralympics.

Schroeder can make a point, too. She hopes her success can show other aspiring female hockey players that "they can play at a high level, too, with the guys and that it is never a problem that you're a female player". — AFP

## AUB announces sponsorship of T20 cricket trophy 2018

**KUWAIT:** Ahli United Bank has announced its sponsorship for the AUB Cricket Trophy organized by the Kuwait Cricket Association. All Kuwaiti banks will participate and compete for the trophy, which will be played out over several weeks. The opening ceremony was held on March 10, at the Cricket Ground in Doha in the presence of

Mahmoud Bastaki, Chairman of Kuwait Cricket Association, Richard Groves, Chief Executive Officer Ahli United Bank, was present, along with his wife, Helen, Tareq Muhmood, Senior Deputy CEO, and other senior Bank executives.

Groves, told the press that Ahli United Bank has long displayed a deep interest in sports activities, particularly cricket, and the Bank's cricket team has had a successful record over the years of both participating in, and winning, various inter-bank trophies.

Groves added: "Ahli United Bank is very keen to encourage sports amongst staff whether football, cricket, bowling and other activities. Equally we are keen to support and sponsor external activities as this engenders the spirit of cooperation and healthy competition. This will also help individuals develop their skills and enable them to raise the stan-

dard, both locally and internationally. He paid tribute to the Kuwait Cricket Association for organizing such cricket trophy competitions and praised the management for creating a very attractive ground in Doha for both players and spectators.

Tareq Mahmood said that Ahli United Bank is proud of its cricket team which has always been a strong competitor thanks to its committed players, in addition to the support and encouragement the team receives from the Bank's management. Anuj Chadha, captain of Ahli United Bank Cricket team thanked AUB's senior management for the all the support and encouragement they give to the Bank's Cricket team to help them to achieve the success. He also paid tribute to the Kuwait Cricket Association for their support in organizing all cricket tournaments throughout the season.





Sports

# Rockets clinch NBA playoff berth, Warriors and Cavs lose

## Houston 17-game winning streak ended by Eastern Conference leaders Toronto

LOS ANGELES: The Houston Rockets clinched an NBA playoff berth with a 105-82 rout of the Mavericks in Dallas on Sunday as reigning champions Golden State and the Cleveland Cavaliers both lost. Even with Most Valuable Player candidate James Harden sitting out with a sore left knee, the Rockets had little trouble from the Mavs. Only a spate of eight second-quarter turnovers by Houston helped Dallas erase a 15-point deficit and briefly take a six-point lead.

The Rockets soon tied things up to take a one-point lead at halftime that they wouldn't surrender after the break. Point guard Chris Paul scored 24 points and handed out 12 assists and guard Eric Gordon added 26 points for the Rockets, who led by as many as 26 in the fourth quarter.

Houston, who saw their 17-game winning streak ended by Eastern Conference leaders Toronto on Friday, improved their league-best record to 52-14. They're 1 1/2 games ahead of the Warriors atop the West and Gordon said the Rockets would keep the accelerator down in a bid to claim the top seed.

"We want to finish number one—I think that's the main goal," he said. The depleted Warriors fell 109-103 to the Minnesota Timberwolves, the defending champs' second straight defeat.

With superstar Stephen Curry missing a second straight game with a sprained right ankle, Kevin Durant scored 39 points and pulled down 12 rebounds for Golden State. But Durant connected on just 11 of 32 of his shots from the field and sharp-shooter Klay Thompson needed 22 shots to score 21 points.

Draymond Green contributed 10 points, eight rebounds and seven assists for the Warriors, who were also missing Andre Iguodala, David West, Patrick McCaw and Jordan Bell as they lost back-to-back

games for only the second time this season. "We're just in a bit of a tough stretch," Warriors coach Steve Kerr said. "I'm really pleased with the effort. We'll get some guys back here hopefully in the next week or two, and I'm very confident with where we're heading."

Karl-Anthony Towns was a force inside for the Timberwolves, finishing with 31 points and 16 rebounds.

Although the Warriors were far from full-strength, Minnesota's Andrew Wiggins said it was an important win.

"This is big for us, because this is one of the best teams in the league, if not the best," Minnesota's Andrew Wiggins said.

“ We want to finish number one ”

### LAKERS BEAT CAVS

The struggles continued for the Cleveland Cavaliers, who fell to the Warriors in last year's finals after beating them the year before. LeBron James and the Cavs tied it twice but never led in the second half in a 127-113 loss to the Lakers in Los Angeles.

Lakers point guard Isaiah Thomas, acquired from Cleveland in a trade-deadline deal, scored 20 points. Los Angeles forward Julius Randle poured in a career-high 36 points and pulled down 14 rebounds.

The Lakers' performance offered James a glimpse of the young talent he could align himself with should he opt to move to Los Angeles as a free agent next season. The Lakers, with money to spend under the salary cap, have been touted as one possible destination for James, although he's said he's only focused on getting Cleveland back to the finals this season.

James scored 24 points with 10 rebounds and seven assists, but the Cavs lost for the fourth time in six games. They're fourth in the Eastern Conference, half a game behind third-placed Indiana who edged second-



NEW YORK: Emmanuel Mudiay #1 of the New York Knicks handles the ball against DeMar DeRozan #10 of the Toronto Raptors on Sunday at Madison Square Garden in New York, NY. — AFP

placed Boston 99-97.

Eastern Conference leaders Toronto cruised past the New York Knicks 132-106. The Celtics, playing without ailing Al Horford and concussed Jaylen Brown, squandered a 50-40 halftime lead in their narrow loss to the Pacers and saw Kyrie Irving depart in the second half with a sore left knee.

In New Orleans, Ricky Rubio scored 30 points with 10 rebounds and seven assists as his Utah Jazz withstood a triple-double from Anthony Davis in a 116-99 victory over the Pelicans. Davis had 25 points, 11 rebounds and a stellar 10 blocked shots in his return from a one-game injury absence, but he had no win to celebrate on his 25th birthday. — AFP

## NBK to offer three luxurious prize packages for FIFA WCup final match

KUWAIT: Al Othman: "NBK offers customers unique and world class products, services and rewards as a way to build lasting and loyal relationship" If you're a football fan and want a chance to win an all-expense paid trip to experience the FIFA World Cup final match in Moscow on July 15, 2018; don't miss your chance with National Bank of Kuwait.

Every time you use your NBK Visa card, you earn a chance to enter the draw and a chance to win. Grand prize package for two includes: Business class flights, tickets to the FIFA World Cup Russia Final match, 5-star hotel accommodation, and KD 1,000 for expenses.

"NBK offers their customers unique and world class products, services and rewards as a way to build lasting and loyal relationships," said Acting General Manager of Consumer Banking Group, National Bank of Kuwait Mr. Mohammed Al Othman. "Football is the most popular sport in Kuwait and around the world which is why we've teamed up with Visa to offer this incredible FIFA package. 3 lucky winners along with a friend, will get the opportunity to watch the World Cup final match in Moscow. It's the trip of a lifetime!"

Customers can still enter to win this extraordinary dream trip. They need to simply use their NBK Visa card to pay for purchases locally, internationally or online. Every KD 1 spent locally or on local websites using the NBK Visa credit card equals 1 entry in the draw. Every KD 1 spent abroad or on international websites using an NBK Visa credit or debit card equals 3 entries in the draw. A minimum spend of KD 100 using any of the eligible NBK Visa credit cards is required to qualify for the draw.

The World Cup is the most anticipated sporting event of the year, with millions around the globe watching matches for the month-long competition and rooting for their favorite teams. NBK's FIFA World Cup prize campaign is part of the bank's ongoing customer-centric approach.

NBK strives to bring customers world-class services, with a customized approach. The bank creates the best rewards and promotions as a way to reward their customers for their extended loyalty.



## Marlos, Ukraine's Brazil-born sensation

KIEV: Ukraine's Brazilian-born sensation Marlos has starred for Shakhtar Donetsk on a Champions League run that could see them reach the quarter-finals for only the second time when they go to Roma today.

But the 29-year-old attacking midfielder's silky dribbling is also turning him into an integral part of Ukraine's hopes of returning to the forefront of the international scene after the country failed to qualify for the World Cup in Russia.

The Ukrainian player of the year for two successive seasons is the engine of a flamboyant Shakhtar side that features an eye-popping eight additional Brazilians and two Argentines. Shakhtar edged out the Italians 2-1 at home in Kharkiv in the first leg of their last-16 encounter last month, meaning they head to the Stadio Olimpico in the driving seat.

They are also on course to retain their domestic title despite being based in three different cities over the past two years due to the conflict in eastern Ukraine. Shakhtar's Portuguese coach Paulo Fonseca has admitted that Marlos is "really important" to his side, describing him as "magical".

Certainly, having a coach who speaks Portuguese helps Marlos and the Brazilians gel into an attacking unit that has flourished in the Champions League. Shakhtar beat Manchester City at home in the group stage and won away at Dutch champions Feyenoord despite finishing that game with 10 men.

Marlos was named February's player of the month in Ukraine after scoring four goals and laying on three assists in three matches, leaving Shakhtar sitting pretty atop the table. "To me, team achievements are much more important," Marlos said after receiving the award.

Marlos played for Brazilian giants Sao Paulo before coming to Ukraine in 2012 and settling in nicely. He first voiced an interest in playing for Ukraine's national team in 2016 as the struggling



Marlos

country scouted around for help.

"If this happens, it will be my gift to Ukrainians for being so welcoming," Marlos said at the time. That wish came true in September when he failed to make Brazil's star-studded squad and was granted Ukrainian citizenship.

It was a decision that endeared him to Ukrainians—used to players looking for work elsewhere because of four years of armed conflict in the east and hard times all around. "In this difficult time for Ukraine, many athletes leave, adopting the citizenship of other countries," said Ukraine coach and former AC Milan great Andriy Shevchenko.

"But Marlos, on the contrary, tied his future to our state. It would have been foolish not to pick such a player." He made his debut against Kosovo in a World Cup qualifier that Ukraine won, although they missed out on a place in Russia, finishing third in their group behind Iceland and Croatia.

Marlos has found the net 40 times in 158 appearances for Shakhtar and should be an enticing option for Ukraine for years to come. And his belief in both team and adopted country has helped Shakhtar as they look to return to the quarter-finals, where they were well beaten by eventual winners Barcelona in 2011. "We are confident that we will be able to get the result we need in Rome," Marlos said. — AFP

Live		Matches on TV
		(Local Timings)
<b>UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE</b>		
Manchester United v Sevilla	22:45	beIN SPORTS HD 1
Roma v Shakhtar Donetsk	22:45	beIN SPORTS HD 2
<b>ASIAN CHAMPIONS LEAGUE</b>		
Melbourne Victory v Kawasaki Frontale	11:30	beIN SPORTS
Kashima Antlers v Sydney	13:00	beIN SPORTS
Ulsan Hyundai v Shanghai SIPG	13:00	beIN SPORTS
Shanghai Shenhua v Suwon Bluewings	15:00	beIN SPORTS
Tractor Sazi Tabriz v AlJazira	15:30	beIN SPORTS HD 1
AlSadd v Nasaf Qarshi	18:15	beIN SPORTS HD 4
AlWasl v Persepolis	18:15	beIN SPORTS HD 2
Alahli v AlGarrafa	20:15	beIN SPORTS HD 3
<b>AFC CUP</b>		
Ahal FC v Alay Osh	13:00	
Thanh Hoa v Bali United	14:00	
Global FC Manila v Yangon United	14:30	beIN SPORTS
Ansar v Al - Wahda	16:10	beIN SPORTS HD 7
Al Jazeera v Al Suwaiq	18:00	beIN SPORTS HD 6
Dhofar v Al Faisaly	18:30	beIN SPORTS HD 7

## Mitroglou grabs Marseille winner as Lyon end barren run

PARIS: Kostas Mitroglou made an instant impact off the bench with the decisive goal in a 2-1 victory at Toulouse on Sunday, while Lyon defeated Caen 1-0 to halt a run of six matches without a win in Ligue 1.

Lucas Ocampos, the two-goal hero in Marseille's 3-1 Europa League last 16, first leg win over Athletic Bilbao on Thursday, was again on target in Toulouse as he forced home a 10th-minute opener. But Toulouse, who are just a point above the relegation play-off place, equalised through Firmin Mubele's first goal for the club following his arrival on loan from Rennes in January. Former Arsenal forward Yaya Sanogo rattled

the crossbar for Toulouse on 33 minutes, with Marseille goalkeeper Steve Mandanda and his teenage counterpart Alban Lafont producing a series of top saves at both ends.

But the introduction of Dimitri Payet, and then Mitroglou, swung the match in Marseille's favour as the pair linked up brilliantly within seconds of the Greek striker's entrance. A clever dummy from Payet allowed the ball to run through to Mitroglou before a slick exchange between the two finished with the latter slamming in a volley via the underside of the crossbar.

Mitroglou nearly grabbed a second in stoppage time when his header bounced back off the post, his follow-up effort coming right after Lafont had tipped a thunderous drive from Bouna Sarr onto the bar.

Former Chelsea forward Bertrand Traore swept home Lyon's winner on 63 minutes against Caen, as Bruno Genesio's team avenged last week's French Cup quarter-final exit at the hands of the same opposition.

Lyon were without a league win since their 2-1 defeat of Paris Saint-Germain on January 21, and hit the

post through Ferland Mendy early in the second half before the woodwork then denied Caen's Enzo Crivelli.

Traore notched his seventh goal of the season when a Mendy cross ricocheted off two Caen players and into his path, allowing the Burkina Faso international to convert from near the penalty spot. The result keeps Lyon within five points of third-placed Marseille in the race for a Champions League spot.

### FEKIR CONCERN

However, Lyon must do without captain and leading scorer Nabil Fekir for another three weeks as the France forward continues his recovery from a knee injury. "Fekir still felt discomfort in his right knee when he returned to training (on Saturday)," Lyon said in a statement, with the 24-year-old sidelined since the 1-1 derby draw with Saint-Etienne on February 25.

He is expected to undergo keyhole surgery on Tuesday, on the same knee that forced Fekir to miss the majority of the 2015-16 season, but Lyon hope he will return at the end of this month.

"It's a big blow for us and for him. He's suffered a lot from injuries in the past," said Genesio. "There's another way to see things though, namely that he is going to come back in great shape after the international break."

Nice strengthened their case for another European adventure next season by romping to a 5-2 win at Guingamp as Alassane Plea scored four goals in the absence of the injured Mario Balotelli.

Former Lyon midfielder Clement Grenier tucked away a ninth-minute penalty for Guingamp—his first goal since April 2016 — but Plea levelled and struck twice more before the hour mark. An own goal on 83 minutes from on-loan Barcelona centre-back Marlon gave Guingamp a lifeline, but Bassem Srarfi promptly made it 4-2 before Plea netted his fourth of the game in stoppage time.

PSG restored their 14-point lead over Monaco at the top of the table on Saturday with a 5-0 win over bottom side Metz to ease some of the pain of their Champions League disappointment against Real Madrid. — AFP



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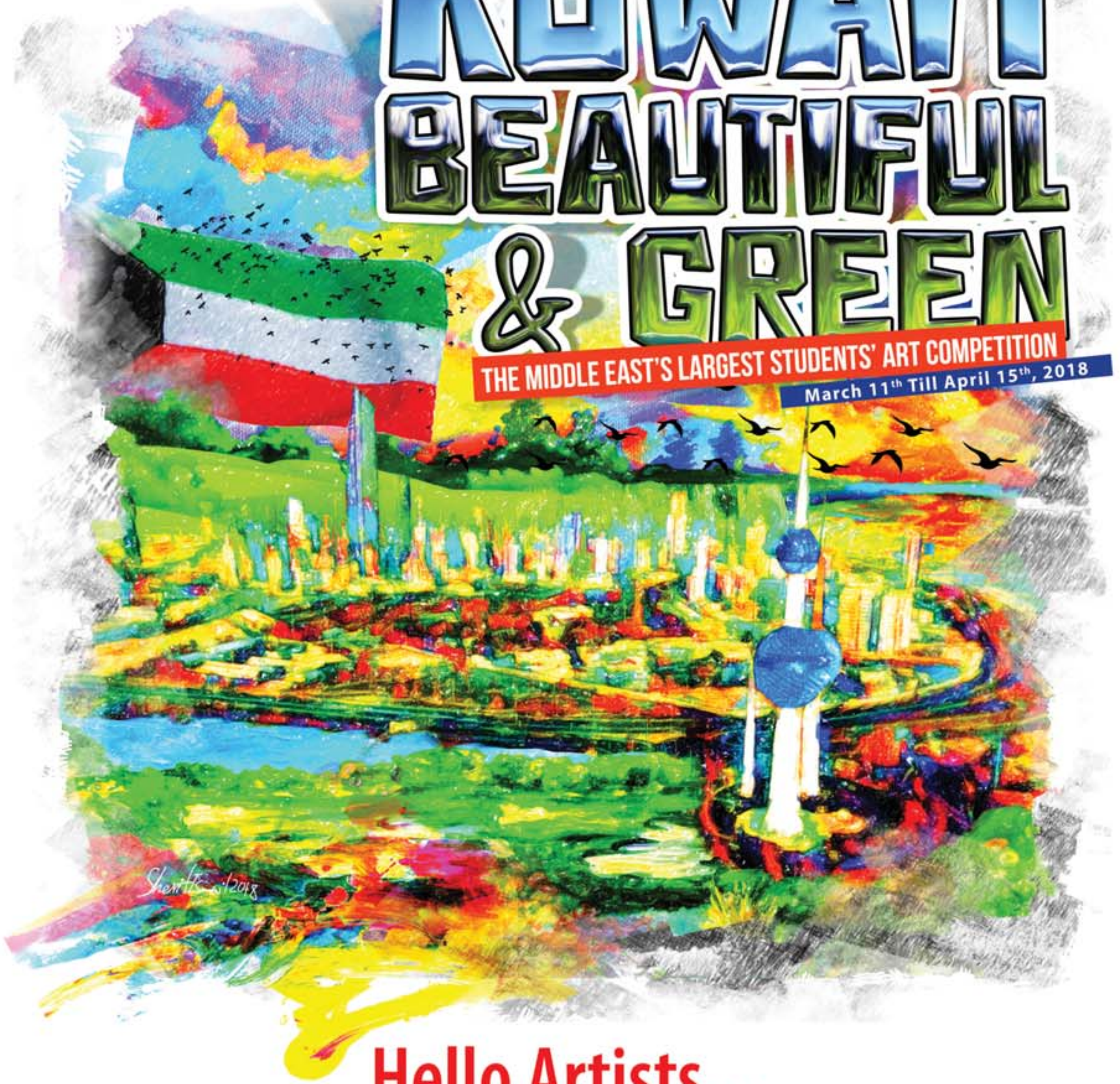
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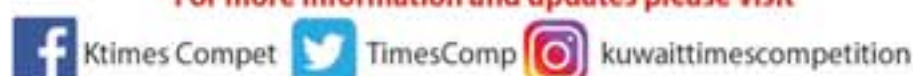
Welcome to the Student's Art Competition. I hope you are ready to paint a beautiful painting and win wonderful prizes. The theme for your painting must be related to planting and greening, basically anything pertaining to our environment. We are looking for a great painting. So, please pick up your color pencils, paint brushes, crayons or whatever you prefer and start drawing and painting.

*Good luck to you, our young artists.*

- Competition is open to students from (6 - 8) (9 - 11) (12 - 14) (15 - 17) and Special needs.
- The competition is open to all schools in Kuwait (Government and Private)
  - 5 winners from each category will receive valuable prizes.
  - All participants will receive a certificate of appreciation.
- All schools participating in the competition will receive a certificate of appreciation.
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  - Drawing sheets will be given to schools FREE of charge.
- Only drawing sheets provided by the Kuwait Times will be permitted for use in the competition.
  - You may use any drawing material such as color pencils, paint or crayons.

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# Business

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WASHINGTON DC: In this file photo, US President Donald J Trump greets Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross as he arrives in the chamber of the US House of Representatives to deliver the State of the Union address in Washington, DC. —AFP

## Trump: Ross will talk to EU on tariffs

### EU says US 'cherry-picking' tariffs to twist debate

**BRUSSELS/WASHINGTON:** US Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross will urge the European Union to lower its trade barriers, which are unfair to US farmers and industry, Donald Trump said yesterday.

Firmly rejecting that view, the European Commission accused the US president of "cherry-picking" data to twist what has become an increasingly fractious transatlantic debate.

The EU is seeking to be exempted from planned US import duties of 25 percent on steel and 10 percent on aluminum, but says Washington has not made clear how the exemption process works.

Trump said in a tweet on Saturday the United States was ready to drop its tariffs if the EU lowered its "horrific" rates on US products. Yesterday, he tweeted that Ross would be speaking with EU representatives about eliminating "large tariffs and barriers."

"Not fair to our farmers and manufacturers," he said. Representatives from the Department of Commerce did not immediately respond to queries on the content or timing of those discussions. The Commission said it expected to be in contact with Washington over the metals tariffs this week, but that no formal talks had been scheduled. It was still hoping for a clearer indication about the exemption process.

It also said Trump was "cherry-picking" particular tar-

iffs to highlight differences, and maintained average tariffs were very similar on each side of the Atlantic - 3 percent for products into Europe and 2.4 percent for those entering the United States.

The US tariff for cars, at 2.5 percent, was lower than the EU rate of 10 percent, but its rate of up to 25 percent on trucks was higher. The Commission spokesman also pointed to US import duties of up to 48 percent on shoes, 12 percent on textiles and 164 percent on groundnuts.

"Cherry-picking particular tariffs in one category, like looking just at car tariffs on both sides, misses the whole picture, while not taking into account lower levels on other products does not give an accurate picture of tariffs in general," a Commission spokesman said.

"The EU market is one of the most open in the world and if anyone starts throwing stones, it's better first to make sure he is not living in a glasshouse." The EU, he

said, preferred dialogue, but was continuing its preparations for a "firm and proportionate" response.

The EU has been talking with partners about a legal challenge at the World Trade Organization to Trump's plan and is considering safeguards to prevent steel and aluminum, diverted from the United States, flooding into Europe.

It has also lined up 2.8 billion euros of US products, from maize to motorbikes, on which to impose tariffs so as to "rebalance" trade flows.

#### Trade 'bullies'

The EU said Europe would not waver against trade "bullies" as a row with US President

Donald Trump over controversial steel and aluminum tariffs deepened. The jab from Brussels came after the US tycoon singled out Europe in the surging trade row, threatening to tax German cars if the European Union doesn't lower barriers to US products.

Trump's threat was part of a dispute sparked by his

announcement of tariffs on steel and aluminum imports, although the "America First" Trump administration has said it will consider exceptions and has already spared Mexico and Canada. The announcement of duties of 25 percent on imported steel and 10 percent on aluminum has stung the EU, coming as a surprise to US allies and to many in Washington. "In some places trade has been to blame for the pains of globalization or they used it as a scapegoat or they think we can live behind walls and borders," European Trade Commissioner Cecilia Malmstrom said at a trade conference in Brussels.

"Recently we have seen how it is used as a weapon to threaten and intimidate us. But we are not afraid, we will stand up to the bullies," she said. Brussels has pushed back the hardest against Washington's shock measures, loudly announcing a list of US products-including peanuts and motorcycles-it could hit with countermeasures.

#### Dialogue 'prime option'

In revealing those measures, European Commission head Jean-Claude Juncker taunted Trump, saying the EU could match "stupid with stupid." Other trade partners, including Japan and China, have also voiced anger and pledged retaliation if the US tariffs are enacted as expected on March 23. —Agencies



### No formal discussions this week

### Angry Istanbul taxi drivers seek to block Uber

**ISTANBUL:** An Istanbul court yesterday began hearing a case against Uber brought by the city's taxi drivers seeking to have the ride-hailing app blocked, as tensions mount in Turkey over its popularity. The suit brought by the main association representing taxi drivers for Istanbul is the latest legal headache for the fast-growing but controversial Uber which has already seen its license withdrawn in London. Dozens of taxi drivers held a noisy protest outside the main courthouse in Istanbul where the case was heard, brandishing placards including "we don't want the global thief". Lawyers for the Taxi Drivers Association told the court

they wanted the app blocked in the city. The court said it would wait for a report from the association and adjourned the next hearing until June 4.

#### 'Ready for anything'

Tensions over the growing popularity of Uber have spread in Turkey, in some cases resulting in violence. On Saturday, shots were fired at an Uber vehicle in Istanbul's Kucukcekmece district but the driver was unhurt. Uber drivers have also received false calls from people pretending to be passengers who then beat them up, according to a report in the Turkish newspaper Haberturk last week. Eyup Aksu, the head of the main taxi drivers guild in Istanbul, slammed Uber as "pirates" and warned that the taxi drivers were ready to act if decisions went against them.

"If the judiciary takes a contrary decision then our patience is sapped. Taxi drivers are ready to do anything for their bread," he said outside the courthouse. Taxi drivers gathered at the court threw bottles of

water at vehicles they suspected of being driven by Uber drivers, the Dogan news agency said.

#### Business troubles

The yellow taxis of Istanbul form the transport backbone of the city, with some 18,000 vehicles helping move commuters and tourists in a megapolis where public transport can be patchy. Some complain Istanbul taxi drivers can be abrasive and prone to ripping off tourists. But most drivers, who usually rent their car from the license holder, are doing their best to earn a living honestly in a tough city. Taxi drivers around the world have complained that Uber has made inroads into their business but the company's biggest trouble has been in London where Uber lost its license over criminal record checks for drivers. It is still allowed to operate in the British capital pending an appeal. New chief executive Dara Khosrowshahi is seeking to clean up the company's reputation worldwide after replacing ousted co-founder Travis Kalanick last year. —AFP



ISTANBUL: Taxis are parked near Istanbul courthouse as taxi drivers demonstrate against ride-sharing firm Uber prior to the second hearing of a lawsuit opened against the transport company by the United Taxi Drivers Association yesterday. —AFP



Business

# BP outlook: Energy demand grows as fuel mix continues to diversify

‘The biggest factor for oil demand is economic growth’



BP General Manager for Global Energy Market Mark Finley gestures during the interview. —Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

By Chidi Emmanuel

**KUWAIT:** Amid global uncertainties, changes to the fuel mix, global economic growth and population and productivity growth, BP is weighing and considering the forces shaping the global energy transition till 2040 and the key uncertainties surrounding this transition. In an exclusive interview with Kuwait Times, BP's General Manager for Global Energy Market Mark Finley outlined BP's energy outlook, which he said is all about understanding the transition of the energy system and global uncertainty.

The outlook, he said, lays out the scenario for discussion and explores the energy transition from three different viewpoints - fuels, sectors and regions. These scenarios are not predictions of what is likely to happen or what BP would like to happen, but rather explore the possible implications of different judgments and assumptions by considering a series of 'what if' experiments. "Much of the outlook is described with reference to the 'Evolving Transition' scenario. The outlook is produced to aid BP's analysis- and decision-making, be part of the global conversation on energy issues and contribute to the wider debate," Finley said.

**Degree of confidence**

"In this year's edition, there are things we feel reasonably confident about. The world can have all the energy it needs to continue to fuel economic growth and to help lift people out of poverty and improve the quality of life. Also, the energy demand on this basis will continue to grow. On the other hand, we do not believe it will continue to grow as it has been in the past. Meanwhile, renewable energy will continue to grow rapidly. The world needs to continue to invest in oil and gas no matter what the future holds - at the same time, it needs to work harder to manage the CO2 profile and carbon emissions," Finley explained.

On key uncertainties, he weighed the prospect of electric vehicles, the changes in the transportation system and the prospect for future energy demand - examining the sensitivity of renewable and natural gas demands. "We believe there is a lot of focus on electric cars and we do believe that it will grow very rapidly, but we do not believe this will push oil demand to fall very sharply - at least in the next 25 years. The biggest factor for oil demand is economic growth," he added.

The 'Evolving Transition' (ET) scenario, which assumes that government policies, technologies and societal preferences evolve in a manner and speed similar to the recent past, expects fast growth in developing economies driving up global energy demand a third higher. According to the ET scenario, the global energy mix is the most diverse the world has ever

seen (by 2040), with oil, gas, coal and non-fossil fuels each contributing around a quarter; renewables are by far the fastest-growing fuel source, increasing fivefold and providing around 14 percent of primary energy.

Also, the demand for oil grows over much of outlook period before plateauing in the later years, while the natural gas demand grows strongly and overtakes coal as the second largest source of energy with oil and gas together accounting for over half of the world's energy. Meanwhile, the number of electric cars will grow to around 15 percent of the car park as carbon emissions continue to rise - signaling the need for a comprehensive set of actions to achieve a decisive break from the past. The new outlook was launched in London by Spencer Dale, group chief economist, and Bob Dudley, group chief executive. The findings below relate to the Evolving Transition scenario.

**Fuel analysis**

By 2040, oil, gas, coal and non-fossil fuels each account for around a quarter of the world's energy and more than 40 percent of the overall increase in energy demand is met by renewable energy. Oil demand grows over much of the outlook, although it plateaus in the later years. All the demand growth comes from emerging economies. The growth in supply is driven by US tight oil in the early part of the outlook, with OPEC taking over from the late 2020s as Middle East producers adopt a strategy of growing market share.

The transport sector continues to dominate global oil demand, accounting for more than half of the overall growth. Most of the growth in energy demand from transport, which flattens off towards the end of the outlook, comes from non-road (largely air, marine, and rail) and trucks, with small increases from cars and motorbikes. After 2030, the main source of growth in the demand for oil is from non-combustible uses, particularly as a feedstock for petrochemicals.

Natural gas will grow strongly over the period, supported by increasing levels of industrialization and power demand in fast-growing emerging economies, continued coal-to-gas switching, and the increasing availability of low-cost supplies in North America and the Middle East. By 2040, the US accounts for almost one quarter of global gas production, and

global LNG supplies will more than double. The sustained growth in LNG supplies greatly increases the availability of gas around the world, with LNG volumes overtaking inter-regional pipeline shipments in the early 2020s.

Coal consumption flat-lines over the outlook period, which falls in China and the OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) - offset by increasing demand in India and other emerging Asian economies. China remains the largest market for coal, accounting for 40 percent of global coal demand to 2040.

**Renewable energy**

Renewable energy is expected to grow over 400 percent and accounts for over 50 percent of the increase in global power generation. This strong growth is enabled by the increasing competitiveness of wind and solar. Subsidies are gradually phased out by the mid-2020s, with renewable energy increasingly able to compete against other fuels. China is the largest source of growth, adding more renewable energy than the entire OECD combined, with India becoming the second largest source of growth by 2030.

**Sector analysis**

Power accounts for nearly 70 percent of the increase in primary energy demand. The mix of fuels used in power generation is set to shift materially, with renewable energy gaining share more quickly than any energy source in history, increasing from 7 percent today to around a quarter by 2040. Even so, coal remains the largest source of energy in power generation by 2040. Transport energy demand grows by only 25 percent despite total demand for transportation more than doubling, reflecting accelerating gains in vehicle efficiency. The transport sector continues to be dominated by oil (around 85 percent in 2040), despite increasing penetration of alternative fuels - particularly natural gas and electricity.

The outlook argues that the penetration of electricity in the transport sector is best measured by considering both the number of electric vehicles (EVs) and how intensively each vehicle is used. In the Evolving Transition scenario, the share of EVs in the global car parc reaches around 15 percent by 2040 - more than 300 million cars in a car parc of almost 2

billion. However, the share of passenger car kilometers powered by electricity, which also takes account of the intensity with which electric cars are used, is over 30 percent. The outlook shows how the interaction of fully-autonomous cars with shared mobility has the potential to substantially boost the intensity with which electric cars are driven.

A key uncertainty in the period to 2040 is the speed with which sales of electric cars increases. To gauge the significance of this uncertainty, the outlook considers a scenario in which there is a worldwide ban on the sales of cars with internal combustion engines (ICE) from 2040. This scenario reduces liquid fuel demand by around 10 million barrels a day relative to the Evolving Transition scenario but, even so, the level of oil demand in 2040 in the 'ICE ban' scenario is higher than in 2016.

"The suggestion that rapid growth in electric cars will cause oil demand to collapse just isn't supported by the basic numbers - even with really rapid growth. Even in the scenario where we see an ICE ban and very high efficiency standards, oil demand is still higher in 2040 than it is today," Group chief economist Dale explained.

**Regional analysis**

All the growth in energy consumption is in fast-growing developing economies: China and India account for half of the growth in global energy demand to 2040. Through the period China's energy growth slows as it transitions to a more sustainable pattern of economic growth. India's slowing in demand growth is less pronounced and by the early 2030s it overtakes China as the world's fastest growing market for energy. In the latter stages of the Outlook, Africa also plays an increasingly important role in driving energy demand, contributing more to global demand growth from 2035 to 2040 than China.

**Carbon emissions**

In the outlook's Evolving Transition scenario, carbon emissions rise by 10 percent by 2040. While this is far slower than the rates seen in the past 25 years, it remains higher than the sharp decline thought to be necessary to achieve the Paris commitments. As such, the outlook also explores an 'Even Faster Transition scenario', which has the same broad decline in carbon emissions as the International Energy Agency's 'Sustainable Development Scenario' where carbon emissions fall by almost 50 percent by 2040. Most of the additional abatement of emissions in this scenario, relative to the Evolving Transition scenario, come from the power sector, which is almost entirely decarbonized by 2040.



## Global energy mix is the most diverse

## Canada's steel town nervous despite tariff reprieve

**HAMILTON, Ontario:** A temporary exemption from US tariffs is little comfort to the Canadian steel city of Hamilton, coping with months of uncertainty as US President Donald Trump has threatened a potentially devastating 25 percent duty unless the North American Free Trade Agreement is renegotiated.

Canadian negotiators are weighing the interests of the relatively small sector, responsible for about 22,000 direct Canadian jobs and C\$9.0 billion (\$7.0 billion) in US exports, against those of bigger industries like auto manufacturing and politically influential groups like dairy farmers.

"I don't think we're at the end of it. Now it's being used as leverage," said Hamilton Port Authority Chief Executive Officer Ian Hamilton. "President Trump is putting a lot of pressure on everybody."

Hamilton, population 700,000, has pushed to diversify its economy, with better transit links to Toronto and affordable homes that are attracting families priced out of Canada's biggest city. A C\$139-million project is underway to clean up coal tar that contaminates the harbor and con-

dos are replacing once empty downtown storefronts. When Canadian steel escaped US steel tariffs in 2002, the duties had diverted some cheap steel into Canada. In recent years, a global steel glut has made it difficult for Canadian mills to compete.

But ArcelorMittal's Dofasco mill, coking and finishing operations at Stelco, and a collection of smaller operations still directly employ 10,000 people in Hamilton.

The North American steel industry is heavily integrated, with raw materials, steel and parts crossing the US-Canadian border several times before a finished product such as a vehicle or refrigerator is sold to consumers. About 65 percent of the Hamilton port's tonnage is iron ore and coal used to make steel. —Reuters



PITTSBURGH: A worker heads toward the US Steel Clairton Works in Clairton, Pennsylvania. —AFP

### EXCHANGE RATES

Al-Muzaini Exchange Co.

ASIAN COUNTRIES	
Japanese Yen	2.823
Indian Rupees	4.632
Pakistani Rupees	2.720
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.933
Nepali Rupees	2.894
Singapore Dollar	229.970
Hongkong Dollar	38.370
Bangladesh Taka	3.598
Philippine Peso	5.789
Thai Baht	9.636

GCC COUNTRIES	
Saudi Riyal	80.267
Qatari Riyal	82.671
Omani Riyal	781.705
Bahraini Dinar	799.260
UAE Dirham	81.973

ARAB COUNTRIES	
Egyptian Pound - Cash	19.500
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	17.054
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.208
Tunisian Dinar	127.190
Jordanian Dinar	424.050
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	2.005
Syrian Lira	0.000
Morocco Dirham	33.311

EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES	
US Dollar Transfer	300.800

Euro	374.240
Sterling Pound	418.410
Canadian dollar	235.830
Turkish lira	79.580
Swiss Franc	318.310
Australian Dollar	238.530
US Dollar Buying	299.600

GOLD	
20 Gram	260.52
10 Gram	133.18
5 Gram	67.43

Dollarco Exchange Co. Ltd

Rate for Transfer	Selling Rate
US Dollar	300.450
Canadian Dollar	235.305
Sterling Pound	417.855
Euro	371.740
Swiss Frank	286.905
Bahrain Dinar	7969.005
UAE Dirhams	82.205
Qatari Riyals	83.435
Saudi Riyals	81.015
Jordanian Dinar	425.040
Egyptian Pound	17.122
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.934
Indian Rupees	4.627
Pakistani Rupees	2.718
Bangladesh Taka	3.60
Philippines Peso	5.773
Cyprus pound	17.885

Japanese Yen	3.820
Syrian Pound	1.585
Nepalese Rupees	2.892
Malaysian Ringgit	77.740
Chinese Yuan Renminbi	47.905
Thai Bhat	10.585
Turkish Lira	79.255

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CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
<b>Europe</b>		
British Pound	0.410894	0.418394
Czech Korune	0.006515	0.015815
Danish Krone	0.045635	0.050635
Euro	0.364783	0.372283
Georgian Lari	0.133973	0.133973
Hungarian 0.001097	0.001287	0.001287
Norwegian Krone	0.034656	0.039856
Romanian Leu	0.062462	0.079312
Russian ruble	0.005283	0.005283
Slovakia	0.008932	0.018932
Swedish Krona	0.032466	0.037466
Swiss Franc	0.309928	0.320928
<b>Australasia</b>		
Australian Dollar	0.228179	0.240179
New Zealand Dollar	0.213598	0.223098
<b>America</b>		
Canadian Dollar	0.229352	0.238352
US Dollars	0.296700	0.301120
US Dollars Mint	0.297200	0.301120

Asia	
Bangladesh Taka	0.003191
Chinese Yuan	0.045984
Hong Kong Dollar	0.036282
Indian Rupee	0.004183
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000018
Japanese Yen	0.002736
Korean Won	0.000272
Malaysian Ringgit	0.073147
Nepalese Rupee	0.003001
Pakistani Rupee	0.002531
Philippine Peso	0.005674
Singapore Dollar	0.223369
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001606
Taiwan	0.010147
Thai Baht	0.009248
<b>Arab</b>	
Bahraini Dinar	0.791205
Egyptian Pound	0.014088
Iranian Riyal	0.000083
Iraqi Dinar	0.000202
Jordanian Dinar	0.419642
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000148
Moroccan Dirhams	0.022694
Omani Riyal	0.774981
Qatar Riyal	0.078332
Saudi Riyal	0.079127
Syrian Pound	0.001274
Tunisian Dinar	0.121892
Turkish Lira	0.073592
UAE Dirhams	0.080471
Yemeni Riyal	0.000977



Business

# MSRY Behbehani, GMC distributor in Kuwait, wins Grandmasters Award 2017

Behbehani and GM celebrate 55 years of partnership



Behbehani Directors with GM Dubai President and Directors.

**KUWAIT:** In recognition of Mohammad Saleh & Reza Yousuf Behbehani's excellence and uniqueness in after-sales services, in achieving outstanding customer satisfaction results and exceeding its 2017 annual sales targets, General Motors presented Behbehani team with its prestigious annual "Grandmasters Award" for the year 2017 in an extraordinary ceremony held by the company for this occasion.

The ceremony was attended by more than 400 of its staff members, led by the Vice President of GMC, Kuwait Jassim Behbehani and the directors Adel Behbehani, Abdul Ghani Behbehani and Talal Behbehani.

From General Motors' side the President and Managing Director for North Africa and the Middle East Mario Spangenberg, and key senior managers from General Motors attended the ceremony as well.

The ceremony was distinguished by its excellent organization and high-end ambience. Adel Behbehani welcomed all attendees and managers from General Motors, headed by Spangenberg as he stated in his speech: "We have gathered here today to celebrate the success achieved by our inspiring team. Our team always strives to deliver the best service and shopping experience to our customers. We are here this evening to recognize the team for achieving General Motors 2017 "Grandmasters Award".

He also added: "All this began with a dream in a small showroom at Al-Safat in Kuwait City where Mohamad Saleh & Reza Yusuf Behbehani Company started operation with a limited number of employees. Step by step in a long path, we kept on growing and pursuing our vision to be one of the leading automotive companies in Kuwait. Today the company has more than 400 employees. We operate through modern facilities in strategic locations. We have two Sales showrooms, state of the art Service Center, Parts Facilities, Certified Pre-Owned Facilities, New Vehicle Preparation center, new vehicle Delivery center and Body Shop facilities."

Jassim and Adel Behbehani presented a special gift to General Motors president—a boom which is a small traditional Kuwaiti ship — to celebrate 55 years of partnership between Behbehani and General Motors Middle East.

A number of employees were honored for their exceptional performance, dedication and efforts. In addition, retired employees who served the company for many years were also honored with appreciation certificates and valuable gifts.

GMC Behbehani continuously strives to be the best in serving its customers and guarantees exceptional service



Vice President of GMC, Kuwait Jassim Behbehani.



Presenting the Kuwaiti Alboom to GM president.



Adel honoring Behbehani employees.



Jasem & Adel Behbehani receiving Grandmasters trophy.

levels at any of its branches and service centers.

GMC Behbehani is considered to be one of the leading companies in Kuwait on both local and international levels. Its 55 years of partnership with

General Motors was achieved after obtaining Beaumont and Acadian vehicles dealership in 1963. In 1967, the company acquired the right to distribute GMC vehicles in Kuwait. Since then, it has been a con-

tinuous success, as it was one of the first companies to receive recognition and appreciation for its outstanding performances and leading achievements in sales, service and customer satisfaction.



Behbehani Managers with GM Delegates.



## Business

## World stocks bask in US jobs data glow

LONDON: World stocks surged to a two-week high yesterday after strong US jobs data at the end of last week helped take the edge off investors' concerns about the potential outbreak of trade war between the United States and other major economies.

European shares shot up across the board, following their Asian counterparts, while emerging market currencies strengthened as investors bought up so-called riskier assets and sold "safe haven" securities such as gold and government bonds.

Markets have been cheering Friday's US non-farm payrolls data which showed a hefty 313,000 rise in jobs, but also revealed that annual growth in average hourly earnings had slowed to 2.6 percent after spiking in January. This sug-

gested that the world's largest economy is experiencing a high growth without a corresponding spike in inflation.

This is referred to in the market as a "Goldilocks" trend, giving investors an incentive to buy assets such as equities and high-yield bonds without having to fear tighter central bank policy. "Friday's US employment data was about as perfect a set of figures as you can get from a policy maker's point of view. The increase in jobs was nothing short of amazing," said Marshall Gittler, a strategist at ACLS Global, a currency strategy firm.

"In other words, it was a 'Goldilocks' report: not too hot, not too cold, just right."

As a result, the S&P500 surged more than 1.7 percent on Friday—its second-best day of the

year so far—and futures pricing pointed to another day of gains yesterday. The warm glow extended around the globe, with Asian and European shares gaining. Germany's DAX led gains in Europe, rising 0.9 percent, and MSCI's world equity index, which tracks shares in 47 countries, hit a two-week high.

Inflation data from the world's largest economy is due today, and the question is how signs of economic strength may affect the US Federal Reserve's pace of monetary tightening.

"The jobs report will reinforce the confidence the Fed has on economic momentum - it's a very solid reading, plus you add a bit of (fiscal) stimulus on top," said Investec economist Victoria Clarke. "But they are a cautious institution who will be wary of reading too much into one print."

Earlier, MSCI's index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan climbed 1.3 percent, poised for a third session of gains. South Korea rose 1 percent, while Australia's main index added 0.7 percent, boosted by mining shares on news that Australia could be exempt from new US trade tariffs on steel and aluminum imports. Concerns over those tariffs have been weighing on European stocks, with the main pan-European stock index hitting a seven-month low at the start of the month. It has recovered somewhat from that trough to rise 0.3 percent yesterday.

The jobs news also lifted currencies such as the Mexican peso and Canadian and Australian dollars, while weighing on the safe-haven yen. Investors had trimmed holdings of yen last week

on news U.S. President Donald Trump was prepared to meet with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, a potential breakthrough in nuclear tensions in the region.

US officials on Sunday defended Trump's decision, saying the move was not just for show and not a gift to Pyongyang. Brent crude rose up some of Friday's gains, dropping 35 cents to \$65.14 a barrel, as rising US output loomed over markets despite a slowdown in rig drilling activity. Gold prices also slipped half a percent to \$1,315.81 an ounce, as demand for safe haven investments fell. For Reuters Live Markets blog on European and UK stock markets open a news window on Reuters Eikon by pressing F9 and type in 'Live Markets' in the search bar.—Reuters

Daily Kuwait Stock Exchange Report				Global			
Monday, March 12, 2018							
Index	Change	Closing	Last Closing	Volume	Value (KWD)	Number of Trades	
Price Index	▼ -37.23	6,729.64	6,762.87	59,533,134	12,640,693	2,822	
Weighted Index	▼ -0.70	406.52	410.22				
KSX 15	▼ -0.23	950.47	950.70				
Trades							
Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KWD)	Trades	Last	Change
IPG	390	365	2,850	1,017	2	365	▼ -34.0
NAFESCO	824	814	15,705	12,852	9	824	▲ +10.0
ENERGYH	27.2	27.2	250	7	1	27.2	▼ -0.3
GPI	29.0	28.0	420,363	11,806	18	28.8	▲ +0.6
ABAR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	87	▼ -0.0
Oil & Gas			<b>436,968</b>	<b>25,682</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>944.37</b>	<b>▼ -11.90</b>
KFODC	234	227	17,506	4,076	8	227	▼ -7.0
BPCC	700	690	475,554	328,422	19	690	▼ -10.0
ALKOUT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	680	▼ -0.0
ALGURAIN	345	341	91,090	31,223	16	341	▲ +1.0
Basic Materials			<b>684,580</b>	<b>363,721</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>1296.90</b>	<b>▼ -6.60</b>
KCEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	445	▼ -0.0
CABLE	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	409	▼ -0.0
SHP	216	213	220,000	47,160	8	213	▼ -4.0
PCEM	1,083	1,083	1,000	1,083	1	1,083	▼ -17.0
PAPER	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	250	▼ -0.0
MRC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	82	▼ -0.0
AGICO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	232	▼ -0.0
HCC	91	91	4,390	399	2	91	▼ -5.0
NICBM	175	162	3,511	584	4	168	▲ +1.0
EQUIPMENT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	35.7	▼ -0.0
NCICI	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	86	▼ -0.0
GYPSSUM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	95	▼ -0.0
SALBOOH	49.9	49.9	5,000	250	2	49.9	▼ -0.1
AGLTY	855	845	1,399,861	1,190,327	113	848	▼ -7.0
EDU	312	310	32,950	10,219	6	312	▲ +11.0
CLEANING	72	67	2,152,464	149,205	83	68	▼ -8.0
KGL	108	104	618,251	65,040	30	104	▼ -4.0
KKPC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	150	▼ -0.0
HUMANISOFT	3,899	3,850	428,928	1,668,074	213	3,850	▼ -49.0
GFC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	64	▼ -0.0
SHOOTING	18.8	18.0	1,565,891	28,378	30	18.2	▼ -1.1
GOC	460	440	18,412	8,591	15	460	▼ -14.0
MTCC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	56	▼ -0.0
UPAC	700	690	1,961	1,365	2	690	▼ -0.0
ALAFOD	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	377	▼ -0.0
MUBARRAD	70	67	355,941	24,128	20	67	▼ -1.7
LOGISTICS	53	53	300,361	15,906	21	53	▼ -0.3
SCEM	86	84	627,000	53,277	16	85	▲ +5.0
GCEM	82	80	245,367	19,804	5	82	▲ +2.0
QIC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	82	▼ -0.0
FCEM	76	75	100,000	7,550	2	76	▼ -0.0
RKWC	83	83	102,281	8,449	8	83	▼ -0.0
SPEC	68	62	600	38	2	68	▲ +8.0
Industrials			<b>8,194,319</b>	<b>3,299,625</b>	<b>601</b>	<b>1882.95</b>	<b>▼ -7.60</b>
FAPCO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	88	▼ -0.0
CATTL	200	200	1,500	300	1	200	▼ -24.0
DANAH	75	74	72,207	5,343	7	75	▼ -0.0
FOOD	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	1,904	▼ -0.0
Consumer Goods			<b>73,707</b>	<b>5,643</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>706.06</b>	<b>▼ -31.80</b>
ATC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	1,100	▼ -0.0
YIACO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	125	▼ -0.0
Health Care			<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1391.79</b>	<b>▼ -0.00</b>
KCIN	1,099	1,099	750	824	4	1,099	▼ -1.1
KHOT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	197	▼ -0.0
SULTAN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	67	▼ -0.0
CABLETV	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	18.1	▼ -0.0
IFAHF	135	105	97,020	10,481	27	105	▼ -25.0
OULAFUEL	113	113	12,140	1,372	12	113	▼ -0.0
MUNTAAHAT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	79	▼ -0.0
JAZEERA	605	600	3,520	2,117	2	600	▼ -0.0
BOOR	115	114	16,135	1,846	10	114	▼ -0.0
FUTUREKD	110	110	87,300	9,603	7	110	▼ -0.0
ALRAJ	121	120	5,250	635	2	120	▲ +1.0
Jiyad	89	82	2,555,145	224,218	181	87	▼ -1.1
Mezzan	795	790	21,416	17,016	10	790	▼ -7.0
Consumer Services			<b>2,798,676</b>	<b>268,113</b>	<b>255</b>	<b>954.93</b>	<b>▼ -7.90</b>
ZAIN	457	450	1,276,118	577,317	179	451	▼ -1.1
GORDDO	1,019	1,000	2,828	2,835	13	1,019	▼ -4.0
AAJ	21.9	21.4	1,354,000	29,176	31	21.4	▼ 0.0
VIVA	785	750	17,018	12,945	39	758	▼ -8.0
Telecommunications			<b>2,649,965</b>	<b>622,273</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>526.85</b>	<b>▼ -3.60</b>
NBK	778	773	4,341,068	3,364,426	144	773	▼ -1.6
GBK	258	251	1,974,814	504,846	58	257	▼ -4.0
CBK	436	430	700	302	7	430	▲ +3.0
ABK	350	341	208,252	71,619	17	348	▲ +3.0
ALMUTAHED	335	325	427,278	140,939	39	328	▼ -2.0
KIB	237	235	1,483,520	349,202	29	235	▲ +1.0
BURG	288	285	447,400	127,957	70	286	▼ -3.0
KFIN	584	582	2,586,201	1,507,123	143	583	▼ -1.1
BOUBAYAN	481	473	135,234	64,910	16	477	▲ +2.0
ALIB	215	214	482,374	103,258	17	215	▲ +1.0
ITHMR	35.9	33.9	307,350	10,522	18	34.5	▼ -0.0
WARBANK	240	235	274,369	94,960	79	237	▼ -0.0
Banks			<b>12,668,558</b>	<b>6,319,064</b>	<b>637</b>	<b>932.82</b>	<b>▲ +3.40</b>
KNS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	290	▼ -0.0
GNS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	695	▼ -0.0
AIS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	510	▼ -0.0
WNS	68	61	10,407	705	2	61	▼ -6.6
KUWAITRE	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	192	▼ -0.0
FTI	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	62	▼ -0.0
WETHAQ	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	30.0	▼ -0.0
BKWIT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	365	▼ -0.0
Insurance			<b>10,407</b>	<b>705</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1022.78</b>	<b>▼ -7.50</b>
Trades							
Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KWD)	Trades	Last	Change
SOKUK	44.9	44.0	20,968	9,284	11	44.0	▼ -0.4
KRE	52	52	2,345,000	122,401	70	52	▼ -0.3
URC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	68	▼ -0.0
NRE	116	114	17,275	2,002	4	116	▼ -1.0
SRE	343	338	136,625	47,040	20	341	▼ -3.0
TAM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	340	▼ -0.0
AREEC	160	150	35,310	5,317	4	160	▼ -1.0
MASSALEH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	39.9	▼ -0.0
ARABREC	34.0	33.7	107,554	3,655	5	34.0	▼ -0.3
ERESCO	34.9	32.8	121,728	4,140	5	32.6	▼ -1.4
MABANEH	712	712	1,629	1,180	2	712	▼ -3.0
INJAZZAT	86	86	61,396	5,285	2	86	▼ -0.0
INVESTORS	15.9	15.8	1,177,721	18,715	30	15.9	▲ +0.1
IRC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	29.4	▼ -0.0
ALTUARIA	88	84	365,301	29,951	12	85	▼ -0.0
SANAM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	32.0	▼ -0.0
AAYANRE	67	62	38,789	2,411	4	67	▼ -2.0
ADAR	75	75	25,530	1,915	3	75	▼ -0.0
ALAGARIA	27.0	27.0	4,000	108	2	27.0	▼ -3.0
MAZAYA	111	110	1,218,358	134,833	18	111	▼ -0.0
TUARA	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	63	▼ -0.0
TAAAMEER	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	29.4	▼ -0.0
ARKAN	88	88	154,145	13,590	3	88	▼ -0.1
ARGAN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	160	▼ -0.0
ABYANR	20.6	20.1	1,822,757	32,752	39	20.1	▼ -0.5
MUNSHAAT	83	79	283,000	22,691	14	83	▲ +3.0
FIRSTDUBAI	47.2	45.0	4,700	212	4	46.4	▲ +1.2
KBT	54	54	430,000	23,187	23	54	▲ +1.0
REAM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	1,572	▼ -0.0
MENA	29.9	28.6	20,990	600	3	29.9	▲ +0.1
ALMUDJON	36.0	35.0	29,7				



Business

# KAMCO sponsors 3rd Kuwait Debt Capital Markets Conference

## Market participants optimistic about potential of KD market

**DUBAI:** The Gulf Bond and Sukuk Association (GBSA), in partnership with KAMCO Investment Company and Dentons, held its third Kuwait Debt Capital Markets Conference at The Chairman's Club in Kuwait. The invitation-only event gathered over 100 local and international market leaders as well as senior government officials.

Faisal Sarkhou, Chief Executive Officer, KAMCO Investment Company delivered the keynote address in which he stated, "As one of the leading debt capital market book runners in the region, we are proud to partner in this GBSA conference. 2017 was significant for debt capital markets in the GCC, as fixed income issuances saw one of the biggest jumps since the financial crisis. As USD yield curves are now established, we expect GCC corporate bond issuances in 2018 to pick up, mainly from the refinancing needs of corporates and banks, and in order to capture relatively lower rates in a rising interest rate environment. International participation for GCC bonds should pick up as well as global investors become more aware of the region's unique value proposition, and more capabilities are developed within the region."

Fawaz Abusneineh, Managing Director & Head of Capital Markets, First Abu Dhabi Bank's, presented on project bonds and sukuk



KUWAIT: A view of the third Kuwait Debt Capital Markets Conference

and reflected on the landmark Abu Dhabi Crude Oil Pipeline transaction.

Alex Roussos, Partner, Dentons led and expert panel on issuer and investor appetite for structured capital market products with Khalid Al-Rukhayes, Senior Dealer Kuwait

Finance House, Rani Selwanes, Managing Director, Head of Investment Banking, NBK Capital, Khaled Fouad, Chief Investment Officer, KAMCO Investment Company and Hossam Abdullah, Legal Counsel & Managing Partner, Al-Hossam Legal.

A second panel examined the local KD market was moderated by Omar Zaineddine, Senior Vice President, Head of Investment Banking, KAMCO Investment Company with panelists Alex Saleh Partner and Head of Office, Al-Tamimi & Co, Declan Sawey, Group



Faisal Sarkhou

Treasurer, Kuwait Projects Company (KIPCO), Rasha Othman, Senior Vice President, Investment Banking, Kuwait Financial Centre "MARKAZ" and Yasmine Salamah Assistant General Manager, Corporate Banking, Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait.

## Toolbox trade wars: How a sure winner in US dispute has yet to reap benefits

**FRANKLIN PARK, Ill:** Nestled in an industrial park near the end of the runway of O'Hare International Airport, Metal Box International Inc. should be one of the winners of a little-known trade war over toolboxes. In January, the US International Trade Commission ruled Chinese imports had harmed domestic producers of big tool chests sold in retail stores, prompting the Trump administration to slap anti-subsidy duties of up to 95 percent on Chinese boxes. That could jump far higher later this year, after the administration decides whether to add anti-dumping duties on top of the anti-subsidy charges.

"This is a game changer for us," said Mitch Liss, one of the owners of the privately held company, who said regaining just a small slice of the Chinese business would make the factory boom.

Metal Box International is one of only two remaining US producers of such boxes. The other is Waterloo Industries, a far larger company recently acquired by Stanley Black & Decker Inc, the global tool producer. So if retailers were going to start buying American again to avoid the mounting duties, it would almost certainly be visible at this factory.

It hasn't worked out that way. There was a small uptick after the January ruling, Liss said, but so far no boom in orders. After spending \$300,000 on new equipment in a surge of optimism, he put plans to buy additional machines on hold and has not added any new workers.

Meanwhile, the Trump administration's move last week to crack down on steel and aluminum imports is threatening to boost costs for Metal Box International as well as Stanley Black & Decker, which uses those metals to fashion similar tool chests.

Stanley Black & Decker declined to talk about whether it was seeing any impact on its business from the new toolbox duties, though a spokesman told Reuters the International Trade Commission's decision could mean "increased volume in the plant, which can translate into growth in US manufacturing jobs." A spokesman for Home Depot said he would not discuss the company's tool chest sourcing "for competitive reasons." The current battle over steel and aluminum tariffs underscores the risks and complexity in trade disputes, which often pit America's love of cheap imports against its desire to protect blue-collar jobs. Winners and losers aren't always initially clear. Tariffs on steel and aluminum could help some US workers - United States Steel Corp cited the prospect of tariffs this week as its reason to restart a mill in Illinois, for instance.

But as a consumer of steel, Liss said the metal tariffs will hurt him but quickly adds that he understands why industries are looking for protection from cheaper imports. Metal Box International had a strong business in tool chests as recently as 2014, when among other models it sold a design to Home Depot with glass on the fronts of the drawers - which made it easier to see which tools were in each compartment. Those were a big seller. But the business quickly faded, he said, as they were displaced by imports that sold to retailers at lower prices than Metal Box

International could match. Shipments of boxes fell by half in 2015 and fell again by half in 2016, said Liss.

The company was planning to shut down when Liss heard that his last US competitor, then called Waterloo Industries, was planning to file a trade case. Waterloo coordinated its efforts with Liss, who traveled to Washington to testify against the importers.

The trade case targeted only a slice of the toolbox industry. Small, portable toolboxes were excluded, as were professional-type toolboxes sold by companies such as Snap-On Inc, which market directly to buyers. Companies have long sought trade protection in Washington, often finding as much success under Republicans as Democrats. The trade dispute process is meant to be bi-partisan, with an equal number of Democrats and Republicans sitting on the International Trade Commission.

But the climate now has shifted decisively in the favor of protection under Trump, especially for old-line industries like steel. The Commerce Department said it launched 82 new investigations into trade cases last year, a 58 percent jump over the year before.

"There is the potential element of companies knowing that they're dealing with a more sympathetic administration," which may be prompting more complaints, said Scott Lincicome, a trade expert at the free-market oriented Cato Institute.

The Department of Commerce can do subtle things to help companies succeed in these cases, he noted, like offering better guidance in how to draft complaints. But Lincicome said the number of trade cases were already on the rise before the last election. These things always tend to "come in waves," he added. The Metal Box International plant, which employs about 100 people, was building Husky brand tool chests for Home Depot one recent day, with workers clustered around an assembly line inserting drawers into the boxes as they rumbled down the line.

The metal-bending machines Liss bought are already lined up in the middle of the plant, but not yet operational. Ever thrifty, Liss bought the machines from a company that reconditions equipment, rather than splurging on new. "I bought these for \$75,000," he said. "New, each would cost \$250,000."

Liss said most workers here are unaware how close the plant came to shutting down or how tenuous the situation remains. And even those who do know, like the director of operations Tom St. Germain, tend not to talk about the political atmosphere that seems to be helping US producers like them. Germain said he likes President Trump, but added that "if he shut his mouth and did his job, he'd be more successful." Liss calls St. Germain almost every day to check whether big orders are rolling in.

These are early days, Liss said, so it still might happen. Retailers may have already stocked up on imports as they anticipated the trade ruling in favor of the domestic producers. But this would normally be a busier time, since Father's Day - along with Black Friday and Christmas - are the highpoints of their annual selling cycle. — Reuters

## Nissan Al-Babtain continues 'scratch & win' campaign on genuine parts!

**KUWAIT:** Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al-Babtain Co, the sole authorized agent of Nissan in the State of Kuwait, continues its Scratch & Win campaign on genuine parts and urges its customers to win instant gifts as the offer comes

to a close. Ensuring everybody is a winner with Nissan Genuine Parts, customers who purchase for the amount of KD 100 or above at any of the authorized parts outlets or service centers will be entitled to a coupon with a

guaranteed win from one of the many exciting prizes. Buyers can look forward to winning cash prizes, a free oil and filter change, free car checkup and a free tool box when spending KD 100 or above. Nissan Genuine Parts provides spare parts that demonstrate long term reliability, safety and quality configured for each model to provide complete reliability and assurance to its passengers.

Nissan owners can visit Nissan Al-Babtain Authorized Parts & Service centers distributed across Kuwait to take advantage of this special offer aimed at accommodating additional customer satisfaction.

## Sunil John appointed President, Middle East at Burson Cohn & Wolfe

**DUBAI:** Burson Cohn & Wolfe (BCW), a top-three global communications agency, has announced the appointment of Sunil John, Founder & CEO of ASDA'A Burson-Marsteller, as President of BCW's Middle East operations.

BCW was created in February through the merger of Burson-Marsteller & Cohn & Wolfe, leading PR agencies owned by WPP, the world's largest communications services company. At BCW, the fast-growing Middle East region will be a separate division, with John joining the global leadership team alongside Chris Foster, President, North America, Scott Wilson, President, Europe & Africa, Francisco Carvalho, President, Latin America, and Matt Stafford, President, Asia. All regional leaders will report to Donna Imperato, Chief Executive Officer of BCW.

"This is a powerful leadership team that will drive integration and growth at Burson

Cohn & Wolfe and lead BCW on our mission to become the best integrated communications agency in the world," said Imperato. "They each have proven track records in leading strong regions and excellence in client service, are deeply respected in their markets, and bring the right integrated expertise and mindset to the roles - the mindset needed to complete a seamless merger and continue pushing the boundaries of integrated communications."

John said: "With a population of 350 million people, some 60 per cent of whom are under the age of 30, the Middle East is a dynamic region poised for exceptional growth across all sectors and markets. The scale of the new BCW network, our focus on ever greater integration, and now our flexibility as an independent regional entity will give us a distinct advantage in pursuing exciting opportunities across the region." The new compa-

ny's brand identity and online presence will be unveiled shortly. Until then, Burson-Marsteller and Cohn & Wolfe will operate under their existing branding.

ASDA'A Burson-Marsteller was founded by John in 2000 as an independent agency. In 2008, WPP acquired a majority-stake in the firm, which joined the Burson-Marsteller network. Today, BCW's Middle East operations employ 160 professionals across 10 wholly-owned offices and seven affiliates in 15 countries. The firm provides services to governments, multinational businesses and regional corporate clients and institutions, and is the leading PR consultancy in the region.

The agency produces the annual ASDA'A Burson-Marsteller Arab Youth Survey, one of the most important and widely-cited pieces of independent research into the region's most important demographic, its youth. Now in its 10th year, the Survey is an invaluable source of information on the hopes, fears and aspirations of young Arabs aged 18-24 in 16 countries.



Sunil John

### NBK INTERNATIONAL MARKETS REPORT

## Volatility rules the roost in February

**KUWAIT:** February was a bumpy month for markets, with volatility rising to its highest levels in over two years. The S&P 500 index is down 5 percent from peaks after regaining some of its losses. Fears of complacency combined with a changing view on the pace of central bank tightening, particularly in the US, laid the ground for the market retreat since early February. Yields have also climbed as some factored in a more hawkish Fed in 2018. Meanwhile, economic data continued to confirm a robust recovery in the global economy, whose outlook improved on expectations of a more favorable fiscal policy in the US.

### Markets see Fed moving faster

Much of the jittery sentiment has come from the US, where inflation appeared to pick up pace enough for some to expect a more hawkish Fed in 2018. Strong core CPI inflation in January affirmed the solid wage growth data seen earlier. The 0.35 percent monthly gain in core prices was by far the largest in years. Still, annual inflation was unchanged at 1.8 percent y/y. Producer price inflation also beat expectations with a 0.4 percent m/m gain. The PCE price index also confirmed stronger price growth, though core inflation was steady (1.5 percent y/y) and well below the 2 percent target.

Expectations of more Fed hikes in 2018 are also being fueled by a positive shift in the growth outlook for the US. Already healthy growth is likely to be bolstered by fiscal stimulus in the form of historic tax cuts and higher spending. Despite some weaker economic data in January, the broad evidence continued to

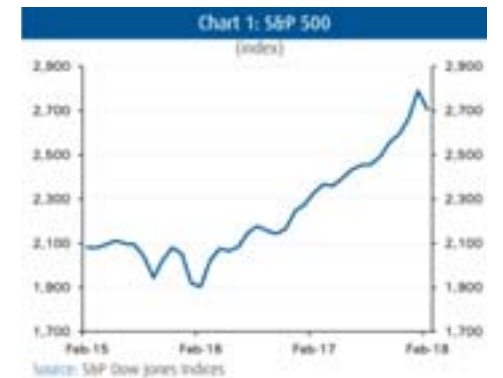
reflect strength. Indeed, retail sales and industrial production disappointed expectations in January, while durable goods orders were soft. Still, other data has been robust. The February Philly Fed index beat expectations, coming in at a solid 25.8, while consumer sentiment surprised to the upside.

As a result, many now expect the Fed to move faster on rate hikes in 2018. This view was also supported by recent testimony by the Fed chair Jerome Powell in which he suggested that more hikes could be forthcoming this year. Indeed, more analysts now expect four 25 bps hikes during 2018, though the odds of just three hikes are still higher. Yields have also risen. The 10-year US Treasury yield rose to 2.86 percent, up around 43 basis points since the start of 2018.

### Eurozone growth remains robust

The economic recovery in the eurozone remains in good shape, despite some softer data. February's eurozone flash PMI eased to its lowest level in several months, though it remained strong at 57.5. Economic sentiment dipped to 114.1, but was still near 18-year highs. Unemployment also remained at a record low 8.6 percent in January. Of course, the key concern in the eurozone continues to be the absence of inflationary momentum. Headline inflation edged lower to 1.2 percent, though core inflation was encouraging at 1.0 percent. As a result, few expect the European Central Bank (ECB) to move toward tightening monetary conditions anytime soon, though the stronger economy suggests the ECB might be closer to that than the inflation data suggests.

In Japan, the economy remained on a firm footing though here too the data has been somewhat softer in recent weeks. Industrial activity slowed from 4.4 percent y/y in December to 2.7 percent y/y in January on the back of weaker demand and an inventory build-up. Domestic



consumption also remains subdued with retail sales growth slowing more than expected. Despite some concerns of a stronger yen hurting exports, the data has shown otherwise. Indeed, exports have help up quite well.

### Oil prices hold high

After rising to 4-year highs in January, oil prices retreated as a result of the market turmoil in February. Nonetheless, prices continued to hold on to levels around \$65 chiefly as fundamentals continued to look relatively robust. There may also be some downward pressure due to resurgent oil production in the US, which is expected to add 1.3 million barrels per day of extra output in 2018, or around two-thirds of expected non-OPEC production growth during the year.



## Technology

# Bezos rockets his way to become the richest person on the planet

## Personal wealth of the 54-year-old has doubled

**SAN FRANCISCO:** Jeff Bezos is officially the richest person on the planet thanks to the success of Amazon—but his bold vision extends to space and even time itself. With Amazon's share price up nearly 60 percent during the past year, the personal wealth of the company's 54-year-old founder has doubled to more than \$110 billion.

Bezos leapt past Bill Gates this week to the top spot on an annual Forbes magazine list of billionaires, relegating the Microsoft co-founder to second place with a net worth of about \$90 billion. He has gone on record with a formula for success that includes taking bold bets, riding change and rebounding from setbacks.

"You need to be nimble and robust so you need to be able to take a punch and you also need to be quick and innovative and do new things at a higher speed, that's the best defense against the future," Bezos said in an interview published in Vanity Fair magazine last year. "You have to always be leaning into the future. If you're leaning away from the future, the future is gonna win, every time."

### Tinkering toddler

Bezos's penchant for experimenting reportedly dates to a young age—with one widely-recounted story telling that he tried to dismantle his own crib as a toddler. His mother was a teenager when she gave birth to Jeff in Albuquerque, New Mexico, on January 12, 1964. She remarried when her son was about four years old, and he was legally adopted by his Cuban immigrant stepfather who worked as an

engineer at a major petrochemical company. His mother's family were settlers in Texas, where Bezos spent many a summer working at a ranch owned by a grandfather retired from a job as a regional director at the US Atomic Energy Commission.

Bezos was enchanted by computer science when the IT industry was in its infancy and he studied engineering at Princeton University. After graduating, he put his skills to work on

“Always be leaning into the future”

Wall Street, where by 1990 he had risen to be a senior vice president at investment firm DE Shaw. He surprised peers by leaving his high-paid position about four years later to open an online bookseller called Amazon.com, which according to legend was started in a garage.

Jeffrey Preston Bezos went from being a boy with a love for how things work to being the man who built Amazon.com into an internet powerhouse. Amazon grew to dominate commerce and become a formidable contender in cloud com-

puting and artificial intelligence with its digital assistant Alexa. The Seattle-based company was worth about \$750 billion based on the price of its shares on Thursday.

### Long-term thinking

Bezos has such a proven track record for shaking up the business sectors he enters that he has been dubbed "disruptor-in-chief." Like his company, Bezos has also transformed with time, shaving his head and bulking up his body with exercise. The results were immortalized in a series of photos taken at a conference last year.

And, he seems to be growing more comfortable being in the public eye, according to recent portrait piece in The New York Times. A fan of science fiction and in particular the British author Iain Banks, Bezos has passions other than Amazon. Bezos called Banks "a huge personal favorite" in a tweet last month while announcing that Amazon Prime video service was working on a television series based on one of the author's novels.

Bezos has invested some \$42 million in the building a 150-meter-tall clock designed to keep time for 10,000 years. Built inside a mountain in Texas, the clock will be powered by geothermal energy. "Humans are now technologically advanced enough that we can create not only extraordinary wonders but also civilization-scale problems," Bezos said in a blog post devoted to the clock project.

"We're likely to need more long-term thinking," Bezos is also behind private space explo-



SEATTLE: In this file photo taken on January 29, 2018 Chief Executive Officer of Amazon, Jeff Bezos, tours the facility at the grand opening of the Amazon Spheres. — AFP

ration operation Blue Origin, into which he usually invests money from selling Amazon shares. Blue Origin has outlined plans to build a space-ship and lunar lander capable of delivering cargo to the moon, perhaps to support colonies there. With the purchase of The Washington Post in 2013, the Internet entrepreneur added a presti-

gious news operation to his investments. The Post, and Bezos himself, have been targeted by US President Donald Trump. An open critic of Trump, Bezos has jokingly offered to send him into space. Bezos has been married to Mackenzie Bezos, a writer, since 1993. They have four children. — AFP

## Step up fake news fight at election time: EU official

**BRUSSELS:** The EU's top official charged with fighting fake news says Europe needs to redouble its efforts to tackle the phenomenon in the run-up to elections, as fears grow about Russian meddling in votes across the continent. Brussels is working on a Europe-wide plan to deal with fake news online, with an expert group to issue a report on Monday and first strategy outlines due to be unveiled next month.

Moscow has been accused of interfering in several recent European votes by using social media to spread bogus news stories and sow discord. In January, French President Emmanuel Macron announced plans for laws to stop such material spreading in the run-up to elections. Mariya Gabriel, European commissioner for the digital single market and society, told AFP in an interview that the question of fake news during election campaigns was a key part of the expert group's study.

"We must redouble efforts against fake news during election periods," said Gabriel, who took over as commissioner when fellow Bulgarian Kristalina Georgieva was appointed to the World Bank last year. "It is at election time when we really see how big an effect this phenomenon can have on voters." The expert group includes a representative from AFP, as well as other major media companies, campaign groups and web giants Google, Facebook and Twitter. Part of the project is to define clearly what is meant by fake news and Gabriel said she would even prefer to drop the term in favor of "disinformation online". "Today we are seeing the perverse effects of the term 'fake news', which can be used by politicians to discredit their opponents and attack freedom of expression," she said.

### Broad approach

In January the EU accused Russia of pumping out thousands of pieces of disinformation in an "orchestrated strategy" aimed at destabilizing the bloc in an unusually blunt assessment.

This was based on two years' work by the EU's Stratcom East taskforce, which runs a "myth-busters" website and social media feeds to debunk false news reports, most of them promoting Russian government agendas. But Gabriel said she wants the EU to develop a strategy that looks beyond individual countries to build resilience across Europe to fake news by educating citizens and encouraging web platforms to be open about the source of their content. "We are aiming for a much larger scope—I don't want to stop with one country or one aspect," she said. "That's why I talk about a multi-stakeholder approach, a multi-dimensional solution—there is no miracle solution." Germany took the lead in trying to tackle fake news with legislation last year, threatening social networks with fines of up to 50 million euros (\$60 million) if they do not remove bogus reports and hateful posts promptly.

The EU has so far taken a more collaborative approach with the big web players, encouraging self-regulation, and Gabriel said it was not planning to follow Germany and France down the road of trying to legislate against fake news. "I don't start with the idea that an attack comes from this country or region. I start with the need for transparency to identify sources, where the information is coming from," she said. "For example during election time to have a clear indication of adverts paid for by political parties to show citizens clearly that something is part of a planned campaign."

And Gabriel, 38, stressed the need to better equip young people—and their teachers — to identify reliable information and spot bogus news. "Today this has become urgent. The key word is education—media education must become part of courses at universities and schools," she said. "For this we must pay attention to teachers—we don't think of this often enough... but it is really teachers who need to master this technology to pass it on to their students." — AFP

## Waymo self-driving rigs to haul Google cargo

**SAN FRANCISCO:** Google-owned Waymo said that its self-driving trucks will haul cargo bound for the internet giant's data centers in Georgia. Rival Uber made a similar announcement on Tuesday, saying it is using self-driving semi trucks to augment human-driven rigs in its on-demand trucking service in the US state of Arizona.

Waymo driverless trucks will go to work in the Atlanta area Monday as part of a pilot program intended to help integrate autonomous big rigs with the operations of shippers, ports, terminals, factories, and distribution centers, according to the company. "Our software is learning to drive big rigs in much the same way a human driver would after years of driving passenger cars," Waymo said in an online post. "The principles are the same, but things like braking, turning, and blind spots are different with a fully-loaded truck and trailer."

Human drivers will be on board Waymo trucks to take control if needed. Waymo for years has been testing self-driving cars, racing against smartphone-summoned ride star Uber, whose trucking service uses humans to pick up cargo from Uber Freight customers and drive it in trailers to transfer hubs. There, the trailers are hitched onto self-driving trucks for long highway hauls, according to the San Francisco-based company. The self-driving vehicles head

to transfer hubs close to their destinations, where the trailers are connected back onto human-steered rigs to complete their journeys. Uber has been testing self-driving truck technology since 2016, and began using autonomous rigs for hauls late last year. The company claims to have made the first commercial shipment ever by a self-driving truck when it hauled a trailer full of Budweiser beer over about 120 miles (193 kilometers) of highway in Colorado.

### Paving the road

Autonomous-vehicle technology has been touted as having potential to save fuel, ease congestion, and make transportation safer. Waymo and Uber last month said they had settled a lawsuit over allegedly stolen trade secrets from the former Google self-driving car project. Waymo filed the suit last year but after four days of testimony before a federal judge, Uber agreed to a financial settlement, a source said.

In September, Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao released new guidelines that permit more testing of self-driving cars and address regulation between the federal government and states. She said self-driving technology could reduce accidents and improve mobility for the elderly, disabled and other restricted populations. — AFP

## India, sunny nations form a solar alliance

**NEW DELHI:** Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India has moved to quickly scale up its use of renewable power. In 2014, the year Modi took office, India had 3 gigawatts of solar power. By the end of 2017, it had nearly 7 times that, or 20 GW, according to industry tracker Bridge to India, a renewable energy consultancy. Now India wants to quintuple that total by 2022 - a goal once seen as hugely ambitious but now considered within reach by energy experts. Progress is clearly happening quickly: During 2017 alone, India doubled its installed solar capacity from 10 GW to 20 GW.

"India is going to maintain and accelerate the momentum. It will move to be the number two player in the next year or two," said Tim Buckley, director of energy finance studies at the Australia-based Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA), a think tank. In 2017, India added the third largest amount of national solar capacity, just behind the US and China, and was overtaking Japan, according to IEEFA research. Now, in partnership with France, India wants to take its growing resources and knowledge on solar power and use it to help other sunny countries jumpstart their solar ambitions as well.

### Solar alliance

On Sunday, in New Delhi, Modi and the French President Emanuel Macron hosted the launch of a solar energy partnership that aims to build a network to help tropical countries around the world boost their use of solar power.

"In the Vedas (ancient Hindu texts), the sun was thought to be the world's soul. In India, the sun was thought of as the nurturer of all life," Modi said at the launch of the International Solar Alliance (ISA). "These days, when we are looking for a way to combat climate change, we must look to this ancient perspective," he said.

As part of the alliance, India will offer up to \$1.4 billion in assistance to help with 27 solar projects in other countries, the prime minister said. Upendra Tripathy, the director general of the new alliance, said it aims scale-up solar power in many more countries. "Everyone has access to (the sun) but in terms of ability to exploit solar energy, (that) is not equal," he said in a telephone interview with the Thomson Reuters Foundation. "Credit is a challenge. Skillset is a challenge. The fundamental issue is, do all member countries have equal ability to exploit solar energy?"

## Space bases on Mars could preserve civilization: Musk

**WASHINGTON:** Bases on the moon and Mars could help preserve human civilization and hasten its regeneration on earth in the event of a third world war, billionaire entrepreneur Elon Musk, said on Sunday. Musk, the founder of rocket and spacecraft company SpaceX, said the company's interplanetary ship could begin test flights as soon as next year.

There is "some probability" that there will be another Dark Ages, "particularly if there is a third world war," Musk said at the SXSW conference. "We want to make sure that there's enough of a seed of human civilization



MIRZAPUR: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi (2L), French President Emmanuel Macron (3L) and Engie General Managing Director Isabelle Kocher (5R) take part in the opening ceremony of a solar power plant. — AFP

ISA plans to address that issue in part by creating a larger, global market for solar technology that would benefit smaller countries by aggregating the risk and the demand, Tripathy said. The alliance, an effort to advance the 2015 Paris climate agreement, aims to become a network of 121 countries, he said. Currently 32 countries are full members and another 61 are on their way to full membership. Many are developing nations.

### India's challenges

India's solar push is in part boosted by steadily dropping costs of providing solar energy. To produce a unit of solar power now costs 2.5 rupees - a cost similar to that of more traditional energy sources, said Kanika Chawla, the senior programme lead at the Delhi-based Council on Energy, Environment and Water, a partner organisation of the ISA.

India's transition to renewable energy - without shutting down its coal-fired power plants - represents a new model for developing countries going forward, Chawla said in a telephone interview. But India still gets about three-quarters of its power from coal, although that is expected to fall to below 50 percent by 2040, according to the International Energy Agency.

India's power providers, largely state-run public companies, are heavily in debt and as a result many companies generating solar power are not being paid on time, Chawla said. India's government also is considering a 70 percent tariff on solar imports to protect

India's solar manufacturers - something that is causing a lot of uncertainty as investors try to bring new solar projects into the country, Buckley said.

Other issues for the nation's solar scale-up include the tricky business of figuring out how to integrate renewables into the existing electricity grid and the lack of a business model for such utilities - a problem other countries using solar energy also face, Chawla said. All of these issues have contributed to a slowdown in the pace at which solar projects are being commissioned in India, she said.

But what the renewable energy future holds for the South Asian giant will be critical for the world, climate change experts say. As China's economic growth slows, India's is heating up, along with its energy demand. India is today the top contributor to growth in energy demand, according to the International Energy Agency.

"It's worth acknowledging the Indian market and economy is still significantly smaller than China and it will be for some time to come," Buckley said. However, "India is very much wedded to the energy transformation. It's coming straight from the Prime Minister, and the energy minister and the coal minister are very much onboard," he said. And "especially with the US leaving the Paris agreement, there's a perceived void that some country needs to fill - and the International Solar Alliance is a clever way of signaling climate leadership", Chawla said. "It is India's offering to the world." — Reuters



ADELAIDE: In this file photo taken on September 29, 2017 Billionaire entrepreneur and founder of SpaceX Elon Musk speaks at the 68th International Astronautical Congress. — AFP

somewhere else to bring civilization back, and perhaps shorten the length of the Dark Ages," he said. "I think a moon base and a Mars base that could perhaps help regenerate life back here on earth would be really important." Musk said he thinks that SpaceX's interplanetary ship will "be able to do short flights, short sort of up and down flights, probably sometime in the first half of next year." SpaceX launched the world's most powerful rocket, the Falcon Heavy, last month, sending Musk's red Tesla Roadster car toward an orbit near Mars. — AFP



Health

# Bottle walls and recycled ships: Kenya to take on plastic waste

## A ship capable of sailing to South Africa to raise awareness

**WATAMU:** Like many places in the world, Kenya's coast faces challenges with waste plastic, from used shopping bags that block drains to throw-away water bottles that litter streets and wash into the sea. But this Indian Ocean resort village, best known for its tropical beaches and Swahili history, is taking on plastic waste, turning it into homes, furniture - and maybe even a ship capable of sailing all the way to South Africa to raise awareness about plastic pollution.

Sammy Baya, for instance, one resident of the coastal community, now owns a house with walls made of stacked glass and plastic bottles. "It just like living in any other house but this one, unlike

other ordinary houses, allows more light to enter the house and therefore I don't use my solar (panels) for lighting when there is a full moon," Baya told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. "You should see the inside of this house at night when there is a full moon. It's mesmerizing," he said.

He said building his three-bedroom house last year in part with waste plastic and glass cut the costs by about 40 percent. Justin Kitsao, chairman of the Watamu Marine Association, an environmental non-governmental group, said constructing houses using plastic and glass bottles reduces the need for other building materials, particularly sand and concrete blocks.

### Plastic bans, buy-backs

Watamu's not the only part of Kenya taking action on plastic waste. The country has banned the sale and use of disposable plastic carry bags and last month Charles Sunkuli, Kenya's environmental principal secretary, said his ministry will launch a plastic bottle buy-back scheme in April. The move is a step back from an earlier proposed total ban on plastic bottles - but it has won the support of the key Kenyan Association of Manufacturers.

Waste disposal planning "needs to be coupled with the instruments and infrastructure to help recycle and reuse waste material," the association noted in a statement. Because throw-away plastic creates environmental pollution and takes fossil fuels to produce, cutting back on its use is important to curb climate change and improve the environment, Kenyan environmentalists say.

In Watamu, Eco World, a non-governmental organisation, has hired 17 local people to collect plastic along the Indian Ocean beach each week. The group then separates the plastics according to weight before grinding some of them into tiny pieces that are sold to artisans, who use them to make chairs, poles and tables. Intact plastic and glass bottles also are washed and bound together with sand and cement to create walls that can replace brick and block walls in homes and other structures. Bottles of different sizes and colors can be used to create different effects.

Any plastic waste Eco World cannot sell is donated to an unusual effort to raise awareness about the problem: A plastic ship, being built in



**WATAMU:** Plastic waste collected from the beaches of Watamu, Kenya, lies waiting to be reused or recycled at Eco World, an environmental organization. — Reuters photos



**WATAMU:** A view of a gate made with plastic bottles at Eco World, an organization.

Lamu County, that is set to sail to South Africa to raise awareness on the importance of recycling plastic to protect the sea. Ali Skanda, who hopes to captain the voyage in June, said cutting the amount of plastic waste reaching the ocean is becoming increasingly urgent.

"If we continue to litter our water bodies, the marine life might disappear one day," he predicted in a telephone interview with the Thomson Reuters Foundation. Melinda Ressa,

meanwhile, the operations manager at Hemingways, a Watamu resort, said her facility has begun to replace palm leaf roofs on some structures with recycled plastic roofing. For now the material is imported from Malaysia, but the resort hopes to begin using locally recycled plastic soon, she said. "I fully support the ban on plastic bags and I wish they could extend it to the plastic straws. Plastic has been a menace to the marine ecosystem," she said. — Reuters

## Africa new frontline in anti-tobacco fight

**CAPE TOWN:** Africa and other developing regions are becoming increasingly significant battlegrounds in the effort to combat the spread of smoking, an anti-smoking campaign group warned on Thursday. But most countries in sub-Saharan Africa have inadequate monitoring of

tobacco use, according to the authors of the newly reissued "Tobacco Atlas" of global tobacco control efforts and challenges. Globally, the battle to end the scourge of tobacco is still long.

Smoking claims nearly seven million lives yearly around the world from cancer and other lung diseases, and accounts for about one-in-10 deaths worldwide, according to the World Health Organization. "More than 1.1 billion people are current smokers, while 360 million people use smokeless tobacco," the authors said in a statement. The sixth edition of the atlas, co-authored by the American

Cancer Society and Vital Strategies, was published to coincide with the opening this week of the World Conference on Tobacco or Health in Cape Town. "Low and middle income countries represent over 80 percent of tobacco users and tobacco-related deaths, placing an increased share of tobacco-related costs on those who can least afford it," said the authors.

"A growing proportion of that burden will fall on countries across Africa in the future, if governments do not implement tobacco control policies now to prevent it." Research on the tobacco industry, published in peer-reviewed jour-

nals, has portrayed a decades-long strategy by the industry to defend itself against health campaigners. Investigators say tactics have included casting doubt on the scientific evidence of the perils of smoking, promoting brands through product placement in movies and aggressively marketing tobacco in low and middle-income countries where smoking laws are weak. Even as the percentage of adults who smoke has dropped in rich nations and plateaued in some emerging ones, the total number of smokers keeps climbing, driven by an expanding global population and more people in poor countries lighting up. — AFP

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## What's On



Yousef Al-Ruwaieh

## KFH wraps up National Day programs

Executive Manager Group Public Relations and Media at Kuwait Finance House (KFH), Yousef Abdullah Al-Ruwaieh said that the bank has achieved great success in its integrated and comprehensive program designed to celebrate the 57th National Day, the 27th Liberation Day. He affirmed KFH's commitment to participate in the various events of society while creating effective message emphasizing the excellence in assuming the social and national role.

He pointed out in a press release, that the anniversary of national days coincides with an important occasion for KFH, the 40th anniversary of the establishment, in which Kuwait witnessed a new dawn of Islamic banking with the establishment of KFH as the first

Islamic bank in the country and one of the first in the world.

He said that KFH's participation in raising the Kuwaiti flag at Naif Palace in the capital province amid the presence of a large number of diplomats and official figures, led by the Governor of the Capital City retired Lieut- General Thabit Al-Muhanna, was the first of these events organized by KFH to celebrate national days, pointing out that the bank's wide range of activities, events and initiatives embodied the prominent role of KFH in supporting community activities.

Moreover, KFH patronized Kuwait Riders Bike Show organized by Kuwait Dragons team on the occasion of the national days' celebrations. The event brought

together over 2000 motorbikes and 600 classic cars under the supervision of a constellation of skillful motorists on the levels of the Arab world and the region. KFH sponsorship of the event came as part of its eventful program tailored to celebrate the festivities marking the glorious 57th National Day, the 27th Liberation Day. The Bike Show not only attracted bikers, it was also a family event with live entertainment, competitions and exciting contests to everyone. Bikers from all around the Middle East participated in this exciting show held in Kuwait.

Al-Ruwaieh explained that KFH launched several events in collaboration with the Ministry of Interior. Such events stresses the importance of road safety and

traffic rules. KFH launched a personalized SnapChat Lens, applying the latest social media features. KFH is the first ever bank in Kuwait to utilize this new technology in line with its digital roadmap strategy while focusing on the youth segment.

KFH visited The Security and Emergency personnel in recognition of their efforts and pivotal role in serving the country and the people. KFH confirms its keenness to reinforce humanitarian and solidarity ties with society, while reinforcing cooperation with government's institutions. Such events have a positive effect in encouraging security and emergency operatives and lifting their morale to perform their duties optimally during occasions.

### Embassy of Bangladesh

The Embassy of the People's Republic of Bangladesh in Kuwait will remain closed on Saturday, 17 March 2018 on the occasion of 99th Birth Day of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and National Children Day 2018.

The Embassy will arrange the following program:  
17/03/2018:  
03:00 pm: Children Art Competition at the Chancery  
17/03/2018:  
05:10 pm: Recitation from the Holy Quran  
05:15 pm: Reading out the Messages on the day  
05:30 pm: Display of documentary of Bangabandhu  
05:45 pm: Discussion on the day  
06:15 pm: Closing speech  
06:30 pm: Prize and certificate giving to the children

### Gulf Bank sponsors the rehabilitation of the desert ecosystem

As part of its ongoing commitment to sponsoring events that contribute to the social and environmental well-being of Kuwait, Gulf Bank sponsored the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research's (KISR) field event to rehabilitate the desert ecosystem



in the Al-Liyah Preserved Area, which took place on 8 March 2018 from 9am to 1pm. The event, entitled "Planning Today for a Brighter Tomorrow," required tremendous efforts by KISR to rehabilitate the natural vegetation in the Al-Liyah refilled quarries.

These efforts included native plant production and the reintroduction and plantation of certain species.

Thousands of native plants were produced and maintained through proper care, addressing different protection measures against sandstorms, different irrigation methods, and protection of the soil erosion.

The event better defined the causes and solutions of desert rehabilitation, as well as generating information on how to mitigate desertification. This event was the fourth event after a series of workshops held annually since 2014. The involvement of school students, in addition to governmental and public environmentalists, in the plantation of more than 2,000 native plants was a key objective of this event, with the enlightenment of younger generation a necessity for the sustainability of our environment.

Esra Alhabib, Corporate Communications Manager at Gulf Bank, said, "Two pillars of our CSR strategy deal with the empowerment of youth and the preservation of our rich cultural heritage. This event, which we're proud to partner with KISR, educates our children on the necessity of a sustainable environment and is in line with many initiatives we have undertaken over the years. We thank KISR for its pioneering role in Kuwait's scientific research and technology, their work over the years puts science into action. We look forward to continuing partnerships with them."

To support cultural initiatives, Gulf Bank has been offering its sponsorship to the 29th Memorial Journey for Pearl Diving for eight consecutive years. The journey is organized each year by the Committee of the Marine Heritage of the Kuwait Sea Sport Club, under the Patronage of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. The Bank has also been supporting Al Sadu Society educational workshops 'Fun with Textiles' aiming at developing children's skills in crafts and textile art techniques and preserving Kuwaiti traditions and heritage.



### Kayal Sandhya 2018 - a mega success

It was a proud day for Kayamkulam NRIs Kuwait when they staged 'Kayal Sandhya 2018' to celebrate 12th anniversary on 16th February 2018. The best part of the program was the presence of TP Sreenivasan, former Ambassador of India to the United Nations, as chief guest and a star-studded music and comedy show by talented artists from Kerala. Sreenivasan inaugurated the function chaired by President BS Pillai, in the presence Patron P Harris, Adviser Safer P Harris, Vice-President Hari Unnithan, General Secretary Abdul Vahab, Treasurer C

Krishna Kumar and Vice-President and Program Convener Tom Jacob. General Secretary Abdul Vahab welcomed the audience covering all aspects of Kayamkulam NRIs.

The president in his address pointed out the successful social, welfare and cultural services of the association. Sreenivasan recalled two names specifically - Sankara Pillai, the first Malayalee in the foreign service, who got killed while serving for the country in Canada and cartoonist Shankar, who was considered one among the elite friend circle of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. In fact, it was the inspiration from his father and the influence of Sankara Pillai that encouraged him to become an ambassador. Having 37 years of diplomatic experience in crucial appointments around the globe, he was India's voice in the United Nations.



The Dean of the diplomatic corps in Kuwait Abd Elahad Embaki hosted a farewell ceremony to the ambassador of Somalia in Kuwait on the occasion of the end of his diplomatic mission in the country. It was attended by a large number of diplomats and other dignitaries. — Photos by Joseph Shagra



TV



Table listing TV programs and times for AM MOVIES ACTION, including titles like 'Seven Years In Tibet' and 'Virtual Revolution'.



Table listing TV programs and times for ANIMAL PLANET HD, including titles like 'Untamed & Uncut' and 'The Jeff Corwin Experience'.



Table listing TV programs and times for BBC FIRST, including titles like 'Silent Witness' and 'Death In Paradise'.



Table listing TV programs and times for crime & investigation network, including titles like 'Robbie Coltrane's Critical Evidence' and 'Measuring Evil: Britain's Worst Killers'.



Table listing TV programs and times for COMEDY CENTRAL HD, including titles like 'Nathan For You' and 'Hannibal Burress: Live In Chicago'.

Table listing TV programs and times for Noah, including titles like 'The Opposition With Jordan Klepper'.



Table listing TV programs and times for Discovery Family, including titles like 'Destroyed In Seconds' and 'Ultimate Survival'.



Table listing TV programs and times for ID HD, including titles like 'The Perfect Suspect' and 'Hostage: Deadly Demands'.



Table listing TV programs and times for Disney HD, including titles like 'Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch' and 'Binny And The Ghost'.

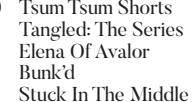


Table listing TV programs and times for Disney XD, including titles like 'Marvel's Spider-Man' and 'Milo Murphy's Law'.



Table listing TV programs and times for Disney Junior, including titles like 'Mission Force One' and 'PJ Masks'.

Table listing TV programs and times for Disney Junior, including titles like 'Who's Doing The Dishes?' and 'The Voice UK 2018'.

Table listing TV programs and times for Disney Junior, including titles like 'Puppy Dog Pals' and 'The Lion Guard'.



Table listing TV programs and times for Discovery Channel HD, including titles like 'Alaskan Bush People' and 'Impossible Engineering'.

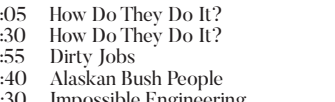


Table listing TV programs and times for HISTORY HD, including titles like 'Swamp People' and 'American Pickers'.

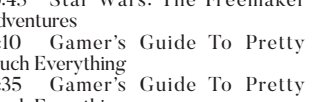


Table listing TV programs and times for HISTORY X, including titles like 'Marvel's Spider-Man' and 'Milo Murphy's Law'.

Table listing TV programs and times for Mariah's World, including titles like 'El News Middle East' and 'Mariah's World'.

Table listing TV programs and times for Mariah's World, including titles like 'Who's Doing The Dishes?' and 'The Voice UK 2018'.

Table listing TV programs and times for Mariah's World, including titles like 'Puppy Dog Pals' and 'The Lion Guard'.

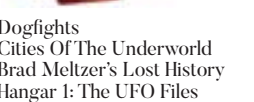


Table listing TV programs and times for H2 HD, including titles like 'Dogfights' and 'Cities Of The Underworld'.



Table listing TV programs and times for HISTORY HD, including titles like 'Swamp People' and 'American Pickers'.

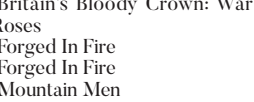


Table listing TV programs and times for NAT GEO people HD, including titles like 'Chasing The Sun' and 'Route Awakening'.

Table listing TV programs and times for Access 360 World Heritage, including titles like 'Building Wild' and 'Eat Street'.



Table listing TV programs and times for NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC CHANNEL HD, including titles like 'Mega Food' and 'India's Mega Kitchens'.

Table listing TV programs and times for NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC CHANNEL HD, including titles like 'Who's Doing The Dishes?' and 'The Voice UK 2018'.

Table listing TV programs and times for NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC CHANNEL HD, including titles like 'Puppy Dog Pals' and 'The Lion Guard'.

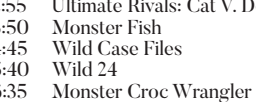


Table listing TV programs and times for NAT GEO WILD HD, including titles like 'Tiger's Revenge' and 'Caught In The Act GPU Revisions'.

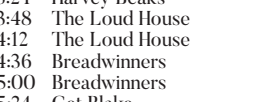


Table listing TV programs and times for nick HD, including titles like 'Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles' and 'Rabbids Invasion'.

Table listing TV programs and times for nick HD, including titles like 'Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles' and 'Rabbids Invasion'.



Table listing TV programs and times for nick jr., including titles like 'Kid-E-Cats' and 'Shimmer And Shine'.

Table listing TV programs and times for Nella The Princess Knight, including titles like 'Kiva Can Do!' and 'Blaze And The Monster Machines'.

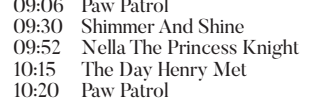


Table listing TV programs and times for STAR GOLD, including titles like 'Paw Patrol' and 'Shimmer And Shine'.

Table listing TV programs and times for STAR GOLD, including titles like 'Who's Doing The Dishes?' and 'The Voice UK 2018'.

Table listing TV programs and times for STAR GOLD, including titles like 'Puppy Dog Pals' and 'The Lion Guard'.



Table listing TV programs and times for AM MOVIES HD COMEDY, including titles like 'Stay Hungry' and 'Fear Inc'.

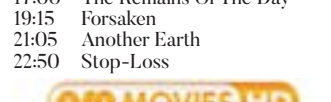


Table listing TV programs and times for AM MOVIES HD FESTIVAL, including titles like 'Waiting For Superman' and 'A.I. Artificial Intelligence'.



Table listing TV programs and times for AM MOVIES HD KIDS, including titles like 'Two Buddies And A Badger' and 'Last Wizard'.

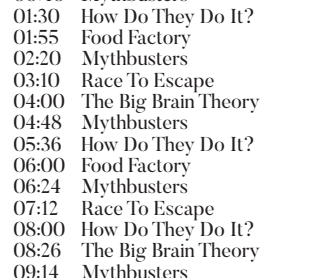


Table listing TV programs and times for AM MOVIES HD DISNEY, including titles like 'Knock Knock' and 'As Good As It Gets'.

Table listing TV programs and times for Nela The Princess Knight, including titles like 'Kiva Can Do!' and 'Blaze And The Monster Machines'.

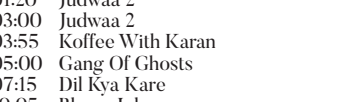


Table listing TV programs and times for STAR GOLD, including titles like 'Paw Patrol' and 'Shimmer And Shine'.

Table listing TV programs and times for STAR GOLD, including titles like 'Who's Doing The Dishes?' and 'The Voice UK 2018'.

Table listing TV programs and times for STAR GOLD, including titles like 'Puppy Dog Pals' and 'The Lion Guard'.

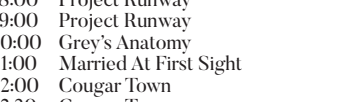


Table listing TV programs and times for STAR WORLD HD, including titles like 'Devious Maids' and 'Paw Patrol'.

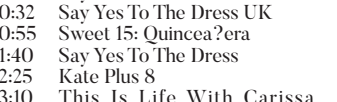


Table listing TV programs and times for TLC HD, including titles like 'This Is Life With Carissa Cupido' and 'My Giant Life'.



Table listing TV programs and times for AM MOVIES HD KIDS, including titles like 'Two Buddies And A Badger' and 'Last Wizard'.

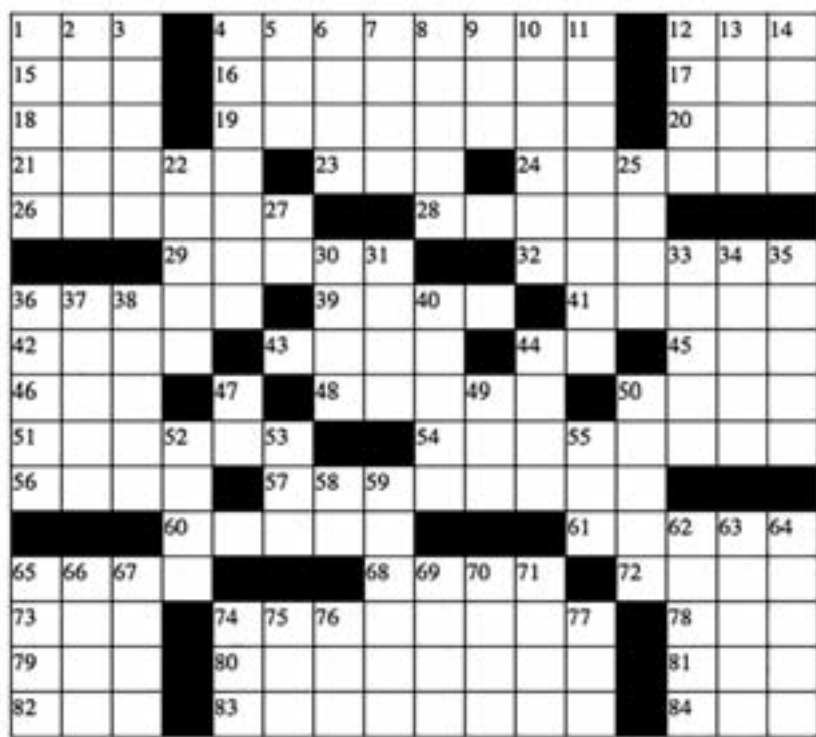


Table listing TV programs and times for AM MOVIES HD DISNEY, including titles like 'Knock Knock' and 'As Good As It Gets'.



Stars

CROSSWORD 1856



ACROSS

1. A self-funded retirement plan that allows you to contribute a limited yearly sum toward your retirement.
4. The front limb (or homologous structure in other animals such as a flipper or wing).
12. A unit of electrical resistance equal to the resistance between two points on a conductor when a potential difference of one volt between them produces a current of one ampere.
15. A port in southern Lebanon on the Mediterranean Sea.
16. Bubble shells.
17. Liquid excretory product.
18. A condition (mostly in boys) characterized by behavioral and learning disorders.
19. Underground organizations.
20. A period marked by distinctive character or reckoned from a fixed point or event.
21. Any of several tall tropical palms native to southeastern Asia having egg-shaped nuts.
23. A unit of pain intensity.
24. A religious sect founded in the United States in 1966.
26. An esoteric or occult matter that is traditionally secret.
28. Fill with high spirits.
29. Coffee with the caffeine removed.
32. Of or relating to a creed.
36. A large number or amount.
39. The 20th letter of the Hebrew alphabet.
41. Of or like a feeble old woman.
42. Fabric dyed with splotches of green and brown and black and tan.
43. Not only so, but.
45. Rate of revolution of a motor.
46. A constellation in the southern hemisphere near Telescopium and Norma.
48. French romantic writer (1766-1817).
51. English writer of historical romances (1803-1873).
54. Something or someone that causes anxiety.
56. A platform raised above the surrounding level to give prominence to the person on it.
57. The largest city of China.
60. The capital and largest city of Ghana with a deep-water port.
61. The Mongol people living the central and eastern parts of Outer Mongolia.
65. A flat-bottomed volcanic crater that was formed by an explosion.
68. Open-heart surgery in which the rib cage is opened and a section of a blood vessel is grafted from the aorta to the coronary artery to bypass the blocked section of the coronary artery and improve the blood supply to the heart.
72. A branch of the Tai languages.
73. A white linen liturgical vestment with sleeves.
78. A master's degree in business.
79. Extremely pleasing.
80. An organism (especially a bacterium) that does not require air or free oxygen to live.
81. Tag the base runner to get him out.
82. A unit of surface area equal to 100 square meters.
83. Dutch colonist who bought Manhattan from the Native Americans for the equivalent of \$24 (1580-1638).
84. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.

DOWN

1. (Old Testament) The second patriarch.
2. Father of the storm gods Marut.
3. A unit of dry measure used in Egypt.
4. An order of dicotyledonous trees of the subclass Hamamelidae.
5. A Turkish unit of weight equal to about 2.75 pounds.
6. Tear or be torn violently.
7. (used as a sentenced connector) Therefore or consequently.
8. An industrial city in northern France near the Belgian border.
9. An agency of the United Nations affiliated with the World Bank.
10. Wildly disordered.
11. Any of several plants of the genus Galium.
12. An organization of countries formed in 1961 to agree on a common policy for the sale of petroleum.
13. A man distinguished by exceptional courage and nobility and strength.
14. (statistics) Approximating the statistical norm or average or expected value.
22. A group of Plains Indians formerly living in what is now North and South Dakota and Nebraska and Kansas and Arkansas and Louisiana and Oklahoma and Texas.
25. Having or demonstrating ability to recognize or draw fine distinctions.
27. A radioactive element of the actinide series.
30. (Greek mythology) Greek god of war.
31. A notable achievement.
33. English theoretical physicist who applied relativity theory to quantum mechanics and predicted the existence of antimatter and the positron (1902-1984).
34. The 1st letter of the Hebrew alphabet.
35. A barrier constructed to contain the flow or water or to keep out the sea.
37. Genus of large deciduous nut-bearing trees.
38. Italian violin maker in Cremona.
40. United States artist whose work reflected social and political themes (1898-1969).
44. Pompous or pretentious talk or writing.
47. An uproarious party.
49. A graphical record of electrical activity of the brain.
50. Sole genus of the family Naiadaceae.
52. A male monarch or emperor (especially of Russia prior to 1917).
53. A committee in the executive branch of government that advises the president on foreign and military and national security.
55. East Indian tree bearing a profusion of intense vermilion velvet-textured blooms and yielding a yellow dye.
58. A period of time equal to 1/24th of a day.
59. A city in western Germany near the Dutch and Belgian borders.
62. A genus of Lamnidae.
63. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
64. Jordan's port.
66. (botany) Of or relating to the axil.
67. A French abbot.
69. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
70. A powerful stroke with the fist or a weapon.
71. A desert in central Asia.
74. A rotating disk shaped to convert circular into linear motion.
75. Black tropical American cuckoo.
76. Airtight sealed metal container for food or drink or paint etc..
77. Vietnamese New Year.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Aries, you become distant and disengaged with someone you're close to. Take care that your sense of idealistic philosophies and outcomes don't turn into fanaticism. You don't have to look far to find arguments. You're not interested in opinions or theories, you want hard, proven facts. Important choices or decisions should be made at another time when the energies support making them; patience is at this time but with effort you definitely can. Keep an eye on your finances as you could have a tendency to spend funds you shouldn't; remember how hard you have worked to earn and save. Circumstances come together to reveal your best qualities and accomplishments. You may discover a new way to do things that others find impressive and useful, talented Aries.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Taurus, actions speak louder than words as you tend to duties and tasks that create productive outcomes. You make no excuses as you do whatever it takes to make money; getting ahead, and away from want, is important. Someone criticizes you for your determination to get ahead; this is an insecure person who hasn't the abilities and talents you possess. You make succeeding seem so easy that others think they can do it too. Your smile brightens the day for several people who need this badly; you're looked up to and admired. You could do harm to yourself by being too generous with an undeserving person; beware of this! Being made to feel important and worthy of love and appreciation brings comfort. There's no better friend on earth than you, dear Taurus.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Gemini, you're drawn to learning more about cutting-edge ideas; being open-minded makes this possible. Opinions don't help when you try to uncover factual information; a like-minded person leads you to the right place. To take things off your mind you explore new interests or hobbies; so many are available you could just have a problem making a choice. You may find yourself enjoying reading or movies more than usual; these could actually stir your creative juices! Taking stock of your home and lifestyle is prominent at this time. Someone younger is becoming a bigger part of your life and this creates much happiness. Being outdoors brings good energy. Stumbling upon a new gadget makes life easier. Inspiring discussions for you tonight, Gemini.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Cancer, someone criticizes you for your desire to learn more about spiritual or mystic matters. You seek ideas rather than opinions; open-minded people appeal to you strongly. You could encounter someone who insists on being in competition with you for someone's good favor or perhaps even for a new job. You attend an event at popular place you have never gone to; art, books or other cutting-edge items are indicated. Success with a new undertaking is forecast in the very near future. A stylish friend offers to help choose an outfit for something important you need to tend to; this takes pressure off of you as this is something you don't look forward to. You may well receive an offer of employment from a competitor to your current employer, Cancer.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Leo, strong love and appreciation for children or pets is prominent. Now's a perfect window of opportunity for taking chances with investments that could bring large returns. Your sweetheart could ask to take your relationship a step further; be prepared to provide an answer. You may find that you're in the right place at the right time. Making preparations for an upcoming medical event is a priority; it appears this is necessary and result are positive! You could become so excited about some good news that you overlook an important detail; be sure to stay focused on your every day duties. You're not interested in hearing the opinion of a negative associate; it's from knowledge you seek. Enjoying some alone time is a great end to your very busy day, Leo.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Virgo, your wonderful communication skills spill over into what you write or speak about; you're in a good place to learn from the experience of others. The narcissism of someone drives you as far away as you can get. You make very decisive personal choices you're happy to stand by. Your influence is felt in a new project assigned to several. Being quiet regarding something of a personal nature is over; you no longer consider yourself unqualified to add your input or opinions and it's about time! Important facts surface during a brainstorming session you're involved in. You could sense that someone's avoiding contact with you and you're happy about it. You have no patience for those who interfere with the choices of others, and you're not at all alone, Virgo.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Libra, you could make a hard choice to separate yourself from someone toxic; sometimes this is exactly what's needed for healing. You're drawn to some type of interesting art that's never appealed to you before. You're entering a phase indicating many opportunities of material abundance; now's the time to research the investments you thought about. You seek solutions and not opinions; you run short on tolerance of people who don't agree. Because you see the truth you may stand up for someone who others don't care for; you could irritate some who're frightened by honestly regarding this situation. You like who you are and who you're becoming no matter what anyone else thinks. This evening with friends brings fun, food and love, Libra.



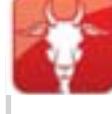
Scorpio (October 23-November 19)

Scorpio, things flow smoothly today for a change and provide encouragement. You work with people, even those who're difficult, easily and with pleasure. A boss or supervisor is impressed with your strategies and suggestions; you quickly move forward while they're on your side. You enjoy involvement with a group of those that share your interests. Moving multiple situations to new levels is clearly indicated during this new phase you have entered. Stepping up to lend aid to someone you don't care for is hard, but you're able to do it. A new customer or client represents a prosperous project or association. A surprise brings some very good news you welcome with open arms. You have a tendency to overspend and should keep a close eye on this now, Scorpio.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Sagittarius, someone close to your heart wants to spend extra time with you. A new coworker sheds light on what the boss thinks of you; you can't help but be pleased. You're called on to join a group but you decline as you don't believe as they do. You might receive criticism from an older person. A nice turn of events occurs unexpectedly. A new, exciting product promises the results you look for. Time spent outside is just the medicine you need; sharing this with a person you enjoy doubles the positive results. You like the harmony created by having an open mind and listening to the opinions of others whether you agree or not. A beloved hobby relieves stress. A recipe you love brings comfort. Settling in with a good book sends you off to sleep, Sagittarius.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Capricorn, you don't hold back on self-expression as you feel loose and easy. You take a casual approach to everything today and make unusually good progress. Your outlook causes you to look through rose-colored glasses, but with strict realism; you're always the practical, hard-working goal! Changes in appearance are strongly indicated; you're becoming less rigid and more free-spirited and carefree. Your inner workings are in a state of transformation you have worked toward for quite some time. You feel certain you see someone in a public setting, but they almost seem to avoid you. Your curiosity is acutely stirred. A challenge is presented that you gladly accept. Solving a perplexing puzzle creates enormous satisfaction later, Capricorn.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

Aquarius, you think about what you consider the good old days, but were they really you wonder if that's so. Family and close connections are where you find your security and true happiness. You could find blockages in the area of romance; the stars seem to be saying it's as though you're almost there, then bam! It becomes a total plan fail. Only you can change your circumstances; take a few moments and listen to the true needs of your heart. Let a friend help you feel better about something you can't change. Your intellect is just about always on the money, take comfort in knowing how to land on your feet. A new recipe has all the ingredients you love! An emotional exchange could get out of hand; you think before you act, Aquarius.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Pisces, you could feel yourself growing further away from someone emotionally; your new thinking and understanding of life in general sets you apart from this person whose attitude is naturally negative. You want to focus on ideas and solutions instead of individuals and their private business; you intentionally distance yourself from gossip and those who enjoy it. You're simply not able to be comfortable around those who don't think as you do; this could be a difficult time. Hold off on making important decisions just now; a better time for this is coming soon. You're captivated by a new invention you get a chance to sample; you love a new gadget! Fun times with friends this evening takes you to a new and interesting place for dinner, Pisces.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Pizza

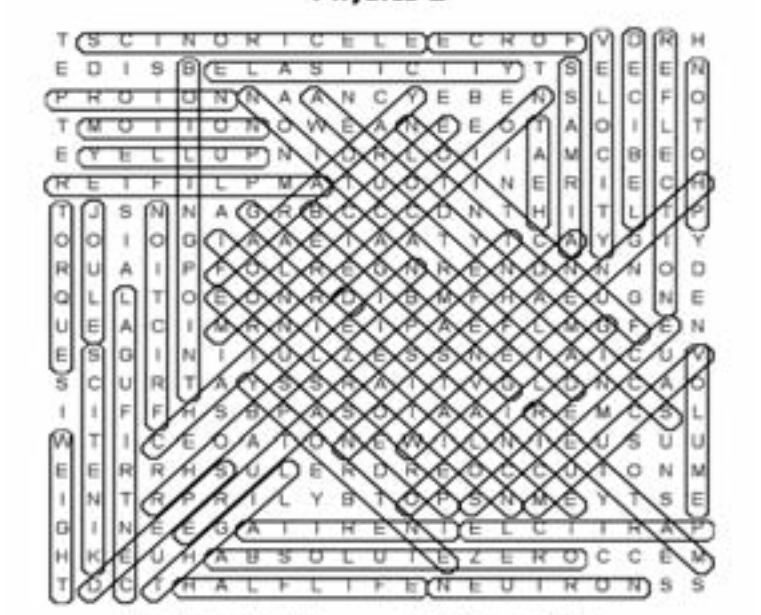
Find and circle all of the pizza ingredients and toppings that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell four additional pizza toppings.



- |                  |              |               |              |
|------------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| ARTICHOKE HEARTS | CRUST        | JALAPENOS     | PROVOLONE    |
| ASIAGO           | EGGPLANT     | MONTEREY JACK | RICOTTA      |
| ASPARAGUS        | FETA         | MOZZARELLA    | SALAMI       |
| BACON            | GARLIC       | MUSHROOMS     | SALSADE      |
| BANANA PEPPERS   | GOAT CHEESE  | OLIVE OIL     | SHRIMP       |
| BASIL            | GOUDA        | ONIONS        | SPINACH      |
| BELL PEPPERS     | GREEN OLIVES | OYSTERS       | TOMATO SAUCE |
| BLACK OLIVES     | GROUND BEEF  | PARMESAN      | TOMATOES     |
| BROCCOLI         | HAM          | PEPPERONI     | ZUCCHINI     |

Yesterday's Solution

Physics 2



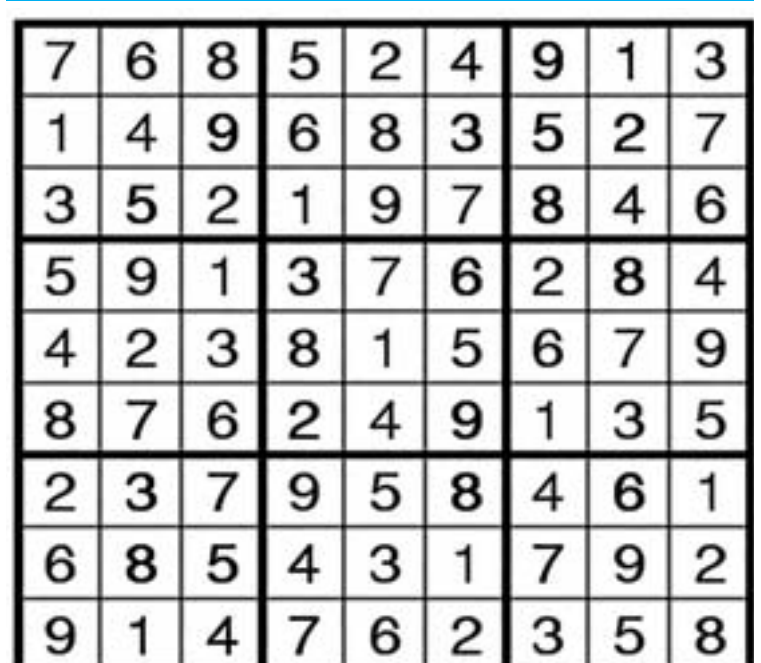
- |                |             |            |             |
|----------------|-------------|------------|-------------|
| ABSOLUTE ZERO  | DRAG        | IONIZATION | PROTON      |
| ADHESION       | ELASTICITY  | Joule      | PULLEY      |
| AERODYNAMICS   | ELECTRONICS | KINETICS   | REFLECTION  |
| AIR MASS       | ENTROPY     | LIGHT      | SCIENCE     |
| AMPLIFIER      | FARADAY     | MATTER     | SPEED       |
| BIG BANG       | FORCE       | MOLECULE   | TEMPERATURE |
| BOILING POINT  | FRICTION    | MOTION     | TORQUE      |
| CENTRIFUGAL    | FUNCTION    | NEUTRON    | VACUUM      |
| CHAIN REACTION | GALILEO     | NIELS BOHR | VELOCITY    |
| DECIBEL        | HALF LIFE   | PARTICLE   | VOLUME      |
| DIFFRACTION    | HEAT        | PHOTON     | WAVELENGTH  |
| DISTANCE       | INERTIA     | PRESSURE   | WEIGHT      |

The hidden message is: THE DISTANCE BETWEEN INSANITY AND GENIUS IS MEASURED ONLY BY SUCCESS

Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution





# Classifieds

Tuesday, March 13, 2018

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

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



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



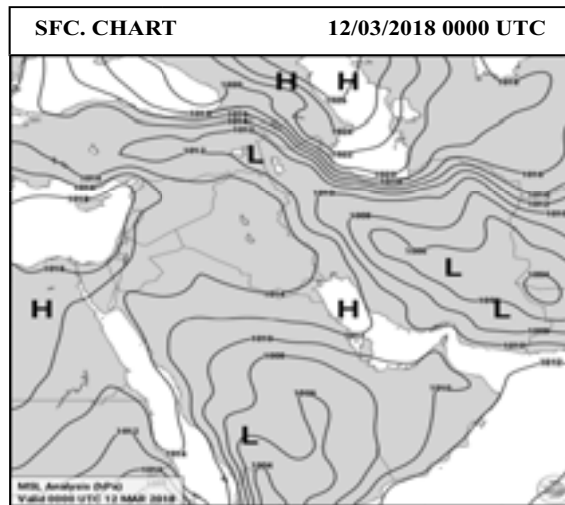
## Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

**BY DAY:** Warm with light to moderate north easterly wind to northerly wind, with speed of 08 - 28 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.

**BY NIGHT:** Cool with light north easterly wind changing to light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 06 - 26 km/h.

**WEATHER WARNING** No Current Warnings

STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.
KUWAIT CITY	28 °C	20 °C
KUWAIT AIRPORT	29 °C	19 °C
ABDALY	31 °C	15 °C
BUBYAN	00 °C	00 °C
JAHRA	30 °C	19 °C
FAILAKA ISLAND	28 °C	19 °C
SALMIYAH	27 °C	20 °C
AHMADI	00 °C	00 °C
NUWASIB	27 °C	19 °C
WAFRA	30 °C	17 °C
SALMY	28 °C	14 °C



DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Tuesday	03/13	Relatively hot	30 °C	17 °C	NW	12 - 35 km/h
Wednesday	03/14	Relatively hot and some high clouds will appear gradually	31 °C	16 °C	VRB-SE	08 - 28 km/h
Thursday	03/15	Relatively hot and Clouds will increase gradually	32 °C	19 °C	S-SE	15 - 35 km/h
Friday	03/16	Partly cloudy to cloudy with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times	31 °C	21 °C	SE	15 - 42 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	04:41
Sunrise	06:01
Zuhr	11:58
Asr	15:22
Sunset	17:54
Isha	19:11

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	26 °C
MIN. Temp.	18 °C
MAX. RH	54 %
MIN. RH	23 %
MAX. Wind	N 36 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

## Hospitals

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

## 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

**EMERGENCY**  
**112**  
 Automated enquiry about the Civil ID card is **1889988**

Airline	
American Airlines	22087425
Kuwait Airways	22087426
Jazeera Airways	171
Jet Airways	22924455
FlyDubai	22414400
Qatar Airways	22423888
KLM	22425747
Royal Jordanian	22418064/5/6
British Airways	22425635
Air France	22430224
Emirates	22921555
Air India	22438184
Sri Lanka Airlines	22424444
Egypt Air	22421578
Swiss Air	22421516
Saudia	22426306
Middle East Airlines	22423073
Lufthansa	22422493
PIA	22421044
Bangladesh Airlines	22452977/8
Indian Airlines	22456700
Oman Air	22958787
Turkish Airlines	22453820/1
Aeroflot	22404838/9

## Directorate General of Civil Aviation Home Page (www.kuwait-airport.com.kw) DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Tuesday 13/3/2018				Departure Flights on Tuesday 13/3/2018			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
JAI	572	Mumbai	00:05	KAC	285	Dhaka	00:01
JZR	607	Kochi	00:10	AIC	976	Goa/Chennai	00:05
JZR	539	Cairo	00:50	JZR	528	Asyut	00:15
PGT	858	Istanbul	00:55	JAI	573	Mumbai	00:30
THY	772	Istanbul	00:55	MSC	406	Sohag	00:30
KAC	102	London	01:20	FDB	072	Dubai	00:35
DLH	625	Bahrain	01:45	MSC	412	Asyut	01:00
THY	764	Istanbul	01:50	JAI	571	Mumbai	01:05
AXB	395	Kozhikode	02:00	JZR	142	Doha	01:45
JZR	267	Beirut	02:10	KAC	677	Dubai	01:50
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	KAC	417	Manila	02:00
QTR	1086	Doha	02:20	THY	773	Istanbul	02:30
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30	PGT	859	Istanbul	02:30
KLM	446	Bahrain	02:30	DLH	625	Frankfurt	02:45
WAN	548	KTM	02:40	AXB	396	Kozhikode	02:55
FDB	069	Dubai	04:55	ETH	621	Addis Ababa	03:05
ETD	995	Abu Dhabi/Bahrain	05:05	QTR	1087	Doha	03:40
JZR	609	Hyderabad	05:10	KLM	446	Amsterdam	03:55
THY	6376	Istanbul	05:10	KKK	1269	Istanbul	03:55
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:20	OMA	644	Muscat	03:55
JZR	143	Doha	05:25	THY	765	Istanbul	04:00
THY	770	Istanbul	05:25	MSR	607	Luxor	04:05
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	05:30	ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	04:05
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:40	MSR	613	Cairo	04:15
KAC	302	Mumbai	06:10	LMU	5511	Cairo	05:00
KAC	678	Dubai	06:30	QTR	1077	Doha	05:30
WAN	338	Alexandria	06:40	KAC	303	Mumbai	05:30
JZR	529	Asyut	06:50	FDB	070	Dubai	05:45
KAC	206	Islamabad	06:50	UAE	874	Dubai	06:15
BAW	157	London	07:15	JZR	786	Riyadh	06:25
FDB	053	Dubai	07:35	JZR	560	Sohag	06:25
KAC	354	Bengaluru	07:35	THY	771	Istanbul	06:50
KAC	358	Kochi	07:40	JZR	164	Dubai	06:55
KAC	384	Delhi	08:00	RJA	645	Amman	07:05
UAE	855	Dubai	08:35	ETD	9882	Dubai	07:05
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	09:05	GFA	212	Bahrain	07:15
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:05	KAC	167	Paris	07:35
QTR	1070	Doha	09:10	KAC	171	Frankfurt	08:00
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	KAC	501	Beirut	08:00
JZR	787	Riyadh	09:50	THY	6376	Dubai/Istanbul	08:10
SVA	512	Riyadh	10:00	KAC	165	Rome	08:15
IRA	675	Lar	10:40	FDB	054	Dubai	08:35
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	KAC	787	Jeddah	08:40
MSC	403	Asyut	11:15	BAW	156	London	08:55
QTR	1074	Doha	11:20	KAC	613	Bahrain	08:55
JZR	165	Dubai	11:30	KAC	117	New York	09:00
WAN	134	Doha	11:55	KAC	561	Amman	09:40
MEA	404	Beirut	11:55	ABY	126	Sharjah	09:45
KAC	614	Bahrain	12:10	KAC	671	Dubai	09:45
SAW	701	Damascus	12:30	KAC	101	London	09:45
KAC	286	Dhaka	12:35	UAE	856	Dubai	10:00
JZR	561	Sohag	12:45	KAC	541	Cairo	10:00
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00	KAC	515	Tehran	10:00
GEL	616	Baku	13:00	ETD	302	Abu Dhabi	10:10
AXB	393	Kozhikode	13:15	KAC	773	Riyadh	10:10
KAC	774	Riyadh	13:40	KAC	617	Doha	10:15
QTR	8322	Doha	13:55	QTR	1071	Doha	10:20
PAL	668	Manila	14:00	KAC	155	Istanbul	10:25
KAC	618	Doha	14:15	FDB	056	Dubai	10:35
KAC	516	Tehran	14:20	JZR	778	Jeddah	10:40
QTR	1078	Doha	14:20	JAI	574	Mumbai	11:00
FDB	059	Dubai	14:20	MSC	405	Sohag	11:25
KAC	672	Dubai	14:25	BBC	043	Dhaka	11:40
GFA	221	Bahrain	14:40	FDB	071	Dubai	12:00



## Lifestyle | Gossip



## Daisy Ridley is taking a break from filming Star Wars: Episode IX

**D**aisy Ridley is "having a break" before shooting 'Star Wars: Episode IX'. The 25-year-old actress stars as the Force-wielding hero Rey in the new sci-fi franchise trilogy, and after shooting to fame in 'Star Wars', Ridley has landed a number of roles including 'Murder on the Orient Express' and the upcoming 'Peter Rabbit' movie. But Ridley has admitted she wants to relax before wielding her lightsaber on set for the ninth installment of the 'Star Wars' franchise. Speaking exclusively to BANG Showbiz at the UK premiere of 'Peter Rabbit' at Vue Cinema in London's Leicester Square on Sunday, Ridley said: "I'm having a break, I've been filming forever. '[Star Wars]' starts later this year, I believe." Ridley will be reprising her role in the upcoming movie alongside John Boyega as Finn, Oscar Isaac as Poe Dameron, Domhnall Gleeson as General Hux and Adam Driver as Kylo Ren. The last movie - which is set to end the current Skywalker saga - was originally meant to feature 'Star Wars' legend Carrie Fisher reprising her role as General Leia Organa for the last time. However, Fisher passed away back in 2016 after she finished shooting her final scenes in the eighth movie 'The Last Jedi' - which was released last year. The new trilogy has seen the original 'Star Wars' actors Mark Hamill, Harrison Ford and Fisher all reprising their iconic roles. And Hamill - who plays Luke Skywalker in the films - admitted he thinks the new younger cast are "spectacular." Asked how he felt about passing on the baton to the younger cast, he said: "First of all the cast is spectacular, they are so talented in their own way. 'I used to be the orphan kid now we have Daisy, I used to be the hotshot impulsive wing fighter now we have Poe. 'I feel like a kid wanting to stop others playing with my toys! But basically I am at the age where I am happy to let the kids do the heavy lifting."

## Tom Jones and will.i.am working on new music



**T**he Voice UK' coaches Sir Tom Jones and will.i.am are set to collaborate on a song together. The two music stars have become close friends from their time sitting on the TV talent show together since 2012 and now the 'Delilah' singer has spilled that he's finally agreed to the Black Eyed Peas star's requests to record with him. Tom, 77, and Will, 42, intend to go into the studio together some time in the near future. Speaking to The Sun newspaper, Tom revealed: "I spend a lot of time with Will off screen, whenever I can. When I was living in Los Angeles I saw Will nearly all the time out there. 'He's been asking me for ages when we can collaborate, and it is going to happen. It sounds like a great idea, we're just working to get the right song, then we're going to do it." The pop legend also admitted there is a chance he could work with Kylie Minogue in the future, with the 'I Should Be So Lucky' singer - who was a coach on 'The Voice' in 2014 - returning this series as a mentor for his team. He added: "I've known Kylie for a long time, she's an old friend of mine. Not that she's old, but we're great friends. I remember when she first came to Britain - you know, and she did 'Neighbors' in Australia. I've known her since she was young and she's great. 'So to have her come back on the show as a mentor, to give ideas to my singers, I was thrilled."

# Rihanna becomes first female star to pass 2 billion Apple Music streams

**R**ihanna has become the first female artist to surpass two million streams on Apple Music. The 'Diamonds' hitmaker made history over the weekend as she broke the record on the online service, and she appeared delighted with the news as she took to social media to celebrate her success. Alongside an amusing video meme of a child dancing for joy, a clearly excited Rihanna joked: "when I found out that I was the first female artist to cross 2 billion worldwide streams on Apple Music! God is too lit!!!! (sic)" The Bajan beauty has already smashed another record this year, as it was revealed last month she become the first-ever artist to earn eight number ones from one album in the history of Billboard's Dance Club Song chart. 'Anti' was first launched in 2016, but it's still making waves in the music industry, and 'Consideration' soared to the top of the



charts to make history. 'Anti's record-breaking run actually began back on April 23, 2016, when 'Work' went to the summit. Meanwhile, it appears that RiRi's success and talent could be intimidating to some performers, after legendary musician Nile Rogers admitted he is too shy of her to ask for a collaboration. Despite working with the biggest stars in the music business - from the late Prince and David Bowie to Duran Duran and Pharrell Williams - he's yet to pluck up the courage to invite the 'Wild Thoughts' singer to his studio because every time he tries he freaks out and goes into "fanboy" mode. Speaking to the Metro newspaper, the 'Le Freak' hitmaker spilled: "I adore Rihanna. I am a super fanboy. When I'm around Rihanna I almost can't move. She'll be sitting down and I'll want to go over, 'Yo, Ri!' At least four times I've been in the room right next to her and I didn't even turn around."



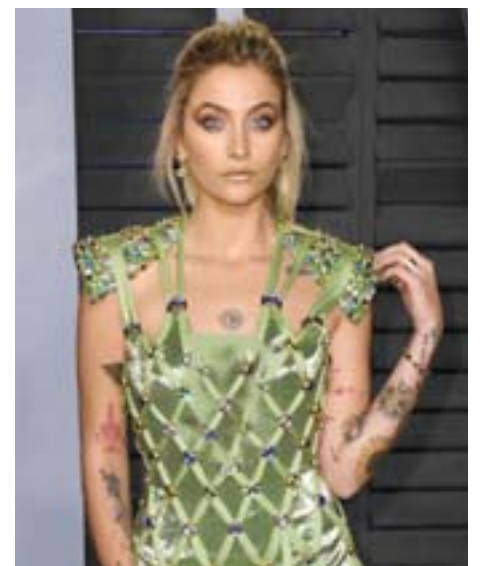
## Tim McGraw collapses on stage

**T**im McGraw has collapsed on stage while performing in Ireland. The 'Live Like You Were Dying' singer was suspected to be suffering from dehydration when he was taken ill on stage during a concert in Dublin on Sunday night, according to Rolling Stone. The 50-year-old country singer had just finished performing his single 'Humble & Kind' when he dropped to his knees before sitting down. His wife, fellow singer Faith Hill, then came on stage to address the crowd following Tim's collapse. In a video posted on social media she can be seen saying: "He's been super dehydrated. I apologise, but I made the decision that he cannot come back on stage." The 'It's Your Love' hitmaker had been performing as part of the Country to Country (C2C) music festival in the UK, a three day event which saw him play London on Friday, Glasgow, Scotland on Saturday and Dublin on Sunday. Tim's representative said in a statement: "Tim McGraw was suffering from dehydration in Dublin this evening at the C2C show. He was attended to by local medical staff on-site and will be fine. He and Faith thank everyone for their love and support and look forward to seeing their Irish fans again soon." Tim and Faith are next scheduled to perform in Virginia on May 31 as part of their 29-city Soul2Soul tour of the US. Last year, Tim said music has been his "savior". He said: "There are nights when you walk off the stage and you think, 'I never wanna do that again.' There are those nights. It happens, where you lay down and you think, 'Why am I doing this? Why am I continuing to do this?' 'But look, it's been really good to me. Music has brought me everything good that's happened in my life. I mean, music has - anything that's ever happened good in my life has come from music. So it's a treasure to me. Whether I want to do it continually, whether I want to stop doing it, any of those things, it's my savior in a lot of ways."

## Little Big Town's tribute to Glen Campbell



**L**ittle Big Town paid an emotional tribute to Glen Campbell during their show at London's O2 arena on Sunday. The quartet performed the late country music star's 1968 classic 'Wichita Lineman', in an echo of their Country Music Awards tribute to Campbell, 81, who passed away in August 2017 following a long battle with Alzheimer's disease. Jimi Westbrook told the crowd "We lost some heroes this year and we got to pay tribute to one of them at CMAs. We sang a song for Mr Glen Campbell at the CMAs and we want to do it here too. This is 'Wichita Lineman.'" They also paid tribute to their late friend Deborah, who died just one day before they took to the stage in London, to close out the three-day Country To Country Music Festival, with a performance of 'Sober'. Kimberly Schlapman said: "What this world needs is a bit of love. We need to sing this for our friend Deborah who went to the angels yesterday. She was so important to us. We love you and miss you. We'll sing this song and send a message of love." Earlier the quartet - which also includes Karen Fairchild and Phillip Sweet - opened their show with Sir Elton John's 'Rocket Man'. They followed it up tracks including 'Bones', 'Pontoon', 'Happy People' and 'When Someone Stops Loving You'. 'Better Man', the song written for the group by Taylor Swift, received a huge reaction from the crowd, as did 'Day Drinking'. To celebrate 20 years together as a band, Little Big Town sang 'I'm With The Band', in front of a big screen playing home videos from their two decades together. They closed out their set with guitar-driven ballad 'Girl Crush', and the energetic 'Boondocks'.

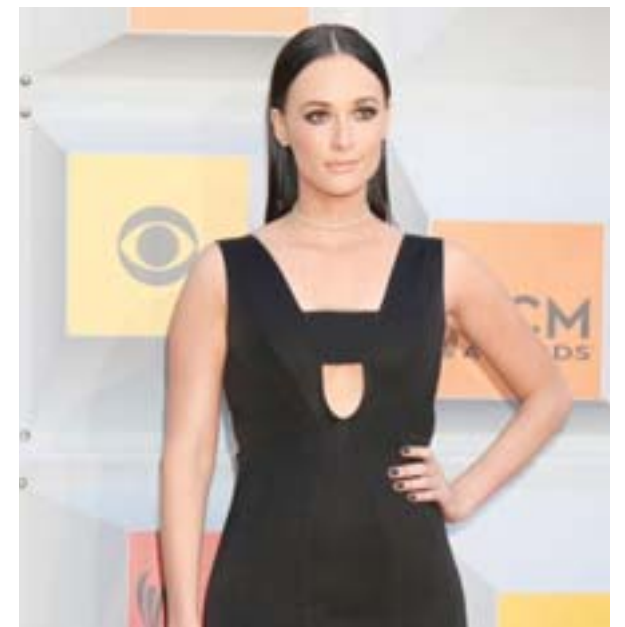


## Paris Jackson's fashion tribute to Michael Jackson

**P**aris Jackson paid tribute to her dad at the Oscars. The 19-year-old daughter of Michael Jackson and Debbie Rowe - who made her first ever movie appearance this year in the film 'Gringo' - has hinted the cascading pastel green gown she wore to the Vanity Fair post-awards party was inspired by 'Peter Pan' character Tinker Bell, a movie her late father was fascinated with. Posting a picture of her eye-catching outfit to her Instagram page, the actress and model - who starred alongside 'Stranger Things' actress Millie Bobby Brown in the latest Calvin Klein campaign - captioned it with lyrics from the song 'You can Fly' from the Disney movie. She wrote: "Take the path that moonbeams make/ If the moon is still awake/ You'll see him wink his eye". The floaty Versace dress with a lavishly embellished corset was praised by fans who compared Paris to the fictional fairy and they were convinced there was a hidden message in her outfit choice because her late father Michael - who died in 2009 from acute propofol intoxication - was infatuated with Peter Pan's fictional world of Neverland - where the characters never grow up - even calling his California home Neverland Ranch. She even re-posted edits from fans which compared the star to the Disney character on her Instagram story, further fuelling speculation that Paris was paying a sweet tribute to her musical icon father at the 90th Academy Awards. Michael often compared himself to Peter Pan when he was alive, and sweetly referred to Paris as Tinker Bell so the blonde beauty has "FAITH, TRUST AND PIXIE DUST" tattooed near her neck for an everyday reminder of her father.

## KACEY MUSGRAVES ANNOUNCES WORLD TOUR

**K**acey Musgraves has announced a huge world tour, kicking off in Europe. The 29-year-old singer/songwriter admitted she was "freaking out" as she shared the exciting news during her headlining set at the County To Country music festival at London's The O2 on Saturday. Kacey said: "I would like to make an announcement while I have you all here. I haven't told anyone this yet. We are gonna go on a world tour this year and we're starting over here in the fall. 'It's gonna be called 'Oh What A World' and I'm freaking out because we get to play Wembley arena on October 27th so I'm assuming you all will be here. I am so freaking excited to come back." Kacey's tour will star in Amsterdam on October 21 and take in UK cities including Bristol, York, Birmingham, Liverpool, Manchester and Glasgow. She will also head to Ireland to play Dublin on November 6th, with more dates and cities to be announced. Tickets go on sale on March 16th, while Kacey's new album 'Golden Hour' will be released on March 30th. During her headlining set, on the second night of C2C at London's The O2, Kacey - dressed in a rhinestone studded jumpsuit and blue furry jacket - played a number of tracks from her new record, which she admitted is a departure from her country roots. She said: "I feel like I've gone through a lot since you last heard my music. I love country and I would never want to totally ditch that but my new music incorporates a whole new sound in my own way." She also revealed the record was heavily inspired by her marriage to fellow country artist Ruston Kelly, who she wed in October 2017. Before launching into 'Love Is A Wild Thing', she said: "A lot has happened



since I was here last. I got married. It sounds cheesy to say out loud but this song been inspired by the fact that love will always trump hate. Hate is out there, especially these days but love will always find a way." However, she did not forget her older material and thrilled the crowd with her own version of 'Mama's Broken Heart', which she wrote for Miranda Lambert. The excited star also said she was "so excited" to be back in London but quickly made her apologies to those listening to the BBC Radio 2 live broadcast of the show for swearing. She said: "I'm so sorry to any classy BBC listeners out there for my swearing, you might want to turn it down." Other tracks performed by Kacey included 'Rainbow', 'Follow Your Arrow' and 'Butterflies', before she ended the show with 'Neon Moon' and 'Merry Go Round'.



Lifestyle | Gossip



**Camila Cabello can't wait for Taylor Swift tour**

Camila Cabello has dubbed her upcoming tour with Taylor Swift and Charli XCX as a "dream come true". The 21-year-old musician is set to head out on the road with the 'Look What You Made Me Do' hit-maker and the 'Boys' musician as part Taylor's 'Reputation Stadium Tour' - which kicks off in May this year - and has said she couldn't be happier to get started. Camila said: "I'm, like, really looking forward to the tour hangs, you know? It's going to be like a big slumber party." And the 'Havana' hit-maker is thrilled to be going on tour with 28-year-old Taylor, whom she says has been an "inspiration" after she made the former Fifth Harmony singer want to start songwriting. Speaking to 'Entertainment Tonight' at the iHeartRadio Music Awards at The Forum in Inglewood, California, she said: "For me, it's a dream come true. When I first met her four years ago, I was like, 'I really love you.' "I was like, 'Man, I really look up to you. You really inspire me.' She was one of the people that made me wanna start songwriting, so it's really amazing." Taylor confirmed Camila and Charli would be joining her on tour in a video posted to her Instagram account earlier this month, in which she said she was "so excited" to have the pair join her. Taylor explained: "Hey guys, this is a 'Reputation' stadium tour update ... and I've been wanting to tell you this for a really long time, but the opening acts on the 'Reputation' stadium tour will be Charli XCX and Camila Cabello. So I'm really excited. I hope you are, too." The blonde beauty also captioned the video clip, writing: "I have a very exciting update to share... @Camila\_Cabello and @charli\_xcx will be the opening acts on the #reputationStadiumTour!!! (sic)" Taylor's tour is set to get underway on May 8 in Glendale, Arizona.

**Jesse Eisenberg wants to play Lex Luthor again**



Jesse Eisenberg would love to reprise his role as Lex Luthor in another DC Extended Universe (DCEU) movie. The 34-year-old actor played the conniving villain in 2016's 'Batman Vs Superman: Dawn of Justice', and has said he'd love to return to the role for a second time as he thinks the evil businessman is the "most enjoyable character" he's ever played. Asked if he would be playing Lex on-screen again, he said: "I hope so. I mean, I have no idea is the truth. I love playing the character. Probably in terms of movie acting, it's the most enjoyable character I've had the opportunity to play. So I would love to do it again. But I don't know what their slate is. If you have any pull, please use it." Jesse had a small role as Lex after the credits in the recent DC ensemble movie 'Justice League' and he insists his role in the production was never meant to be any bigger. When asked if rumors that he was cut out of scenes were true, he said: "No, no. Actually, on the contrary, they added some stuff." The actor is keen to get stuck in to his career and take on more movie roles after a stint of producing plays, as he says he's no longer "interested" in producing and would much rather act and write. When asked if he would be doing any more producing, he told Variety magazine: "Not really. I spend my days writing plays and acting in movies. I'm not that interested in producing because when I'm putting on one of my plays, it requires so much of that anyway and I find it exhausting."

**DOMINIC WEST THOUGHT HE'D BE THE LOVE INTEREST IN TOMB RAIDER**

Dominic West thought he would be the love interest in the new 'Tomb Raider' movie. The 48-year-old actor plays Lord Richard Croft - the father of action hero Lara Croft played by Alicia Vikander - in the movie reboot of the popular game franchise, and admitted he would love to make a career of starring as his co-star's dad. Speaking to the Metro newspaper, West said: "I did rather sadly think that I was maybe the love interest when the 'Tomb Raider' call first came through. "Then I realized, 'Of course you're not, you fool, you're the dad!' "I have actually played Alicia Vikander's dad before, in 'Testament of Youth' and I hope to again. "In fact, I hope to make a whole career off it." Although Vikander isn't the first actress to portray the adventurous character on screen after Angelina Jolie starred as the titular female in two



movies back in 2001 and then in 2003, the new reboot - helmed by Roar Uthaug - has been dubbed more of an origins story. And West has nothing but praise for his Swedish co-star and said she is "incredibly disciplined and single-minded". He said: "That film I did, 'Testament of Youth', she could barely speak English in the read-through - at least not with an English accent - and she was amazing as Vera Brittain. "So she is incredibly disciplined and single-minded. [On 'Tomb Raider'] she was up every morning at 5am, went to the gym for an hour and then would do a whole day of unbelievably punishing action stuff. "She asked me once if I would like to join her in the gym and I couldn't even do it once." Despite struggling to keep up with Vikander at the gym, West admitted he thinks there is the same pressure for young male actors to have the perfect body, but joked the increase of Botox allows him to keep working. He said: "Absolutely. But the more Botox becomes the norm, the more there's demand for actors like me, who are still able to move their foreheads."

**KEVIN FEIGE: MARVEL SET TO BECOME MORE DIVERSE**

Kevin Feige has revealed Marvel Studios are set to hire more women and people of colour both on and off screen. The 44-year-old president of Marvel Studios has praised the "positive initiative" of getting more minority groups involved in film, and has said that the popular studios - which has recently begun work on the female-led 'Captain Marvel' movie - are doing more to hire a diverse range of people to fit "all different capacities" of jobs. When asked if Marvel plan to hire more women and people of colour both as actors and behind the camera, Kevin said: "Yes. I think we're seeing it shift from a very purposeful initiative to just a fact of life, to just a way of doing business. Then there are people we hired that we're not ready to announce in all different capacities, particularly behind the camera. As 'Black Panther' has so loudly declared, [representation] can only help you, can only help you tell unique stories, can only help you do things in a new, and unique, and fresh, and exciting way. If you do that, audiences will notice it, and appreciate it, and support it." 'Captain Marvel' - which will star Brie Larson in the titular role - marks the first movie from the studios to have a female lead, and Kevin has admitted that the production might be considered a "risk", but thinks the final product will be worth it. Speaking about which of Marvel's movie he would consider to be risks, he told Entertainment Weekly: "You look at 'Guardians of the Galaxy', 'Doctor Strange', 'Ant-Man' ... You look at 'Black Panther' or 'Captain Marvel', that we have just started filming. One could consider those risks, whenever you're doing something new and it's not proven. Doing a third version of 'Spider-Man'. Those are all things that have a certain amount of risk associated with them, but early on we decided we didn't want to be just the 'Iron Man' studio or just the 'Avengers' studio. We want to be the Marvel Studio."



**Star Wars' Daisy Ridley consider's Rey's future**

'Star Wars' actress Daisy Ridley has revealed how her character's discovery about her parents in 'The Last Jedi' could change her. The 25-year-old actress stars as resistance fighter Rey in the sci-fi franchise, and in the most recent installment was informed by Kylo Ren (Adam Driver) that her parents were junk traders who sold her for drinking money. During a recent Facebook Live Q&A, Daisy was asked if she thought Rey's fixation on finding out who her parents were had been a flaw in her character. Daisy said: "I do not think that is a weakness. Great question, but I don't think that is a weakness. "I think longing for something, there's usually a reason you're longing for it. Even though she's very hopeful about moving forward, there's clearly some stuff that she needs to put to bed and that is all going to help her, moving forward. So I don't think that's a weakness. I think it's a wonderful... again, sort of adds to the brilliant hopefulness that, what may have happened wasn't so bad. Like, that she wasn't just left there by these awful people. And, also, it leads her on this amazing jour-

ney. That's part of the whole thing. She wouldn't have stayed if she didn't really want that. She wouldn't have had the moment with Luke and all of the other amazing stuff that happened." Fans had previously speculated, like other 'Star Wars' characters such as Luke Skywalker and Darth Vader, that Rey's parents may have been revealed to be significant. But they will have to wait for 'Star Wars: Episode IX' to discover if Kylo Ren was telling the truth. Daisy has previously spoken of her pride at portraying a strong female role model on screen. She said: "The thing is I was always a book person not a film person. Books never quite discriminated the way films did. All the heroes I needed were in books. So for me I had everything I needed in my home but obviously if I hadn't, it would have meant a great deal and I think that's why I don't see the disparity that much because I really didn't have access to so many films but the way people have responded has been wonderful and I think it's only a good thing to be joined by the wonderful people who have joined this film."

**Kristen Wiig confirmed for Wonder Woman sequel**



Kristen Wiig will play the villain Cheetah in the 'Wonder Woman' sequel. The 44-year-old actress has accepted the crucial role in the much-anticipated new superhero movie, which will see Gal Gadot reprise the role of Wonder Woman. Director Patty Jenkins wrote on Twitter: "So excited to confirm the most thrilling news. Yes! It's true! So incredibly lucky to welcome the sensationally talented Kristen Wiig to our Wonder Woman family. Can't wait to finally work with one of my favorites. And SO excited by what we have planned. #Cheetah!!! (sic)." Gal added: "I'm SO excited welcome on board Kristen! This is going to be WONDERful! (sic)." Cheetah has taken many different forms since her introduction in 1943 but Kristen is most likely to play Barbara Ann Cavendish,

who has a passion for mythology and multiple archaeology degrees. The sequel, like the original movie, will be a period piece, set towards the end of the Cold War. There is also still a possibility that Chris Pine - whose on-screen character was killed off in the first movie - could make an unlikely return to the franchise. 'Wonder Woman' proved to be a huge box office success in 2017, helping to establish Gal as one of the most sought-after female stars in the movie business. And director Patty previously admitted to being shocked by how well received her movie was. She shared: "I didn't really start to make the connection about the lightning rod it was going to hit until it had opened. "I assumed that it would be seen just as a superhero film."

— Bang Showbiz



# Lights, camera, action! Young Zimbabweans ditch drugs for performing arts

Jimmy Gata, 19, recites an anti-drugs poem at "Theatre in the Park" in Zimbabwe's capital Harare, jumping and gesturing on the stage, as spectators clap and cheer on the former addict. Before finding his passion for the spoken word, Gata regularly took BronClear, a cough syrup often smuggled in from South Africa that contains codeine, a painkiller similar to morphine. If enough is drunk, it also intoxicates like alcohol. "Since Ngoma Yorira Theatre Association took me in to learn about film-making and acting and poetry, I have had no time for (BronClear)," said Gata, a trained motor mechanic. There are no accurate figures on the number of drug users in Zimbabwe. The Ministry of Health and Child Care says about 3,000 people nationwide are suffering mental illness directly related to drug abuse.

For 19-year-old Innocent Ndaramashe, an emerging R&B and hip-hop music star who was addicted to substances like BronClear, the performing arts came to his rescue just in time. "My music encourages my peers not to consume drugs because they damage our health," Ndaramashe told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. "As a young man who has been taking drugs, I decided to preach against the abuse of drugs through my music career." In a country where many people struggle to earn a living in the informal economy, the theatre association has also helped out the poor and hungry. "It gives food parcels, groceries to the needy in my community of which I am also a beneficiary because I am very old," said 73-year-old Tambudzai Mlambo, a resident of Mbare township in Harare.

## State support

As Zimbabwe battles drug abuse made worse by a shortage of jobs for young people, the government acknowledges the contribution of the community arts scene. "Groups that have of late emerged have helped to keep former drug addicts



Former drug addict Innocent Ndaramashe, now an up-and-coming musician, works in a studio in Harare, Zimbabwe. — Reuters

focused on theatre or art. This diverts their attention from drugs to concentrate on something new and positive for their wellbeing," said Dorcas Sithole, deputy director of the Ministry of Health's mental health department.

The state is doing what it can to fight drug abuse in tough circumstances, she told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. "We are trying to prevent drug users from turning into addicts," she said, explaining how the government puts them on withdrawal programs in hospital and is also planning to open rehabilitation centers. In addition, anti-drugs activists say there is a need for occupational therapy such as theatre, which also helps young people build their self-esteem.

"Nurturing talent provides an avenue for accomplishment as opposed to helplessness which is associated with the onset of drug use," said Hilton Nyamukapa, program coordinator for

the Zimbabwe Civil Liberties and Drug Network. Established seven years ago, the national network advocates for strategies to address problems linked to drug use in Zimbabwe and across Southern Africa.

## Community care

A pioneer of the idea of using theatre to tackle drug problems, Ernest Nyatanga, founder and president of the Ngoma Yorira Theatre Association, said his organization pays former addicts for their acting. "Rewarding former drug users for their performances in theatre helps to motivate them and cultivate in them a desire to work for themselves," he told Thomson Reuters Foundation. Recently the association shot films highlighting social and economic issues facing the country, such as "The Delinquent" which depicts a misled young man who takes drugs while in school. The films are shown at Harare's "Theatre in the Park".

Nyatanga said the association donates some of the proceeds from its performances - which it stages in townships in remote areas too - to local orphanages and poor widows. And it has helped feed people going hungry when drought hit food supplies in rural and urban areas. It also recruits community members to sell recordings of theatre productions on a commission basis by the roadside. "We are an association that lives amongst ordinary people, and we care for their needs," Nyatanga said.

So far, the theatre association has helped more than 340 individuals change their lives for the better, 30 percent of whom were hooked on drugs, he said. Parents like Linda Masarira, 36, whose 18-year-old son was an addict but has now resumed his secondary-school studies, are grateful for its work. "It is a miracle - my son is reforming; he is now an upcoming hip-hop star while he is also into theatre and as a result he has... stopped using drugs," Masarira said.



Young people with the Ngoma Yorira Theatre Association get ready for a performance at "Theatre in the Park" in Harare, Zimbabwe, as they campaign against drug abuse. — Reuters

## Faith and football

Community religious groups like the Christian Youths Fellowship Association (CYFA) based in Chegutu, a farming town 100 km (62 miles) west of Harare in Mashonaland West Province, have also joined the fight against drugs. Patrick Imbayago, founder and director of the CYFA, said his group has shown anti-drugs films in urban and rural townships. "After seeing these kinds of films, few would return to drug abuse because... drug abusers are shown as eventually losing their marbles, going mad," he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. The CYFA also funds football training for young people. "The more we occupy them with social activities like soccer, the less our youths turn to drug abuse," said Imbayago. — Reuters



In this file photo British veteran entertainer Ken Dodd arrives for an investiture ceremony at Buckingham Palace. — AFP



In this March 8, 1966 file photo, comedian Ken Dodd poses with his award for Show Business Personality of the Year, presented to him at the Variety Club luncheon at the Savoy Hotel, London. — AP



In this Aug 17, 2005 file photo, comedian Ken Dodd poses with a new oil on canvas portrait of himself entitled 'Ken Dodd. Entertainer' by Wiltshire artist David Cobby. — AP

## Tim McGraw collapses on stage during Ireland performance

Country music star Tim McGraw collapsed on stage during a performance in Ireland. Rolling Stone magazine reports McGraw collapsed while performing Sunday night in Dublin. McGraw's wife, singer Faith Hill, can be seen in a video on a fan's Instagram page saying, "He's been super dehydrated. I apologize, but I made the decision that he cannot come back out on stage."



File photo shows Tim McGraw performs on NBC's 'Today' show at Rockefeller Plaza in New York. — AP

A representative for McGraw issued a statement saying McGraw was attended to by local medical staff on-site and will be fine. McGraw, who was performing as part of the Country to Country festival in the UK, had performed Friday night in London and Saturday night in Glasgow as part of C2C, a three-day, three-city country-music festival. The duo is scheduled to begin their 29-city Soul2Soul tour in the US on May 31 in Richmond, Virginia. — AP

## British comedian Ken Dodd dies aged 90

British comedian Ken Dodd, a legendary variety performer known for his unruly hair and buck teeth, has died at the age of 90, his publicist said yesterday. Dodd, from Liverpool in northwest England, won millions of fans with his epic stand-up shows filled with non-stop jokes, in which he brandished his trademark colorful "tickling sticks". He made his first professional appearance in 1954 and a decade later made his debut in London's West End, where he staged a record-breaking 42-week show at the London Palladium.

He drew wider audiences on television and radio, and also released a number of smash hit songs, but continued touring right up until last year. "To my mind, he was one of the last music hall greats," said his publicist Robert Holmes. Dodd, who was knighted by Prince William last year, died on Sunday in the house where he was born, just two days after marrying his partner of 40 years, Anne Jones, on Friday. He had left hospital on February 27 after a six-week stay for a chest infection.

"He passed away in the home that he was born in

over 90 years ago. He's never lived anywhere else. It's absolutely amazing," Holmes said. "With Ken gone, the lights have been turned out in the world of variety. He was a comedy legend and a genius." Dodd's success drew the interest of the taxman, and in 1989 he endured a five-week trial accused of fraud. He was acquitted, and later made jokes about it. — AFP



## Nick Gordon arrested for domestic violence

Nick Gordon has been arrested on a charge of domestic violence. The 27-year-old - who is best known for dating the late Bobbi Kristina Brown before her death in July 2015 - was arrested on Saturday in Seminole, Florida, after his girlfriend, Laura Leal, called police alleging that he struck her in the face while she was driving. According to Entertainment Tonight, the arresting officer stated Leal had a visibly swollen lip with dried blood. Leal claims she picked up Gordon from a bar and he attacked her while she was driving, but Gordon told police they had both been drinking alcohol at his home and she attacked him, ripping his shirt and throwing a bottle at him. Leal refused to press charges against Gordon, whom she said she has been dating for the past six months. Gordon was arrested for Battery Domestic Violence, and posted a \$500 bond. He is due to appear in court on April 6. Last June, Gordon was arrested in Sanford, Florida, for domestic violence and kidnapping his girlfriend at the time, but the charges were eventually dropped. — AP

## 'Black Panther,' 4 weeks in, tops 'A Wrinkle in Time'

Challa still rules the box office four weeks in, even with the fresh rivalry of another Walt Disney Studios release in "A Wrinkle in Time." "Black Panther" took the No. 1 spot at the North American box office with \$41.1 million according to studio estimates Sunday, leaving another newcomer in its wake. The Marvel and Disney phenomenon crossed the \$1 billion mark worldwide this weekend and became the 7th highest grossing domestic release with \$562 million. Not accounting for inflation, it's now passed "The Dark Knight."

With a marketplace still dominated by "Black Panther," Disney faced some stiff competition from its own studio in launching Ava DuVernay's adaption of "A Wrinkle in Time," which opened in second place with \$33.3 million from 3,980 locations. The PG-rated film, which cost around \$103 million to produce and stars Oprah Winfrey and Reese Witherspoon, received mixed reviews from critics (it's currently at a "rotten" 44 percent on RottenTomatoes) and audiences who gave it a B CinemaScore.

In gauging "A Wrinkle in Time's" long-term prospects, a somewhat similar comparison could be Disney's "Tomorrowland," a PG-rated sci-fi pic with middling reviews and a B CinemaScore which opened to \$33 million in the early summer of 2015 and went on to gross \$93 million domestically. "Tomorrowland," however, notably cost nearly twice as much to make as "A Wrinkle in Time." But the "Black Panther" effect is the x-factor here. For Disney, it's a "win all around."

"When you think about having two films at the top of the box office, it's definitely a win all around," says

Disney's worldwide theatrical distribution president Dave Hollis. "We're feeling good about this start ... We're feeling good about what, for us, is a little family competition between now and (the Easter holiday)." Hollis says he doesn't think the studio would have done anything differently regarding "Wrinkle's" release had they known the scope and longevity of "Black Panther's" prospects.

## Post-Oscars stature

"There's always going to be competition in the marketplace," he says. "With a tentpole strategy like ours, four weeks of separation is about what we can expect." Still, "Black Panther" has devoured the marketplace for a month straight now, leaving all other newcomers in the dust. The new horror film "The Strangers: Prey At Night," with Christina Hendricks, took third place with \$10.5 million. The Jennifer Lawrence thriller "Red Sparrow" landed in fourth in its second weekend with \$8.2 million and the comedy "Game Night" placed fifth with \$7.9 million in weekend three.

Hardly any of the new releases, which also included the thriller "The Hurricane Heist" (8th place, \$3.2 million) and the dark action comedy "Gringo," (11th place, \$2.6 million) were well-reviewed going into the weekend, save for the limited release independents like "Thoroughbreds," which made \$1.2 million from 549 locations, and Armando Iannucci's "The Death of Stalin," which opened in four theaters to \$181,000. It also left room for the Academy Award



This image released by Disney and Marvel Studios shows Chadwick Boseman in a scene from "Black Panther." — AP photos

best picture winner "The Shape of Water," which is also available on home video, to capitalize on its post-Oscars stature. The Fox Searchlight film added 720 theaters and took in in \$2.4 million from 1,552 locations, bringing its domestic total to \$61 million.

But even though "Black Panther" has helped boost the year to date box office significantly, it's also proving to be a continued challenge for any other wide release hoping for a piece of the market. "Every movie that has opened in the wake of 'Black Panther' has had its work cut out for it," says comScore senior media analyst Paul Dergarabedian. "We keep underestimating this film and it just shows no sign of slowing down."

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at US and Canadian theaters, according to comScore. Where available, the latest international numbers for Friday through Sunday are also included. Final domestic figures will be released Monday.

1. "Black Panther," \$41.1 million (\$100 million international).
2. "A Wrinkle in Time," \$33.3 million (\$6.3 million international).
3. "The Strangers: Prey At Night," \$10.5 million (\$140,000 international).
4. "Red Sparrow," \$8.2 million (\$15.7 million international).
5. "Game Night," \$7.9 million (\$5.4 million international).
6. "Peter Rabbit," \$6.8 million (\$4.8 million international).
7. "Death Wish," \$6.6 million (\$3 million international).
8. "The Hurricane Heist," \$3.2 million (\$1.9 million international).
9. "Annihilation," \$3.2 million.
10. "Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle," \$2.8 million. — AP





In this file photo a rose-ringed Parakeet rests on a power line in Israel's coastal Mediterranean city of Netanya, north of Tel Aviv. — AFP

# Pretty polly or pests? Dutch in a flap over parakeets

To their detractors, they're dirty alien invaders whose incessant chatter ruins Sunday morning lie-ins. To their supporters, they're beautiful, cheerful reminders of warmer climes amid the winter chill. Love 'em or hate 'em, thousands of rose-ringed parakeets, close relatives of parrots, have made their home in the Netherlands over the past five decades, and their growing presence has become a source of noisy debate. Like in other European cities such as London and Paris, the colourful green birds with distinctive red beaks have proliferated over the years.

They gather in garden trees and around schools; they even roost outside the Dutch parliament in The Hague, with urban legend telling how one debate was drowned out by the birds' constant calls. Imported from Pakistan in the 1960s to brighten the aviaries of wealthy Europeans—especially the Dutch and British—over the years many escaped and have now successfully adapted to life in the city. Indeed, the rose-ringed, or ring-necked parakeet was listed among Europe's top 100 most invasive species in the scientific journal "Biological Invasions" in December.

While their fans claim they are victims of a knee-jerk fear of anything new, some groups actively lobby for their numbers to be culled. In Amsterdam, where one of the largest colonies of parakeets lives, the town hall has banned residents from putting out food in some areas or risk a 70 euro (\$86) fine. Critics argue the flying flocks

undermine the natural order, pinching the resting spaces of owls and bats, leaving behind piles of bird droppings and ravaging trees and plants. "Some residents are even thinking of moving house because of their infernal noise," said Wilfred Reinhold, president of an association fighting against the birds' presence in the country.

“Of course they are charming... but they also cause a lot of damage”

### 'Charming, but destructive'

With plentiful food, few predators and lots of water, the living is easy in the Netherlands, where the flocks have grown unchecked. In Leiden, biologist Roelant Jonker has taken the country's oldest colony of the birds under his wing, despite being allergic to their feathers and even though his passion was sorely tested six years ago. While studying a group of yellow-eared parrots in the jungles of Colombia, Jonker was taken hostage by FARC rebels, a "traumatizing experience" which lasted eight months. But he remains determined to protect the

estimated 15,000 parakeets which now call the Netherlands home. By comparison, France is 15 times bigger but counts only some 10,000 parakeets.

"Of course they are charming... but they also cause a lot of damage," said Reinhold, keeping a watchful eye on some budding chestnut trees outside the Dutch parliament. A recently published picture of an embassy-lined street near the royal palace sullied with parrot droppings has only added grist to his mill.

### 'Here to stay'

Reinhold insists that measures should be taken to stop the flocks. "Nets could be dropped on the trees at night to catch hundreds of them," he suggested, accepting however that using guns to shoot them down "would not be a very good idea in the city". But removing them would be too costly, argued Jonker, declaring: "There is nothing to do. They are here, they are going to stay." He pointed to some birch trees, saying they had once been imported by the Romans and were now an integral part of the Dutch landscape. The next generation will see the parakeets "as ordinary birds... and they will be as ordinary as all the different colours of people and birds in Europe," he added. — AFP



Benjamin Vidmar and his son, Amir-Soffian Vidmar, pictured with microgreens and a quail from their urban farm in Longyearbyen, Norway. — Reuters photos



Benjamin Vidmar's domed greenhouse is pictured in Longyearbyen, Norway.

## Mostly fun, sometimes weird: 'BBC Dad' one year after video

The Korea politics professor who became a viral sensation after his children interrupted a BBC interview says he has been pulled over by police for selfies and photographed buying milk in the year since the broadcast. Robert Kelly of Pusan National University was commenting on the downfall of impeached president Park Geun-hye when his daughter Marion waltzed into his home office, followed by his toddler son James, who wheeled in on his baby walker.

Suddenly the implications of a parliamentary vote turned into what the BBC described as a "perfect piece of physical comedy". Kelly's wife Kim Jung-A, who was watching on television from their living room, flew in seconds later, flinging her arms in a desperate attempt to retrieve the young intruders, before returning on all fours to reach out and close the door. The clip spread like wildfire online and provoked widespread debate and commentary in media around the world. It is the most-watched video ever on the BBC's Youtube page, with more than 27 million views—half as much again as the second-placed item, drone footage of the Nazi concentration camp at Auschwitz in Poland.

A year after the broadcast, Kelly wrote on the website of the Lowy Institute, an Australian think tank, that the subsequent 12 months had "mostly been fun, and sometimes weird". "I was photographed buying milk at Costco once, because apparently BBC Dad's calcium consumption is a hot issue," he said. "A cop in South Korea once pulled me over to ask for a selfie." The family had made some money as a result of their notoriety, "but the total amount was not that much".

The biggest upside, he said, was that his opinions on North Korea and northeast Asian security were sought more often, and he was invited to more events—although at one panel in China he was introduced as "BBC Dad... and, oh yeah, an expert on Korea". As the furor mounted in the days after the interview, Kelly had expressed hopes that one day he would be known for his work, adding: "I mean, this wouldn't be the first line in my obituary."

### 'Race-gender narrative'

The US-born academic, who studied at Ohio State University, teaches US foreign policy at the institution where he is an associate professor, and has research interests in international politics and political theory. The politics surrounding the video were "weird", he added in his post, published on the anniversary of the interview Sunday. Some racist neo-Nazis called him a "race traitor" - "This was predictable: anyone in an interracial relationship has experienced it," he said.

"More curious were the responses from the left which tried to read some kind of race-gender narrative into the video," he added, with his wife's attempts to stay out of shot by crawling along the floor seen as "some sort of metaphor for white-male social power in Asia". "The episode was just a family blooper," Kelly insisted. In South Korea, suggestions that his wife was the family nanny were seen as prejudiced at the time, with broadcaster SBS referring to "Caucasian-centred racism".

Kelly denied the two most frequent claims about the video - that it was staged so that they could become famous, and that he did not get up because he was not wearing trousers. "We anticipate that this is our final major public statement on the video," he added, hoping that after a year, "peak interest in it has passed, making way for the next dancing cat video". — AFP

## GROWING YOUR OWN IN 30 BELOW – THE CHEF ON AN ARCTIC SELF-SUFFICIENCY MISSION

In one of the planet's most northerly settlements, in a tiny Arctic town of about 2,000 people, Benjamin Vidmar's domed greenhouse stands out like an alien structure in the snow-cloaked landscape. This is where in summer the American chef grows tomatoes, onions, chillies and other vegetables, taking advantage of the season's 24 hours of daily sunlight. During winter's four months of darkness, when temperatures can reach -30 Celsius (-22°F), Vidmar tends to microgreens - the leaves and shoots of young salad plants - and dozens of quails in two rooms beneath his home.

He is the sole supplier of locally-grown food in the Norwegian town of Longyearbyen in the Svalbard archipelago. The North Pole is about 1,050 kilometers (650 miles) to the north; mainland Norway is about as far south. Growing food in such conditions can be "mission impossible" but it is necessary, Vidmar told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. He hopes to set an example for other remote towns in the region.



A street in Longyearbyen town in the Svalbard archipelago, Norway, is pictured.



Pots of microgreens at the Polar Permaculture urban farm in Longyearbyen, Norway.

centres, no billboards saying, 'buy, buy, buy!' A year later, he moved to the island and started working at restaurants and bars in Longyearbyen, a coal mining town turned tourist-and-research attraction.

He decided to grow his own food after becoming frustrated with the absence of fresh produce and the fact that a lack of treatment sites meant organic waste was dumped into the sea. People thought he was "crazy" trying to grow food in the Arctic. Initially he experimented with hydroponics - farming in water instead of soil - but that meant using fertilizer, which comes from the mainland. Eventually the city authorities gave him permission to bring in worms from Florida to do the job. Now, whenever he or his son deliver a tray of microgreens to restaurants, they collect the previous tray and feed the soil to the worms, which break it down to produce natural fertilizer for bigger plants. His next aim is to heat the greenhouse during winter using a biodigester - which generates energy from organic material - so he can use it all-year-round.

### Sustainability

Vidmar also helps fourth- and ninth-grade students at Longyearbyen school to learn farming and sustainability. That has led older students to query the island's supply chain, said teacher Lisa Dymbe Djonne. "They question the transportation of food from the mainland to here and how expensive that is," she told the Thomson Reuters Foundation by phone.



A worm at the Polar Permaculture urban farm in Longyearbyen, Norway.

"We are so dependent on imports. Everything is by boat and plane," said Vidmar, who comes from Cleveland, Ohio, and who has lived here for nearly a decade. That makes the town vulnerable, he said. In 2010, stores in Longyearbyen stood empty after an Icelandic volcano erupted, bringing air transport to a halt. And the cost of imported food and its quality "is often disappointing". His company, Polar Permaculture, aims to produce enough food for the town and process all its organic and biological waste. It sounds ambitious, but the firm, which received support from a government-funded body that helps startups, broke even last year, just two years in. It was helped by the fact that he and his teenage son do not draw salaries, and Vidmar still cooks full-time at a school.

### 'crazy' to try

Vidmar's produce now appears on many of Longyearbyen's menus, including at Huset restaurant where intricate, multi-course Nordic tasting menus are served in stately surroundings. Alongside reindeer steak and tartare of bearded seal is a delicate dish of quail egg with dill, red onions and anchovies on flatbread. "We would not use quail eggs unless they were local so we designed a dish as soon as we got the opportunity to try them," said Filip Gemzell, Huset's head chef. Vidmar first stepped foot in Svalbard in 2007 while working as a chef on a cruise ship. One of his first thoughts was, "How can people live here?", but he was also intrigued.

"The sad part (in America) is you work so hard and you still have to worry about money. Then you come here and you have all this nature. No distraction, no huge shopping



This file photo shows the entrance to the Svalbard Global Seed Vault (SGSV) is pictured outside Longyearbyen on the Svalbard archipelago, Norway.



# Lifestyle

TUESDAY, MARCH 13, 2018



## THE 'SPIRAL OF CONTAINMENT' EXHIBITION

A photo titled "The Present" featured in the 'Spiral of Containment' exhibition on sexual abuse survivors by London-based photographer Elisa Iannacone. "I was 5 and he was 16. He said, 'If you come up to my room I'll give you a present.' - Purple".



A photo titled "Flight and Fight" featured in the 'Spiral of Containment' exhibition on sexual abuse survivors by London-based photographer Elisa Iannacone. "My first response was flight - to escape the horror I'd experienced. But soon after I realized I had survived and found myself turning back, determined to fight for a change. Ballet became a creative outlet; it gave me a sense of grounding. - Pink". Photo supplied by Elisa Iannacone.



A photo titled "Normal" featured in the 'Spiral of Containment' exhibition on sexual abuse survivors by London-based photographer Elisa Iannacone. "I was introduced to sex at the age of five by a woman. Everybody says it must have been terrible and I think, Actually, it was just normal. For me, that's what happened every day and I carried on. I thought it was happening to everybody. - Verdigris". — Reuters photos

## EGYPT FILMMAKERS DEFY TABOOS OF CONSERVATIVE SOCIETY



Egyptian director Ahmed Amer speaks during an AFP interview in the capital Cairo.

“ Things started to change in the 1980s ”

Filmmakers in Egypt are defying a largely conservative society with television series and movies that deal with modern relationships between men and women and the empowerment of the young. In its heyday between the 1950s and the 1970s, Egypt had one of the largest and most dynamic movie industries in the world. The golden age of Egyptian cinema starred fiery, determined women and love scenes that rivaled those of Western movies at the time. "Things started to change in the 1980s" as social freedoms regressed and society grew more puritanical, leading Arab film critic Tarek El-Shenawi told AFP.

Under the growing influence of the Muslim Brotherhood group and Arab Gulf countries, conservatism expanded steadily in Egyptian society during the time. Braving criticism from conservatives, young directors are now becoming more daring in their work. Such productions often stir controversy, but they still attract millions of viewers online. In the film "Balash Tebosni" (Kiss Me Not), young director Ahmed Amer makes fun of the taboo on passionate kisses in contemporary Egyptian cinema. "Comedy makes the people a bit more open to the theme," Amer told AFP.

In the "adults only" movie, Amer tries to shoot a kissing scene but the actress refuses to comply, stressing that she wants to become a

more devout Muslim. The "film within a film" satirizes the dogged resistance of his starlet in what has become an increasingly puritanical society. Yasmin Raeis, who plays the actress, said she remembers how such scenes used to be "totally normal" in Egyptian movies she watched as a child. "Then as I got older, suddenly people started saying that this shouldn't happen" in movies anymore, she said.

Raeis said she could not understand the taboo on kissing when audiences stream to watch thrillers and action movies packed with scenes of violence. "That's what's strange. We should be condemning violence, not romance," she said. The idea for Balash Tebosni originated in a short film which Amer had tried but failed to complete in real life because the leading actress was disgusted by the idea of an onscreen kiss.

### Generation gap

Family comedies have also become a hit. Watched by millions on YouTube, "Sabaa Gar" (Seventh Neighbor), a series which airs on the private CBC Entertainment channel, has faced a storm of accusations that it corrupts Egypt's youth. A single woman living alone and seeing men out of wedlock, or another who smokes in secret, Sabaa Gar shows the young demanding control over their own lives. This contrasts with the stricter social norms that the older genera-

tion still holds on to and highlights the generation gap in Egyptian society.

The goal was not to spur controversy, said Heba Youssry, one of the series' three all-female co-directors. Sabaa Gar has "allowed people to understand each other and to learn about how the new generation thinks", she said. Among the story lines is one of a young woman who wants to have a child, but does not want to share her life with a man. She agrees with a work colleague to get married for the sole purpose of having a baby, and then to get divorced.

A similar theme was the subject of hit comedy "Bashtery Ragel" (I'm Buying a Man), released in Egyptian cinemas in February 2017 on Valentine's Day. At the same time, however, many Egyptian actresses refuse to be filmed in kissing scenes or to play roles that could be regarded as immoral. Some have even quit the industry for religious reasons. Egyptian authorities under President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, in power since 2013, have clamped down on activities deemed immoral. In the latest case, Egypt last month banned the Arabic version of US television's "Saturday Night Live" for use of "sexual expressions, phrases and gestures... which violate ethical and professional standards". — AFP



Egyptian actress Yasmin Raeis speaks during an AFP interview in the capital Cairo. — AFP photos