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# Assembly committee wants total Kuwaitization by 2023

## Lawmaker threatens to grill oil minister over alleged graft

By B Izzak and A Saleh

**KUWAIT:** Head of the National Assembly's committee for the replacement of expatriates in public sector jobs MP Khalil Al-Saleh said yesterday the panel is determined that the replacement of all expatriates in government jobs must be completed by 2023 in accordance with a government plan. Saleh said that at present around 80,000 expatriates hold government jobs based on official contracts, forming around 20 percent of all government employees. But he said many other expatriates also work in government jobs but are not counted among the 80,000 contract employees.

Commenting on the government's vision which said that the replacement of expatriates may not be completed before 2028, the lawmaker claimed some advisors are obstructing Kuwaitization plans in the government. "We are not questioning their intentions, but some have been slowing the process on purpose," he said, noting that citizens are well-qualified and that all they need to dominate various jobs is to have more trust in their potentials and administrations that fully believe in depending on citizens instead of expats in doing administrative jobs.

Saleh said the replacement policy, which began in 1997, required each ministry and government department to shed 10 percent of its expatriate employees every year to create jobs for Kuwaitis. The percentage was raised to 15 percent annually in 2007. Saleh said Kuwaitis can easily replace expats in jobs such

as PC operators, programmers, data registration, administrative research and coordination, educational and secretarial services, transaction follow-up, typing, handling paperwork, telephone operators, safety and security, collectors, cashiers, warehousing, purchasing and driving.

Saleh blamed the government for failing to implement replacement plans and demanded that those who failed to carry out such plans be exposed. He said the committee will demand studies and statistics made by the government in this connection and threatened to publicly question those responsible for delaying replacement plans.

Meanwhile, MP Omar Al-Tabtabaei yesterday said he will grill Oil Minister Bakheet Al-Rasheedi if he does not confront and control what he described as a "gang" in the oil sector. The lawmaker claimed that corruption is widespread in the oil sector and called on the prime minister to meet leading oil executives and review questions by MPs to see the extent of corruption in the vital sector.

He also claimed that millions of dinars in public funds have been squandered by leading oil executives through illegally reimbursing annual leaves. Tabtabaei alleged that there is a "mafia" in the oil sector and advised the prime minister to read opinions by top executives about corruption. He said that if the prime minister and the oil minister are incapable of holding corrupt elements to account and end corruption in the oil sector, they should quit.



**KUWAIT:** HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah yesterday decorated visiting Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko with the Mubarak Al-Kabeer Medal in appreciation of his role in boosting bilateral relations. Poroshenko also decorated Sheikh Sabah with the Yaroslav Order of Prince Yaroslav the Wise, the country's highest order. — KUNA (See Page 2)

## Qatar asks US to investigate 'financial war'

**LONDON:** Qatar has asked US regulators to investigate the US subsidiary of the largest bank in the United Arab Emirates, accusing it of "bogus" foreign exchange deals designed to harm its economy as part of a blockade by Gulf neighbors. The Central Bank of Qatar's law firm has written a letter to the US Treasury asking it to investigate NBAD Americas, the US subsidiary of First Abu Dhabi Bank (FAB), which is majority state-owned.

In a second letter, the lawyers - Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison - asked the US Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) to investigate possible manipulation of Qatar's currency, the riyal. The request for an investigation deepens the diplomatic crisis that erupted in June when Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates (UAE)

Continued on Page 11



**AFRIN:** Turkish soldiers gather in this Kurdish-majority city in northwestern Syria after seizing control of it from Kurdish People's Protection (YPG) units yesterday. — AFP

## Turkish forces and Syrian allies drive Kurds from Afrin

**AFRIN, Syria:** Turkey's flag was flying in Afrin yesterday after its troops and Ankara-backed rebels chased out Kurdish militia forces to seize control of the Syrian city. In a major victory for Ankara's two-month operation against the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) in northern Syria, Turkish-led forces pushed into Afrin apparently unopposed, taking up positions across the city. The advance came as Syria's civil war entered its eighth year this week with heavy fighting on two fronts - around Afrin and in the rebel enclave of Eastern Ghouta near Damascus.

Hundreds have been killed and thousands forced from their homes by the ferocious assault in Ghouta, where President Bashar Al-Assad yesterday visited troops battling to retake the last rebel enclave close to the capital. In Afrin, AFP correspondents saw Turkish forces and their Syrian allies in all neighborhoods of the city after they made a lightning advance inside yesterday.

Continued on Page 11

## Pulling no punches: Saudi woman boxer breaks exercise taboo

**JEDDAH:** Throwing punches in a gym tucked away from prying eyes, a Saudi female boxing trainer asserts a right long denied to many women in the conservative kingdom - the right to exercise. Halah Alhamrani, 41, runs a gym for women called FlagBoxing - its motto is Fight Like A Girl - in the western Red Sea city of Jeddah, offering fitness classes such as calisthenics, CrossFit, boxing and kickboxing.

Relying on word-of-mouth publicity in a country where exercising in public is culturally deemed unbecoming for women, Alhamrani is working to empower a generation with little to no exposure to sports. "On a daily basis, women who have never done sports walk into my class, some with their mothers," Alhamrani told AFP at her gym, which opened in 2016. "They walk out more confident. Many find their voice. The mothers approach me and say: 'Thank you for offering such an empowering feeling'."

At first blush, the gym screams California, not Saudi Arabia. Wearing headbands and workout attire, women are seen lifting weights, practicing sparring techniques and pounding their fists into a punching bag. Some of them crumple up their abaya gowns and toss them into a locker. They sweat it out over thumping music. Around 150 women, including Saudis but also other Arabs, share a sense of camaraderie. A note scribbled on a whiteboard reads: "I can't wait to come back!"



**JEDDAH:** Saudi gym owner Halah Alhamrani, 41, trains in her gym center in this coastal city on Feb 19, 2018. — AFP

Another banner on the wall reads "BADASS". "It sometimes feels like a tea party - without the tea and cookies," Alhamrani jokes.

Women exercising in public were long a potential target for the kingdom's austere religious police, which has largely been neutered in recent years. But dramatic social reforms sweeping Saudi Arabia, including a historic decree allowing women to drive from June, have shone the spotlight on figures such as Alhamrani who have long fought isolated battles for basic freedoms.

Under Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's Vision 2030 reform plan, the government is seeking to

Continued on Page 11

## Plan to revive Dead Sea edges closer to reality

**GHOR AL-HADITHA, Jordan:** Israel and Jordan have long pursued a common goal to stop the Dead Sea from shrinking while slaking their shared thirst for drinking water with a pipeline from the Red Sea some 200 km away. Geopolitical tensions have stalled efforts to break ground on the ambitious project for years, but the end of the latest diplomatic spat has backers hoping a final accord may now be in sight. The degradation of the Dead Sea, on the border of Israel, Jordan and the Palestinian West Bank, began in the 1960s when water began to be heavily diverted from the Jordan River.

"Before 1967, the water was just a 10-minute walk from my house," said Musa Salim Al-Athem, a farmer who grows tomatoes on the banks on the Jordan side. "Now it takes an hour," he said, standing amid the



**SWEIMEH, Jordan:** A sign marking the level of the Dead Sea in 2005 is seen near this village on March 11, 2018. — AFP

resulting lunar landscape of spectacular salt sculptures, gaping sinkholes and craters. "Only the sea can fill up the sea." "Since 1950, the amount flowing in the Jordan has dropped from 1.2 billion cubic metres per year to less than 200 million," said Frederic Maurel, an engineering expert at the French development agency AFD.

Heavy production of potash, used for making fertilizer, has also accelerated evaporation that has seen the sea's surface area shrink

by a third since 1960. Experts say water levels are falling one metre a year, and warn it could dry out completely within 30 years. Already 100 years ago, Theodor Herzl, the father of modern political Zionism, had envisaged filling the Dead Sea via a canal dug to the Mediterranean.

The sea's natural beauty and mineral-rich black mud have also provided a source of tourism revenue.

Continued on Page 11

# Kuwait, Ukraine strike deals as part of President Poroshenko's visit

Amir, Ukraine's president discuss boosting relations



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah welcomes Ukraine's President Petro Poroshenko to Kuwait.



Children greet His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Ukraine's President Petro Poroshenko at the airport.

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait and Ukraine yesterday sealed the deal on a number of agreements in a lavish ceremony with both nations' respective leaders in attendance. Presiding over the proceedings, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, with His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah by his side, was joined by Ukraine's President Petro Poroshenko. The two sides signed an agreement for military cooperation, in which Kuwaiti First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, along with his Ukrainian counterpart Stepan Poltorak put their names on the dotted line.

Meanwhile, a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on inter-sport cooperation was among the agreements made, where Kuwait's Minister of Commerce and Industry, as well as Minister of State for Youth Affairs Khaled Al-Roudhan co-signed the deal with Ukraine's Minister of Economic Development and Trade Stepan Kubiv. Another MoU, on cooperation in the field of science, was finalized between the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research and Ukraine's self-governed National Academy of Sciences.

#### Official visit

President Poroshenko arrived yesterday on an official visit, and was welcomed at the airport by His Highness the Amir, Highness the Crown Prince, His Highness the Prime Minister, National Assembly Speaker Marzuq Al-Ghanem in addition to a host of senior state officials.

Later yesterday, His Highness the Amir received President Poroshenko and his accompanying delegation at Bayan Palace. The two sides held official talks in the presence of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad and His Highness the Prime

Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. The meeting discussed boosting bilateral ties and cooperation on all levels, said Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah in a statement. His Highness the Amir also held a luncheon banquet in honor of the visiting Ukrainian President.

#### High respect

In other news, His Highness the Amir received at Bayan Palace Ghanem, who was accompanied by the Speaker of the Riksdag (the Swedish Parliament) Urban Ahlin, who is in an official visit to Kuwait. The receptions were attended by Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah.

Sweden has high respect for His Highness the Amir, Ahlin said in a statement after the meeting. "We are working very closely together in the UN Security Council between Sweden and Kuwait. We are very happy about cooperation that Kuwait has in the UN Security Council and we appreciate His Highness' mediating efforts in the region," he pointed out. Sweden is a country which is always looking for a diplomatic and political solutions to crises and "we really feel that His Highness is doing here exactly the same, which we appreciate."

Ahlin noted that Syria "is one example where Sweden and Kuwait together has put forward a resolution about humanitarian access and humanitarian support for the suffering people of Syria. That is only one example and we can see all around that Sweden and Kuwait can do a lot together in pushing forward diplomatic political solutions."

His Highness the Amir also received yesterday His Highness the Crown Prince, His Highness the Prime Minister and His Highness then received First Deputy Premier and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince received Ghanem, His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak, and Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. —KUNA

## Amir meets Swedish parliament speaker



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with the visiting President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko.



An agreement on cooperation in the field of science is signed between the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research and Ukraine's self-governed National Academy of Sciences.



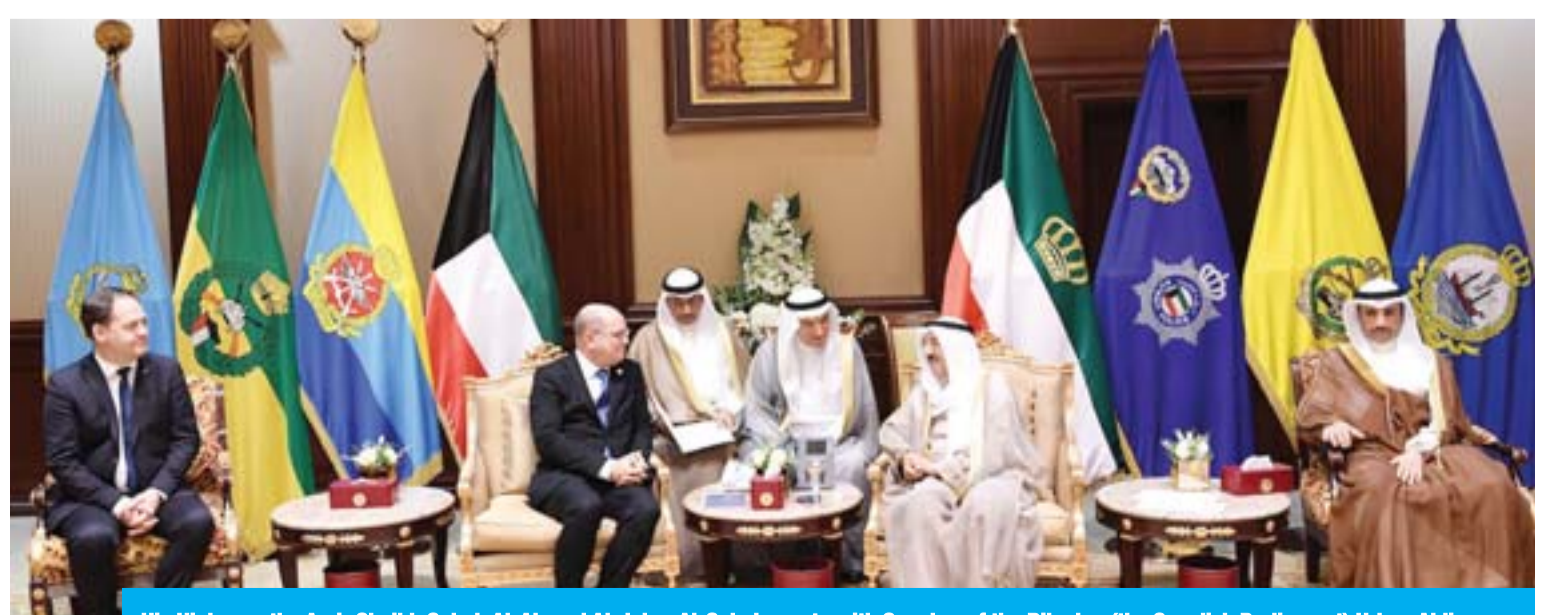
KUWAIT: First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and his Ukrainian counterpart Stepan Poltorak sign an agreement for military cooperation between Kuwait and Ukraine yesterday. — KUNA



Minister of Commerce and Industry Khaled Al-Roudhan signs a deal with Ukraine's Minister of Economic Development and Trade Stepan Kubiv on inter-sport cooperation between Kuwait and Ukraine.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah invites the visiting President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko to a luncheon held in his honor.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Speaker of the Riksdag (the Swedish Parliament) Urban Ahlin.

Local

# Education Ministry unionist urges CSC to rethink expats' termination

## 'Kuwaitis reluctant to work as social workers'

By A Saleh

**KUWAIT:** Head of the Ministry of Education's (MoE) employees syndicate Saleh Al-Azmi yesterday urged the Civil Service Commission (CSC) to undo its decision to terminate 214 expat psychological and social workers working in various public schools without providing qualified Kuwaiti substitutes. Azmi argued that CSC made a 'hasty' decision without studying its possible consequences on the educational process, especially in view of the lack of specialized and qualified Kuwaiti citizens in this field.

"Education cannot be run by individual decisions made by CSC in disregard to MoE's actual needs," he stressed, pointing out that citizens have been reluctant to work as psychological and social workers with MoE due to salary problems, as they are not paid as much as Kuwaiti teachers, and prefer working in other ministries. Finally, Azmi urged CSC to provide MoE's needs of staff and not terminate any teacher or social worker without providing well-qualified substitutes.

### Local recruitment

Meanwhile, MoE's human resources manager Saud Al-

Juwaier said the ministry has opened local recruitment of non-Kuwaiti teachers to join its teaching staff for the 2018-2019 school year. He added that bedoon applicants will be exempted from the experience condition. Juwaier explained that male teachers of English, French, mathematics, chemistry, biology, physics, geology, art and craft were needed, while female teachers were only needed to teach physics, mathematics, art and music. He also noted that applicants' age should not exceed 45, except for physical education teachers, who should be older than 32. He stressed that certificates must be endorsed and that visitors' applications will be ignored.

“ Education cannot be run by individual decisions ”

### Info Ministry

Undersecretary of the Ministry of Information Tareq Al-Marzam denied reports that any of the ministry's announcers have been suspended. He also noted that Kuwaiti

announcers from outside the ministry were temporarily hired based on need. Marzam said the total number of non-Kuwaiti announcers is 87 and underlined that the ministry is fully committed to the government's Kuwaitization plans. "The total number of Kuwaiti employees by the end of 2016 was 6,937 (86 percent) while non-Kuwaitis working on contracts were 311, and those working on temporary contracts only renewable by CSC approval number 884," he explained, concluding that expat employees in the ministry are only 14 percent of the total.

### Health insurance scheme

The State Audit Bureau rejected a tender made by the Ministry of Health (MoH) to qualify companies to register subscribers in the expats' health insurance scheme because the ministry violated the procedural regulations included in directive number 4/1997 pertaining government biddings and opening bid offers. Addressing MoH,

the bureau stressed that bids can only be opened in the presence of the full quorum of the purchases committee. It also noted that some of the applying companies had filed complaints regarding the process and stressed that all bidding companies are entitled to a copy of the committee's report, which was not done with the complaining company. Accordingly, informed sources urged Health Minister Sheikh Dr Basel Al-Sabah and his undersecretary Dr Mustafa Redha to form an investigation committee to hold whoever is responsible accountable. Notably, former MoH assistant undersecretary for public services Dr Mahmoud Abdul Hadi had filed related complaints with the public prosecutor against a former health minister and his assistant undersecretaries for financial and legal affairs.

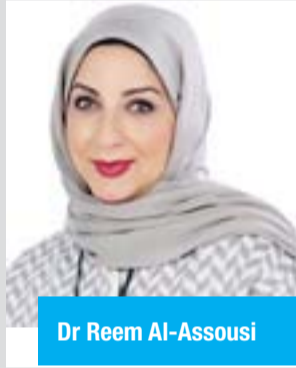
### Military laws

First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense urged lawmakers to review four military-related laws including the martial court and military penalties law number 119/1996, the martial penalties and military litigations and procedures law number 77/2000, a bill on banning the use, production and storage of chemical weapons and a bill on amending article 5 of law number 24/1963 pertaining the supreme defense council.

### News in brief

#### No expired stents used

**KUWAIT:** Chest Diseases Hospital's Director Dr Reem Al-Assousi stressed that cardiac catheterization surgeries conducted by the hospital's surgeons were completely safe and highly efficient. She also strongly denied that hospital doctors had ever used expired stents on any patient.



Dr Reem Al-Assousi

#### Southern power plant's renovation

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's Minister of Oil and Minister of Electricity and Water Bakheet Al-Rashidi signed a deal worth KD 20 million (\$60 million) yesterday to refurbish units in the country's southern "Al-Zour" power station. The contract entails complete renovations to the power plant, where all equipment would be upgraded to ensure maximal energy efficiency, read a statement by the ministry of oil and electricity. The statement also put a 60-month timeframe on the contract. — KUNA

#### Kuwait committed to Morocco quota

**RABAT:** The State of Kuwait has fulfilled in full its quota of the Gulf grant worth \$1.25 billion to Morocco, Kuwaiti Ambassador in Rabat Abdullah Al-Yahya said on Saturday. The ambassador made the statement on the sidelines of a meeting between Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development's (KFAED) Director General Abdulwahab Al-Bader and Moroccan Minister of Economy and Finance Mohammad Bou Saeed. The meeting was to assess the projects funded by KFAED in Morocco. Yahya added that the Kuwaiti portion was given to Morocco by KFAED through financing several social and economic projects aiming to improve living conditions of many categories of Moroccan people. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah meets with Chief of US Military Cooperation Office Brigadier General David P San Clemente. — KUNA

## Defense minister meets US military official

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah yesterday met Chief of US Military Cooperation Office, Brigadier General David P San Clemente, discussing issues of common concern. The Public Relations and Moral Guidance Department at the Ministry said in a statement that Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad praised during the meeting level of the bilateral relations between the two friendly countries.

## Three car break-in suspects arrested

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

**KUWAIT:** Farwaniya detectives arrested three people responsible for at least 17 robberies in which they broke into cars parked in various areas around Kuwait and stole their contents. Car owners had reported that their vehicles were targeted at the Friday Market in Rai, as well as the parking lots of Farwaniya, Amiri and Sabah Hospitals, in addition to the courts complexes in Regaei and Jahra, Mubarakiya Market and Ardhiya Industrial. Detectives monitored the places where the robberies were reported, and were able to identify two Arab men as prime suspects after they were seen frequenting those locations. The two men were arrested and taken for questioning, during which they admitted to committing the robberies. They led police to a third suspect who they said they have

Meanwhile, the air arm of the Kuwaiti military travelled to neighboring Saudi Arabia yesterday to participate in a pan-Gulf exercise, which kicks off today and ends on April 16. The Commander of the Kuwaiti Air Force Major General Abdullah Al-Foudari bid farewell to the officers upon their departure, read a statement by Kuwait's defense ministry. The drill, christened, 'Joint Gulf Shield I', focuses on war preparedness and exercises that aim to boost the Gulf region's collective military prowess, the statement added.

In other news, Chief of Pakistan Navy Admiral Zafar Abbasi and his accompanying delegation visited the Mohammad Al-Ahmad Kuwait Naval Base yesterday. The visiting admiral was received at the naval base by Kuwaiti Naval Force Major-General Khaled Al-Kandari and a number of naval force senior officials. During the visit, the two sides held a meeting discussing issues of common concern, especially military ones. —KUNA

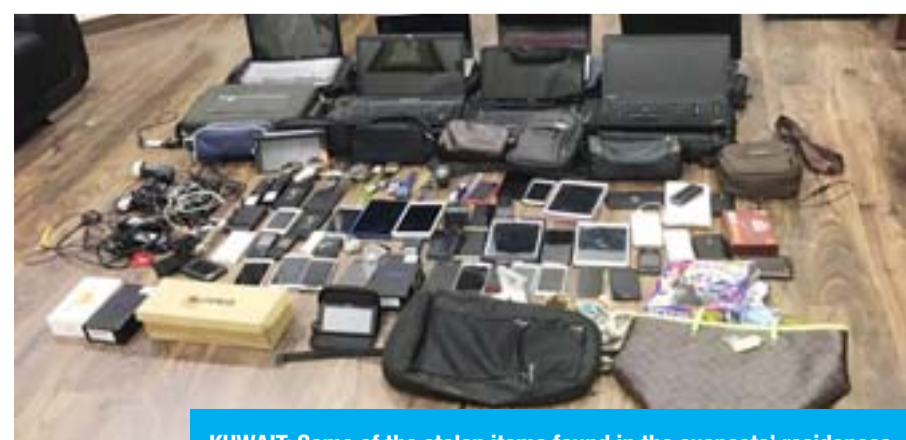
sold the stolen goods to. Police arrested the third man: who confirmed that he bought the items from the two other suspects, but denied knowledge of them being stolen. Police obtained a warrant to search his Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh apartment as well as the other suspects' residences, where they found some of the stolen items, as well as tools that they used in breaking vehicles' windows. The suspects were taken to the relevant authorities for further action.

### Crackdowns

The Interior Ministry's relations and security information department said the general security sector carried out several campaigns in all governorates from March 11 to 17, 2018 - 315 checkpoints were set up, resulting in the arrest of 253 persons for felony and civil cases, 597 residency violators, 44 fugitives, as well as 77 illegal workers and roaming vendors. Seventy drugs cases were recorded and 1,424 traffic citations were issued, while 109 vehicles were impounded and 18 cars wanted by authorities were recovered.

### Garage fire

Firemen battled a blaze in a Shuwaikh Industrial garage that spread to two neighboring garages. The fire was brought under control and no injuries were reported. Industrial Shuwaikh, Shuhada and backup centers responded to the call.



KUWAIT: Some of the stolen items found in the suspects' residences.

## Tons of foul food confiscated in recent crackdowns

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

**KUWAIT:** Public Authority for Food and Nutrition inspectors confiscated 2,635 kg of foul fish during a recent crackdown at the fish market. They also issued 12 warning notices for violating cleanliness and health rules, said Capital inspection manager Abdul Rahman Al-Fares.

Meanwhile, Ahmadi inspectors inspected Mina Abdullah, Khairan and Nuwaiseeb markets, where they confiscated and destroyed 25 kg of foul meat, fish and chicken, said the team's manager Saud Al-Jallal, noting that the team also filed eight citations and six warning notices.

In Farwaniya, inspection teams inspected a number of stores, restaurants and cafes at Ardhiya industrial area and Riggae, where they filed 15 citations for violations including handling food items without having health certificates and violating cleanliness conditions. Inspectors also confiscated four kilograms of inedible food during a recent inspection tour in Fahaheel. They also issued citations for several violations detected during the tour.

### Senior citizens

Health Minister Sheikh Dr Basel Al-Sabah approved providing senior citizens with special amenities including using 'priority' cards issued by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor (MSAL) in various Health Ministry facilities. Sheikh Basel also issued a decision on forming a nursing team at each hospital to follow up discharged patients - namely senior citizens - and contact them through mobile phones to check on their conditions.

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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)
- 10 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.
- Any school or individuals interested in participating are welcome to visit the office of Kuwait Times and collect the drawing sheet.
- 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.

You can collect the drawing sheets from **Hardee's** branches: Jahra, block 3 - Mushref - South Surra - Jabriya - Fahaheel - Mougherah

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All entries are non-returnable, and will be the property of Kuwait Times ©

## Local

# Limak graduates 30 aspiring Kuwaiti female engineers

As part of its 'Kuwait's Engineer Girls' training program



**ISTANBUL:** Limak Insaat Kuwait, a fully-owned subsidiary of Limak Group of Companies established through the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA), held a graduation ceremony in Istanbul for the first graduating batch of its university-level training program for aspiring female engineers, "Kuwait's Engineer Girls". In partnership with Turkey's Bogazici University, the 200-hour internship and training program celebrated 30 Kuwaiti female students who are enrolled in Kuwait University's undergraduate and graduate engineering programs.

The graduating students were awarded a Business Technology Education Council (BTEC) Management and Leadership certification recognized in over 100 countries, a Certificate from Bogazici Lifelong Learning Center (BULLC), and a Certificate of Field Training from Kuwait University.

Launched on May 8, 2017, the 'Kuwait's Engineer Girls' program is a joint project implemented through a partnership between Kuwait University, Turkey's Bogazici University and Limak Insaat Kuwait. The project-based

learning program consist of 200 training hours divided into seven modules with an aim to empower students' leadership and management skills and help them envision their future careers in engineering.

More than 90 people attended the ceremony including Limak Foundation Chairwoman Ebru Ozdemir, Undersecretary of Kuwait's Ministry of Public Works Awatef Al-Ghunaim, BULLC Director Dr Tamer Atabarut, Kuwait University College of Engineering and Petroleum Director of Engineering Training and Alumni Center Dr Bader Albusairi, and the Ambassador of the State of Kuwait to Turkey Ghassan Yousef Abdulbari Al-Zawawi, who all spoke at the ceremony to commemorate the graduates'



## In partnership with Bogazici University



achievements and the program's success. "Investing in Kuwait's future with more than one project at a time, we are proud to be here today to celebrate the graduation of the first batch of the

"Kuwait's Engineer Girls" program who are now equipped to take part in the development of the country and contribute to Kuwait's future vision and ambitious mega projects," said Limak Foundation Chairwoman Ebru Ozdemir.

"The most important and valuable component in construction projects are engineers and

through our program we are helping to prepare them for their future. I congratulate the girls for their success and wish them the best of luck in their future careers whether

they choose to join Limak on our projects in Kuwait, or another opportunity to better their country."

Limak Insaat, which is currently constructing Kuwait's new airport terminal and other landmark projects in Kuwait and the world, is a strong and long-term advocate of the advancement of women in the engineering and construction sector in the Middle East. Limak's support for female engineers in Kuwait is part of the company's greater regional efforts to add permanent value to Kuwait's society by supporting education and learning opportunities in the fields of construction, engineering, architecture, and project management. The Kuwait program is modelled after a successful program launched by Limak Insaat in Turkey in 2015, "Turkey's Engineer Girls."

The Limak Group of Companies is a worldwide leader in building and managing state-of-the-art infrastructure projects. The Group operates in over 17 countries with more than 65,000 employees and across various sectors, including tourism, cement, energy, infrastructure, airport management and operations, port management, food and aviation.

## CONDOLENCES

**Kuwait Times Editor-in-Chief,  
management and staff**

convey their deepest condolences  
to their colleague

**Ahamad Saleh  
Aldaqrani**

on the sad demise of  
his Sister

May Allah Almighty bestow His mercy on her

## Ooredoo sponsors education college students' visit to Doha

**KUWAIT:** Ooredoo Kuwait sponsored a trip for 60 students at the Ministry of Education - Kuwait University, to Doha, Qatar. The five-day trip was in collaboration and coordination of Al-Mostaqilla Student Bloc. The trip included visits to the Qatar Foundation, Qatar University, Qatar's Education City, Qatar Museum, Qatar National Convention Centre, and Al-Wabra Wildlife Conservatory.

In a statement about the visit, Ooredoo Kuwait's Corporate Communication Senior Director Mijbil Alayoub



Mijbil Alayoub

noted that the sponsorship of this visit comes in alignment with the company's core values and its corporate social responsibility strategy, which places a lot of importance on youth as they are the leaders of the future. He added: "Qatar boasts a number of academic, educational and cultural venues and entities, and we are certain that

the visit was of great value to the students."

Ooredoo Kuwait's corporate social responsibility strategy supports the collaboration between different entities in both the private and public sectors to enrich the experience of youth and help them reach their potential.

## Diabetes Awareness Day held at Marina Crescent

**KUWAIT:** Following the recent press conference announcement by Kuwait Projects Company (Holding) (KIPCO) in collaboration with United Real Estate Company (URC) who partnered with the Diabetes Unit in Amiri Hospital, the 7th Annual Diabetes Awareness Day

was successfully held on Saturday, March 17th and witnessed heavy footfall.

Many visitors carried out free health checks on blood pressure, eyes and foot examinations, received advice from attending healthcare professionals, as well as tips on types of activities to follow through the effective utilization of diet centers, sport equipment's and available gymnasiums.

The largest known diabetes campaign that was organized with the support of Public Authority for Food and Nutrition (PAFN) and the Public Authority for Youth and Sports (PAYS) aimed to address one of Kuwait's fastest growing epidemics and highlight preventive measures.



## Kuwaiti wins Gulf Nahmah Prize in Qatar

**DOHA:** Faisal Malallah of Kuwait won Saturday Qatar's Cultural Village Foundation's (Katara) art of Gulf Nahmah Prize, and was followed by Ali Al-Haddad from Qatar while third place went to Hamad bin Hussain, also

from Kuwait. Malallah won the 100,000 Qatari Riyal while second place winner got QR 70,000. Bin Hussain won QR 50,000. The organizing committee gave the fourth place winner, Oman's Nassr Al-Sulaimi, a QR 15,000 award as an encouragement of his efforts.

Dr Bader Al-Duweesh, Assistant Secretary General of Kuwait's National Council for Culture, Art and Letter (NCCAL), said that he was proud of Kuwaiti singers in Katara's 2nd edition of the Nahmah Prize. He commended the performance of Malallah and bin

Hussain, saying their capabilities to perform qualified them to win the top spots.

These events, said Duweesh, revived the tradition of the forefathers during their sea trips. The competition categories include traditional singing types: Dawari, Al-Yamal, Al-Khatfa, Adsani, Haddadi and Mkholfi. The Nahmah singing used to be performed during trips of fishing or pearl diving. The Nahmah singer entertains the sailors during the harsh journeys. The singer, through the Nahmah, prayed to Allah to ease their pain and difficulties they face at sea. —KUNA

Local

# No foodstuff price increases before Ramadan: Union Chief

Food security is a crucial part of the national development agenda

By Nawara Fattahova

**KUWAIT:** Foodstuff prices will not rise before Ramadan, an official assured yesterday. "People say prices will increase before or during Ramadan, but this is not correct," said Ali Hashim Al-Kandari, Chairman of the Union of Consumer Co-operative Societies (UCCS). UCCS has not increased prices of any products since 2016. We will not allow any artificial hikes in the prices of any product before Ramadan, and for this purpose, we have formed a committee to monitor prices in all co-ops. The committee will not approve any price hike suggested by any company."

Kandari made his statements yesterday after inaugurating the Kuwait International Agro Food Expo: an event that Kuwait hosts for the first time. "We will be meeting soon with one of the biggest agents in the local market to set a plan for subsidizing some of their products and lower their profit by 10-15 percent, which is considered as their cooperation with the union. This will relieve consumers' expenditure," he added. But prices of some

products differ from one co-op to another. "If the products are under the control of the union, they should be of the same price in all co-ops, but this doesn't apply to other items. Also, some co-ops run festivals or promotions with discounts on various items," he explained.

Over 35 companies from 10 countries are participating in the two-day fair which takes place at Hall 4A of the International Fair Ground in Mishref. The expo is an important event as food security is a crucial part of the national development agenda of the government, Kandari stated. "Such exhibitions are useful for the local market. The participants in the expo are displaying new products, and new agents are participating as well. This provides a wider variety of food products to the local market, and also increases competition," he noted.

"After my tour of the expo, I noticed many high-quality products. Also, the timing of the expo is perfect as it is close to the start of the holy month of Ramadan, when people focus more on purchasing food," concluded Kandari.

“ Prices could vary from one co-op to another ”



**KUWAIT:** Ali Hashim Al-Kandari, Chairman of the Union of Consumer Co-operative Societies (center) inaugurates the Kuwait International Agro Food Expo yesterday. —KUNA



**Ali Hashim Al-Kandari, Chairman of the Union of Consumer Co-operative Societies (left) tours the Kuwait International Agro Food Expo.**



**A Chinese pavilion participating in the Kuwait International Agro Food Expo.**

## Sadu House organizes Open Day



**KUWAIT:** Children and their families spent an Open Day Saturday at the Sadu House, enjoying fun activities aimed at highlighting some of cultural aspects of Kuwait. Children were exposed to handicrafts, traditions and how forefathers used to live, in cozy work-

shops organized by the Sadu House. They also learned how to weave, cook and tell stories. Some volunteers participated in playing traditional games with the kids. Bin Hussein band performed live music that added a lively atmosphere to the open day. —KUNA



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US president to host Saudi Crown Prince

## Russia accused of secretly stockpiling deadly nerve agent

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BERLIN: A woman holds a poster reading 'Put In - Put Out' as she demonstrates outside the Russian embassy in Berlin, where people queued to cast their votes for Russia's presidential elections yesterday. Russians were voting in an election set to hand President Vladimir Putin a fourth Kremlin term but slammed by the opposition as a sham as tensions with Britain escalated over the poisoning of a former Russian double agent. —AFP

# Putin on track for a commanding victory

## Opinion polls give Putin around 70% support

**UST-DJEGUTA:** Russians vote in a presidential election yesterday expected to give Vladimir Putin an easy victory, though the Kremlin could miss out on the resounding mandate it wants if large numbers, bored by a one-sided contest, do not bother to vote. Opinion polls give Putin, the incumbent, support of around 70 percent, or nearly 10 times the backing of his nearest challenger.

Another term will take him to nearly a quarter century in power - a longevity among Kremlin leaders second only to Soviet dictator Josef Stalin. Many voters credit Putin, a 65-year-old former KGB spy, with standing up for Russia's interests in what they view as a hostile outside world. A row with Britain over allegations the Kremlin used a nerve toxin to poison a Russian double agent in a sleepy English town - denied by Moscow - has not dented his standing.

"I voted for our liberator, Putin," said Alexander Kiryukhin, a 79-year-old in the city of Simferopol, Crimea. Russia's annexation of the region from Ukraine in 2014 earned Putin condemnation from Western governments and admiration from many Russians. "He sorted our lives out, he's irreplaceable for the state," said Kiryukhin. Putin's opponents alleged officials were trying to inflate the turnout, by opening up stalls selling discounted goods at polling stations, and instructing state employees to report back to their bosses that they had voted. Reuters reporters witnessed multiple people in different locations voting

in groups, and then taking photos of themselves in front of the ballot boxes on their mobile phones.

In polling station 1515 in Zelenodolsk, 800 km east of Moscow, five people photographed themselves voting. Asked by a Reuters reporter why, one of the group, a young woman, said: "What do you mean why? It's a photographic report for our bosses." At polling station number 216 in Ust-Djeguta, in the Karachayev-Cherkessia region of southern Russia, Marina Kostina was marshalling groups of voters to be photographed. Asked why one woman was photographed, Kostina said: "Her work asked her to report in."

### Putin's dominance

The first politician in years to challenge the Kremlin's grip on power, Alexei Navalny, is barred from the race because of a corruption conviction he says was fabricated by the Kremlin.

He is calling for a boycott of the election, saying it is an undemocratic farce. A day of voting across Russia's 11 time zones began at 2000 GMT on Saturday on Russia's eastern edge, in the Pacific coast city of Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky. Voting will run until polls close at the westernmost point of Russia, the Kaliningrad region on the Baltic Sea, at 1800 GMT. The majority of voters see no viable alternative to Putin: he has total dominance of the political scene and state-run television, where most people get their news, gives lavish coverage of Putin and little airtime to his rivals.

Many Russians believe he has restored stability after the chaos that ensued after the Soviet Union collapsed. A March 9 survey by state-run pollster VTsIOM gave Putin, who was first elected president in 2000, support of 69 percent. His nearest rival Pavel Grudinin, the Communist Party's candidate, was on just 7 percent. "There is no intrigue. I do not see any point for me in

going to the election," said Alexei Khvorostov, a resident of Krasnodar, in southern Russia. Ella Pamfilova, head of the commission organizing the vote nationwide, has said any fraud will be stamped out.

She said those alleging the election was rigged were biased and peddling "Russophobia", echoing a line used by the Kremlin to describe Western criticism of Russia. A low turnout would diminish Putin's authority in his next term, which, under the constitution, has to be his last. Yevgeny Roizman, a Kremlin opponent who is mayor of the industrial city of Yekaterinburg, said officials were using inducements to persuade people to vote. "They're herding the whole country to the polling stations," Roizman, a rare example of an elected official opposed to the Kremlin, said in a video blog. "It's degrading... We're not sheep."

Irina Kormienko, 68, was running a stall selling clothes at a school in Kemerovo, Siberia, that was hosting two polling stations. Her T-shirts were on sale for 200 roubles (\$3.48), and underwear for 50 roubles. She said she was given special incentives by the local government to set up her stall yesterday. "The administration told me I could sell my stuff at a lower price if I came here today. These prices aren't usually allowed. It's the same for the people selling food, the prices are much lower. But that's good for people here, life is hard," she said.—Reuters



## Kremlin's critics allege turnout is artificially inflated

## Five Indians killed in cross-border shelling by Pakistani troops

**SRINAGAR:** Five members of an Indian family were killed and two injured by shelling from Pakistani troops yesterday along the Line of Control, the de facto border between India and Pakistan, according to army and police officials. Both sides were engaging in heavy shelling despite a 15-year-old ceasefire between the nuclear-armed rivals in the area, the officials said. Nine people were also wounded across the border in Pakistan-controlled Kashmir due to the shelling from India that began late Saturday night, Pakistani officials said yesterday.

Tension has been running high since an attack on an Indian army camp in India-controlled Kashmir last month in which six soldiers were killed. India blamed Pakistan for the attack and said it would make its rival pay for the "misadventure". The South Asian neighbors have fought two of their three wars since independence in 1947 over Muslim-majority Kashmir, which they both claim in full but rule in part. Indian Defense spokesman Lt Col Devender Anand said yesterday that Pakistani troops started the shelling around 7:45 in the morning.

"They are specifically targeting civilian areas," Anand said. "Army troops retaliated strongly and effectively to



BALHAMA, India: Indian Kashmiri villagers look on next to the debris of a house after a gunbattle between suspected militants and government forces in the Balhama area of Khanmoh district near Srinagar. —AFP

silence Pakistani guns." Director General of Indian Police in Kashmir, S P Vaid said the five people were killed in the village of Devta Dhar when a shell hit the house of Choudhary Mohammad Ramzan. Ramzan, 45, his wife Malka Bi, 45, and three sons - Muhammad Rehman, 19, Muhammad Rizwan, 18, and Muhammad Razaq, 8 all died, Vaid said. Two of Ramzan's daughters - Nooren Akhtar, 14, and Marin Akhtar, 7, were critically injured in the incident and were airlifted to a hospital in Jammu, Vaid said.—Reuters

## What next for rebels, civilians in Ghouta?

**BEIRUT:** As Russia-backed Syrian regime forces chip away at what remains of the last opposition bastion outside Damascus, experts say the future looks bleak for rebels there. What is likely to happen to these opposition fighters, most of whom hail from the area, as well as tens of thousands of civilians still inside the besieged enclave?

### How do things stand?

Government forces have retaken 80 percent of the former rebel bastion since launching a blistering air and ground assault to retake it on February 18, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights says. They have split the remaining areas under rebel control into three separate pockets, each held by different opposition factions, the Britain-based monitor says. The rebel Jaish al-Islam group is isolated in a northern pocket around the main town of Douma, while hardliners from Ahrar al-Sham control a small area around the town of Harasta to the west. In the south, Faylaq al-Rahman holds the town of Arbin and surrounding territory. When fighting stops, negotiations are likely to determine the fate of opposition fighters and civilians there, analysts say.

"Fighting will stop at some point and they will negotiate," geography expert Fabrice Balanche said, adding that such talks could be prolonged. As it seeks to win back control of the country, the Assad regime has often sought evacuation deals in rebel-held areas after brutal bombardment campaigns or suffocating sieges. This was the case in the central city Homs in 2014 and in the northern city of Aleppo as regime forces retook full control of it in late 2016. These so-called "reconciliation" deals saw rebels evacuated to other parts of the country under opposition control, including the northwestern province of Idlib.

### Will Ghouta see evacuation?

Eastern Ghouta's rebels have said they reject any evacuation, but on Friday announced they were prepared to hold direct United Nations-backed ceasefire talks with regime backer Russia. Thomas Pierret, another Syria analyst, said the rebels stood little chance against the onslaught, which the Observatory says has claimed more than 1,400 civilian lives in a month.

However "excellent in urban warfare" Eastern Ghouta's rebels are, they "can't do much faced with the regime's fire power", he said. When fighting stops, talks will decide what becomes of the rebels—most of whom, Pierret said, originate from the region. Aron Lund, a fellow with the Century Foundation, said that makes evacuations particularly devastating.—AFP

International

# Trump to host Crown Prince who has rocked the kingdom

## US, Saudi leaders to deepen an already congenial relationship

WASHINGTON: Donald Trump will host Saudi Arabia's crown prince in Washington tomorrow, giving the president a receptive audience to denounce rival Iran and a chance to take stock of significant changes the prince is engineering in the kingdom. Ten months after the last face-to-face meeting between Trump and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, in Riyadh, the 71-year-old president and the 32-year-old strongman prince are expected to deepen an already warm and congenial relationship.

But they are also expected to take up major developments for Saudi Arabia, both internally and externally: the end of a ban on Saudi women driving, the unprecedented detention of dozens of people that was billed as a high-level anti-corruption purge, Saudi involvement in the war in Yemen, and the crisis with the Gulf state of Qatar. "It's jaw-dropping how many policy changes the Saudis have pursued at home and in the region since that last meeting," said Lori Plotkin Boghardt, a former CIA analyst now with the Washington Institute for Near East Policy.

"Many of these changes have touched US security interests." One example is the summit that the administration had hoped to host this year with the six countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), which could be difficult to arrange given the continuing crisis with Qatar. In June, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) began an air and sea boycott against

Qatar, which they accuse of financing terrorism and being overly friendly with Iran.

Prince Mohammed, known by his initials MBS, was named Crown Prince that month by his father, King Salman. Early on, the prince announced an ambitious "Vision 2030" initiative to build an economy less dependent on oil, while luring more foreign investment. Toward that end, Riyadh wants to greatly accelerate the pace of its civilian nuclear energy program. The goal: to build 16 reactors over the next 20 years, at a cost of some 80 billion euros (\$98 billion), according to officials and analysts.

As the Saudis pursue the technology needed to undertake the ambitious project, they are expected to play potential rivals against one another, reminding their American counterparts that China, Russia and France are also capable of filling their needs. "It would be virtually impossible for the Saudi government to accept terms that are less than what Obama gave the Iranians—the possibility of future enrichment," a source close to the Saudi government told AFP, referring to the nuclear deal between Tehran and world powers that was completed when Barack Obama was still president.

### Bloody war in Yemen

The United States and Saudi Arabia are historic allies. Ever since Franklin Delano Roosevelt met with King Abdul Aziz ibn Saud on a US naval ship in the Suez Canal

in 1945, every American president has carefully nurtured relations with the Saudi royal family. But the unstinting support Trump offered when he chose Riyadh as the destination of his first overseas trip as president brought the relationship to a new level. While Barack Obama said in 2015 that it was important "not to perpetuate any long-term confrontation with Iran, or to even marginalize Iran," Trump, who has repeatedly threatened to withdraw from the nuclear deal reached that year with Tehran, has chosen a very different path.

"Everywhere we go in the Middle East it's Iran, Iran, Iran," he said a few days ago. "Every problem is Iran." Even before setting foot on American soil, Prince Mohammed struck a scathing tone toward Iran in an interview with CBS, comparing the territorial ambitions of that country's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei to those of Adolf Hitler in Nazi Germany. And he warned that if Iran were to develop a nuclear bomb, Saudi Arabia would do the same "as soon as possible." But critics are cautioning the White House not to blindly embrace every stance taken by the Saudi prince, particularly as concerns its role in the bloody civil war in Yemen.

Fighting between the Houthi movement, supported by Iran, and Yemeni government forces, backed by the Saudis and the UAE, has claimed nearly 10,000 lives and left the country on the verge of a disastrous famine. In an opinion column early this



LONDON: In this file photo, Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman arrives for talks at 10 Downing Street, in central London. — AFP

month in the New York Times, Thomas Friedman, writing in the form of an open letter to Trump, urged the president not to give in to Prince Mohammed's "bad impulses" as he seeks to modernize Saudi

Arabia's "economy and religious/social structure." He then adds: "If you think you can just applaud his anti-Iran stance and religious reforms and all will work out fine, you're wrong." — AFP

## US-Saudi Arabia partnership: A long affair

WASHINGTON: The longstanding relationship between the United States and Saudi Arabia, its main Middle East ally, is founded largely on the exchange of American security for Saudi oil. As Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman heads to Washington for talks with President Donald Trump, here is a look over the partnership.

### Partners since 1945

The discovery of vast oil reserves beneath Saudi sands in the late 1930s secured the kingdom's place as a vital partner for the energy-hungry United States. The two countries initiated diplomatic relations in 1940 during World War II. The partnership was sealed in 1945 at a historic meeting between then-king Abdul Aziz ibn Saud and US president Franklin D Roosevelt on board the USS Quincy as it cruised the Suez Canal. The agreement promised the kingdom military protection in exchange for access to oil.

### Cooperation

When Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait in 1990, then-US president George H.W. Bush launched Operation Desert Storm that soon liberated the country. The United States used airbases in Saudi Arabia as vital staging posts, sending thousands of American troops into the kingdom. It was "a moment of unparalleled cooperation between two great nations," Bush said. In the years that followed, US-led coalition planes took off from Saudi bases to enforce no-fly zones in Iraq.

### September 11

The 9/11 attacks that killed almost 3,000 people in the United States tested the US-Saudi relationship, with 15 of

the 19 Al-Qaeda attackers from Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia condemned the attacks but was accused of secretly financing extremist militants. It refused to take part in retaliatory strikes on Al-Qaeda bases in Afghanistan in late 2001. Riyadh was also not part of the 2003 US-led invasion of Iraq that led to Saddam Hussein's downfall. Washington pulled most of its remaining troops from the kingdom from 2003 and transferred its regional military headquarters to Qatar, while continuing military cooperation with Riyadh.

### Obama: A crisis of confidence

Simmering tensions between the administration of US president Barack Obama and Saudi Arabia came to a head when Riyadh refused in October 2013 a seat on the UN Security Council. It was an unprecedented act aimed at protesting inaction over the Syrian conflict, then in its third year. Riyadh, which backs rebels fighting against the regime of Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad, was angry that Obama pulled out of strikes against the Syrian regime a month earlier. The 2015 agreement over Iran's nuclear program further rattled the Sunni kingdom's confidence as it feared Washington was tilting towards its regional Shiite rival.

### Total support under Trump

Riyadh has issued a series of laudatory comments about the Trump administration, which echoes its concerns about Iranian regional influence. Trump chose Saudi Arabia for his first foreign trip after taking office, arriving in May 2017 to much fanfare and ceremony. The partners announced major contracts worth more than \$380 billion—including \$110 billion for the sale of American arms to Saudi Arabia, aimed at countering what they see as a threat from Iran and radical Islamists. The allies also both accuse Iran of involvement in the Yemen conflict on the side of Houthi rebels. At the head of an Arab military coalition, Riyadh has since March 2015 deployed forces against the rebels, who captured the capital Sanaa in 2014. — AFP



WASHINGTON DC: This file photo taken on March 14, 2017 shows US President Donald Trump and Saudi Deputy Crown Prince and Defense Minister Mohammed bin Salman shaking hands in the State Dining Room before lunch at the White House. — AFP

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## International

# Trump attacks FBI as his lawyer calls for an end to Russia probe

## US president hails FBI official's firing

WASHINGTON: Donald Trump slammed the FBI as he hailed the firing of a veteran Bureau agent as a "great day for democracy," a move his attorney said he hoped would bring an end to a probe into alleged collusion between the president's campaign and Russia. Critics described the axing of Andrew McCabe—the deputy of former FBI director James Comey—as a "dangerous" ploy to discredit the top US law enforcement agency as well as the work of Robert Mueller, the special counsel investigating Russian influence in the 2016 election.

McCabe is a potential key witness in the Russia probe. Trump on Saturday via Twitter blasted the alleged "tremendous leaking, lying and corruption at the highest levels of the FBI, Justice & State." He also reiterated long-running criticism of the Mueller investigation, terming it a "witch hunt" and saying that it "should never have been started in that there was no collusion and there was no crime."

### McCabe job offer

Earlier, Trump's personal attorney, John Dowd, told the Daily Beast that he hoped Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein would follow the lead of the FBI Office of Professional Responsibility and "bring an end to alleged Russia Collusion investigation manufactured by McCabe's boss James Comey based upon a fraudulent and corrupt Dossier."

Dowd told the Daily Beast he was speaking for the president. But in a subsequent statement he said he had been "speaking for myself, not the president." McCabe, who has endured a year of withering attacks from

Trump, was fired by the Justice Department late Friday, just two days before he was to retire after 21 years with the FBI. Critics say the firing is a step in Trump's plan to engineer Mueller's dismissal, potentially sparking a constitutional crisis.

Mueller is also examining whether Trump might have obstructed justice, including by fir-

denied any impropriety and said he was the victim of a Trump administration "war" against the FBI and the special counsel. McCabe kept memos of his interactions with Trump, US media reported Saturday, adding that the documents could bolster his version of events. Comey pushed back as well.

"Mr President, the American people will hear my story very soon. And they can judge for themselves who is honorable and who is not," he tweeted. The Justice Department said an internal investigation had found that McCabe made unauthorized disclosures to the media, and had not been fully honest "on multiple occasions" with the department's inspector general.

"The FBI expects every employee to adhere to the highest standards of honesty, integrity and accountability," Attorney General Jeff Sessions said in a statement. Lack of candor under oath is a firing offense at the FBI, but the politically-charged context of the move raised questions among McCabe's backers. Former CIA chief John Brennan lost his patience with Trump. "When the full extent of your venality, moral turpitude and political corruption becomes known, you will take your rightful place as a disgraced demagogue in the dustbin of history," he tweeted.

### 'Not political appointees'

Trump, in an early afternoon tweet, belit-



## Critics denounce axing of McCabe as 'dangerous'

ing Comey last May. One Democratic lawmaker, Mark Pocan of Wisconsin, announced Saturday that he offered McCabe a job in his office so he can complete the time necessary to retire with full federal benefits. "My offer of employment to Mr McCabe is a legitimate offer to work on election security," Pocan said in a statement. McCabe spokeswoman Melissa Schwartz was non-committal. "We are considering all options," she told the Washington Post.

### 'War' on the FBI

"Andrew McCabe FIRED, a great day for the hard working men and women of the FBI - A great day for Democracy," Trump tweeted soon after the firing. McCabe



WASHINGTON: This combination of pictures shows US President Donald Trump (left) at the White House in Washington and a file photo of US Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein on Capitol Hill.—AFP

ted the media for its coverage of the story, saying: "The Fake News is beside themselves that McCabe was caught, called out and fired..." In a second tweet he again denied any collusion with Russia. Details of the inspector general's probe were not made public, but it involved the FBI's handling of the 2016 investigation into Trump's election rival, Democrat Hillary Clinton. Trump has repeatedly accused McCabe and Comey of protecting Clinton from prosecution, including over her misuse of a private email server while she was secretary of state. The inspector general's probe was "part of an unprecedented effort by the administration, driven by the president himself, to remove me from my position,

destroy my reputation, and possibly strip me of a pension that I worked 21 years to earn," McCabe said in a statement.

"It is part of this administration's ongoing war with the FBI and the efforts of the special counsel investigation." But one law professor defended the Justice Department's investigators. "These are not political appointees," Jonathan Turley of George Washington University told CNN. "They clearly concluded that McCabe misled them—and that he misled them on one of the core issues they were investigating." The White House has shown mounting frustration with the collusion probe, as it focuses ever more closely on the president's inner circle.—AFP

## News in brief

### 7 sentenced to death

DHAKA: A court in Bangladesh sentenced seven militants to death yesterday after finding them guilty of killing a shrine worker in 2015, court officials said. Bangladesh, a Muslim-majority country of 160 million people, is facing what appears to be a growing threat of militant violence and has seen a string of incidents in recent years. Shrine caretaker, Rahamat Ali, 60, was hacked to death in November 2015 in the northern district of Rangpur. Six others accused of the attack were acquitted by the court. The convicted men were members of the Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh group, public prosecutor Rathish Chandra Bhowmik told reporters.—Reuters

### Nations urged to quit ICC

MANILA: Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte yesterday urged other nations to follow his move to quit the International Criminal Court, which is examining his deadly drug war. Duterte lashed out at the war crimes tribunal days after his government notified the United Nations of his decision to withdraw the Philippines from the Rome Statute which set up the court. "I said withdraw simply because to announce to the world, and I will convince everybody now who (is) under the treaty: get out, get out. It is rude," Duterte said in a speech to Philippine Military Academy graduates. "It is not a document that was prepared by anybody.—AFP

### Philippine hotel fire

MANILA: Three people were killed and 23 injured by a major hotel fire in the Philippine capital Manila yesterday, with others plucked by helicopter from the rooftop of the building engulfed in thick black smoke, authorities said. The blaze at the Waterfront Manila Pavilion, a high-rise hotel and casino complex, was still raging nine hours after it began yesterday morning, with two people missing as hundreds fled the area. Authorities initially said four people had died but later clarified that one victim had been revived in hospital, according to Metro Manila Development Authority acting chief Jojo Garcia. The three who died had likely suffocated while another 23 people had been taken to hospital, said Manila city's disaster risk reduction chief, Johnny Yu.—AFP

### Fires rage in Australia

MELBOURNE: Homes were razed, cattle killed and large swathes of land burnt yesterday as bush and grass fires rage in Australia amid hot and blustery conditions, with residents fleeing flame-filled red skies. Dozens of blazes in western and southwestern Victoria state began on Saturday and a change in wind direction early Sunday worsened the situation. Some 40,000 hectares have been damaged, and "hundreds of beef and dairy cattle will be lost as a result of these fires", Victoria's Emergency Management Commissioner Craig Lapsley told reporters Sunday. Up to 12 homes were "impacted", he added, with broadcaster ABC reporting they were "destroyed". "We've got fires, major fires, running.—AFP

### Sri Lanka ends emergency

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka's president announced yesterday he is lifting a nationwide state of emergency imposed 12 days ago to quell anti-Muslim riots in which three people died and hundreds of shops were destroyed. Maithripala Sirisena said improvements in the security situation prompted him to end the emergency, under which security forces and the police had sweeping powers to detain suspects. "Upon assessing the public safety situation, I instructed to revoke the state of emergency from midnight yesterday," Sirisena said on Twitter as he returned to the island after a tour of Japan. Much of the anti-Muslim violence was concentrated in the central district of Kandy, 115 kilometers northeast of the capital Colombo.—AFP

## UK accuses Russia of secretly stockpiling deadly nerve agent

LONDON: British Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said yesterday that Russia has been stockpiling the deadly nerve agent used to poison a Russian former double agent in England and has been investigating how such weapons can be used in assassinations. Britain has said Russia used the Soviet-era nerve agent called Novichok to attack Sergei Skripal and his daughter Yulia in the first known offensive use of such a weapon on European soil since World War Two. Russia has denied any involvement.

"We actually have evidence within the last 10 years that Russia has not only been investigating the delivery of nerve agents for the purposes of assassination, but has also been creating and stockpiling Novichok," Johnson told the BBC. Britain and Russia have each expelled 23 diplomats over the attack as relations between the two countries crash to a post-Cold War low. Skripal, a former colonel in Russian military intelligence who betrayed dozens of Russian agents to Britain, and his daughter are fighting for their lives after they were found collapsed on a bench in the city of Salisbury two weeks ago.

Officials from the world's chemical weapons watchdog will arrive in Britain today to investigate the samples used in the attack and the results should be known in about two weeks, Britain's foreign ministry said. The foreign ministry said that if Russia has been stockpiling nerve agents this would amount to a violation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, of which Moscow is a signatory.

Russia's ambassador to the European Union Vladimir



SALISBURY: Personnel collate sample after swabbing railings near a bench covered in a protective tent at The Maltings shopping centre in Salisbury, southern England.—FP

Chizhov told the same program that his country has destroyed its reserves of such substances and a British research laboratory could be the source of the nerve agent used in the attack. Johnson dismissed those claims and said Russia's reaction "was not the response of a country that really believes itself to be innocent".

"Their response has been a mix of smug sarcasm and denial and obfuscation," he said. Johnson said Britain's National Security Council will meet later this week to decide "what further measures, if any" may be taken,

and that the government may decide to target Russian wealth in Britain.

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. Some British lawmakers have urged Prime Minister Theresa May to freeze the private assets of senior members in Russian President Vladimir Putin's circle. Putin is expected to easily win a presidential election yesterday which would take him to nearly a quarter of a century in power.—Reuters

## Angry islanders: Why France faces protests overseas

PARIS: A month-long campaign of strikes and protests on the French Indian Ocean island of Mayotte has shone a light on the simmering resentment in some of France's tropical outposts over perceived neglect by the state. Supplies of fuel, drugs and other essentials are running dangerously low on the island of 250,000 people off southeast Africa as protesters dig in for more funding—and empathy—from Paris.

The spice island in the Comoros archipelago, which has been governed by France since the mid-1800s, is the fourth overseas territory to be paralyzed by strikes over living conditions in the past decade. An attack by a gang on a school lit the fuse on frustration over mass migration and growing lawlessness in France's poorest department, which many link to the influx of arrivals by sea from neighboring non-French Comoran islands.

Visiting minister for overseas territories Annick Girardin failed to convince the demonstrators to abandon the barricades this week, despite a promise of police reinforcements to combat crime and a clamp-down on illegal migration. "They made the same promises to our parents and grandparents," Toto Amachebane, head of a striking transport company, said dismissively. France's collection of overseas territories stretch from the islands of Wallis and Futuna in the South Pacific to Saint Pierre and Miquelon in the northwest Atlantic to Reunion island off Madagascar.

Attachment to the former colonial mothership is generally strong, particularly

in the five overseas departments of Martinique, Guadeloupe, French Guiana, Mayotte and Reunion island. But many in the scattered parts of overseas France complain of being made to feel like an afterthought. The development gap with the mainland is particularly striking in Mayotte, which broke ranks with the three other Comoros islands in voting against independence in the 1970s but was only fully integrated into France in 2011.

Unemployment of 25.9 percent is over double that in France as a whole and public services are woefully deficient: Mayotte had 18 doctors per 100,000 inhabitants in 2012, compared to an average of 201 in the rest of France. "There is a lot of impatience in Mayotte. Some people expected things would be settled in six months, but it's going to take a generation or two," Olivier Sudrie, an economist at BDE consultancy on governance told AFP. While poor in French terms, Mayotte is a beacon of prosperity for residents of the severely impoverished, coup-prone Comoros. In scenes reminiscent of the Mediterranean, thousands of Comorans pile into rickety boats to make the 70-kilometre (44-mile) crossing to Mayotte each year, including large numbers of pregnant women.

### Migrant baby boom

"Mayotte has become an open-air Sangatte," Said Hachim, one of the protest leaders, told Le Monde newspaper this week, referring to an infamous migrant camp in northern France that was closed in 2002. Some 9,600 babies were delivered in Mayotte's hospital last year—a record for a French hospital—of which 70 percent were born to migrant parents hoping to secure French citizenship for their child. Schools are also bursting at the seams, creating resentment among locals who fear being further pauperised by the situation.

The government this week suggested giv-



MAJICAVO, France: Gendarmes control the road traffic and check IDs in Majicavo in the French overseas territory of Mayotte. Some 70 people believed to be illegal migrants have been detained.—AFP

ing Mayotte's hospital special "extra-territorial" status so that children born there would not automatically qualify for French passports. Half-way around the world, a wave of illegal immigrants has also piled pressure on public services in French Guiana, a vast, forested territory with an acute lack of schools and paved roads. Protesters shut down Kourou spaceport, a major launchpad for European satellites, for several weeks last year to demand a "takeoff plan" for the area.

### 'Not Father Christmas'

During a visit in October President Emmanuel Macron promised to limit benefits for newcomers "to reduce the attractiveness" of the territory. But he also declared he was "not Father Christmas" accusing previous governments of making

"too many unkept promises." In 2009, the then right-wing government agreed to a system of salary top-ups to offset high living costs in Guadeloupe and Martinique which were ground to a standstill by month-long general strikes.

The people of Mayotte insist they are not looking for handouts. "The Mahorais (Mayotte residents) fought to be French and to be free," Hachim, the protest leader told Le Monde. "We are not beggars," he said. For Claude-Valentin Marie, a sociologist at the French Institute for Demographic Studies, they just want what those on the mainland take for granted. "They want to be like other French departments in terms of education, economic activity, health and security," he said. "They no longer want to be the exception.—AFP



International

# Southeast Asia, Australia 'gravely' concerned by North Korean nukes

## ASEAN tackles Rohingya crisis, urge South China Sea calm

SYDNEY: Southeast Asian countries and Australia said yesterday they held "grave concerns" about escalating tension caused by North Korea's nuclear and missile programs and urged "irreversible" denuclearization. North Korea is pursuing its weapons programs in defiance of UN Security Council sanctions and has boasted of its plans to develop a missile capable of hitting the US mainland. It defends the programs as a necessary deterrent against perceived plans by the United States, which stations 28,500 troops in South Korea, for invasion - a plan the United States denies.

"We strongly urge the DPRK to immediately and fully comply with its obligations under all relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions," the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and Australia said in a joint declaration, using the initials for North Korea's official name. The country's nuclear and ballistic missile development "threaten regional and global security" the declaration added, calling for the "complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization" of the nation. Tensions have eased in recent weeks, coinciding with North Korea's participation in the Winter Olympics held in the South last month.

US President Donald Trump also announced surprise plans to meet North Korean leader Kim Jong Un before May, after Kim "committed to denuclearization", according to South Korea's National Security Office. "We are cautiously encouraged by these developments," Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong told reporters in Sydney after the publication of the ASEAN declaration. "The situation on the Korean peninsula is a complicated problem which will take time to resolve, and we hope these recent steps will contribute to lasting peace and stability."

### Rohingya crisis

Meanwhile, Australia and its ASEAN neighbors vowed to boost defense ties while stressing the importance of non-militarization in the disputed South China Sea yesterday at a summit where the "complex" Rohingya crisis took centre stage. Leaders from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, at the three-day meeting in Sydney, also agreed to work more closely to tackle the growing menace of violent extremism and radicalization. But while a final communique

noted a resolve to "protect the human rights of our peoples", it failed to condemn member state Myanmar's treatment of the Muslim-minority Rohingya. Nearly 700,000 Rohingya have fled the troubled Rakhine state for Bangladesh since authorities launched a brutal crackdown six months ago that the UN has called "ethnic cleansing".

Myanmar, whose de-facto leader Aung San Suu Kyi was in Sydney, has vehemently denied the allegations. "We discussed the situation in Rakhine state at considerable length today," Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull said at a closing press conference. "Aung San Suu Kyi addressed the matter comprehensively, at some considerable length herself," he said. "It's a very complex problem ... Everyone seeks to end the suffering that has been occasioned by the events, the conflict." Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, said the crisis was "a concern for all ASEAN countries, and yet ASEAN is not able to intervene to force an outcome".

### North Korea threatens global security: ASEAN



### Security threat

Tensions in the South China Sea remain a big worry for regional leaders, as Beijing continues to build artificial islands capable of hosting military installations-much to the chagrin of other claimants to the area. Vietnam remains the most vocal in the dispute with the Philippines backing off under China-friendly President Rodrigo Duterte. Taiwan, Malaysia and Brunei also have claims.

Canberra and ASEAN reaffirmed "the importance of maintaining and promoting peace, stability, maritime safety and security, freedom of navigation and oversight in the region", without naming Beijing. The leaders added they wanted to see an "early conclusion of an effective code of conduct in the South China Sea". "We will uphold our commitment to the rules-based order and international law in the region, including the South China Sea," stressed Turnbull. With China flexing its muscle, they also committed to enhancing "the scope and sophistication of defense cooperation", while expressing "grave concern" about escalating tensions on the Korean peninsula. Day two of the summit on Saturday was devoted to counter-terrorism, with an agreement to work together to tackle extremism



SYDNEY: Posters referring to Myanmar's State Counselor Aung San Suu Kyi are displayed at a protest during the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations)-Australia Special Summit in Sydney yesterday. —AFP

amid growing concern about the use of the "dark web", or encrypted messaging apps, by terrorists to plan attacks. Fears have been heightened by jihadists now being forced out of Syria and Iraq with the Islamic State caliphate most-

ly crushed, and into other countries. Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak cited the flow of the displaced Rohingya as a potential new security threat, with desperate people more susceptible to radicalization. —Agencies

## Japan cult spinoffs persist two decades after sarin attack

TOKYO: More than two decades after Japan's Aum Shinrikyo cult plunged Tokyo into terror by releasing a nerve agent on rush-hour subway trains, its spinoffs continue to attract new followers. Cult head Shoko Asahara is on death row, along with 12 of his disciples, for crimes including the subway attack, which killed 13 people and injured thousands.

He was arrested in 1995 in the wake of the sarin attack, but the Aum cult survived the crackdown, renaming itself Aleph and drawing new recruits into its fold. Aleph officially renounced ties to Asahara in 2000, but the doomsday guru retains significant influence, according to Japan's Public Security Intelligence Agency. "It (Aleph) is a group that firmly instructs its followers to see Asahara as the supreme being," an agency investigator told AFP, speaking on condition of anonymity.

"If someone says 'guru Asahara wants to bring down Japan', there would be followers who would act. The group poses such a potential danger," he said. Raids on Aleph facilities have found recordings of his teachings as well as a device used by the Aum cult known as a

"Perfect Salvation Initiation", a type of headgear that emits weak electric currents which members believe connects them to Asahara's brainwaves.

Aleph and other splinter groups, which deny links to Asahara despite the claims of authorities, have 1,650 members in Japan and hundreds more in Russia, according to the Public Security Intelligence Agency. It says the groups attract around 100 new followers annually via yoga classes, fortune-telling and other activities that do not mention the cult's name, often targeting young people who do not remember the 1995 subway attack. "Young female followers go to 'training' places with their children... We are worried there is an increasing number of children who have been inculcated by the Aum since they were very young," the investigator said.

### Horrendous ordeals

Asahara and his wife Tomoko had four daughters and two sons, and most of the family remains within the cult. One daughter who left in 2006, aged 16, has described horrifying ordeals during her childhood, including being forced to eat food with ceramic shards in it and being left in the cold in little clothing. "It was an environment unthinkable in modern-day Japan. I was afraid I would be killed if I rebelled, so I felt tense, as if I were on a battleground, for 16 years," she said in a statement last year. "I strongly hope no more children will grow up in the Aum's successor groups." In early March, on Asahara's 63rd birthday, investigators were keeping their usual close eye on the headquarters of an Aum splinter group in a quiet Tokyo residential area. —AFP

## Israeli army bombs Gaza 'underground' complex

JERUSALEM: Israel's military carried out an air raid overnight against an underground Hamas facility in the Gaza Strip and destroyed a separate tunnel under construction that could be used for attacks, it said yesterday. No casualties were reported in either operation, which came after an explosive device was detonated near the Gaza border with Israel, the latest in a string of such incidents. Israel's military said the operation to destroy the tunnel involved new technology it has been developing to detect them.

"Our policy is to act resolutely against any attempt to harm us and systematically eliminate the terror tunnel infrastructure, and we will continue doing so," Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said in a statement. Hamas, the Islamist movement that runs the Gaza Strip, called Israel's actions an attempt "to scare the people" and head off planned protests along the border beginning later this month. Israel "bears all the consequences of the escalation," Hamas spokesman Fawzy Barhoum said. Beginning on March 30, Gazans are planning to erect hundreds of tents near the Israeli border in a six-week show of support for Palestinian refugees.

Regarding the overnight operations, Israeli military spokesman Jonathan Conricus said Hamas had been digging the tunnel to link up with an older one in the south of the Palestinian enclave. The new tunnel had not reached Israeli territory but was within a few hundred meters of the border fence, near the Kerem Shalom goods crossing and in the area of the city of Rafah in the Gaza Strip, he said. The older tunnel did "partially" reach into Israeli territory, but had been discovered and cut off in 2014. —AFP

### Car Recall Announcement

This recall includes Mazda cars imported by Kuwait Automotive Imports Co. W.L.L. as per below details:

Model	Year	VIN Range
Mazda 6 GG	From 2003 - 2007	JM7 GG*****100019 to 555990
Mazda 6 GH	From 2007 - 2010	JM7 GH*****100012 to 140320
Mazda 6 Ultra 1YVHP	From 2008 - 2012	1YV HP*****M00156 to M52200
Mazda 6 Ultra 1YVHZ	From 2008 - 2012	1YV HZ*****M00001 to M58873
Mazda 2 DE	From 2009 - 2014	MM7 DE*****100010 to 291856
Mazda CX-9 TB	From 2007 - 2012	JM7 TB*****100042 to 317291
Mazda BT-50 UN	From 2006 - 2014	MM7 UN*****413816 to 941359
Mazda E2000	2006	JM3 SL*****120258 to 128536

This recall is from Kuwait Automotive Imports Co. W.L.L. & in coordination with the Ministry of Commerce & Industry- Consumer Protection Department & as per law decree No 39/2014 stating to conduct a continuous review of all imported products to provide the necessary protection for the customer.

**Recall Description:**  
The inflator casing of the driver / passenger airbag of the above mentioned Kuwait Automotive Imports Co. W.L.L. might rupture due to high internal pressure. This is due to exposure to high level of humidity over a long period of time.

**Action to be taken:**  
The driver / passenger airbag has to be checked & replaced if necessary. Mazda - Middle East & Kuwait Automotive Imports Co. W.L.L. & in agreement with the Ministry of Commerce & Industry - Consumer Protection Department decided to launch a campaign aiming to check vehicle safety.

**Contacts:**  
For Further details, please call: 662 79 604

Based on above, Kuwait Automotive Imports Co. W.L.L. asks its valued customers owners of above mentioned models to call above number to set up a convenient appointment to check/ fix their vehicles at Mazda service centre - Bank street - Shuwaikh commercial area

Tel: 248 10 600

### عملیات الخفجي المشتركة AL-KHAFJI JOINT OPERATIONS

الشركة الكويتية لنفط الخليج  
KUWAIT GULF OIL COMPANY (K.S.C.)

ارامكو للامعمال الخليج  
ARAMCO GULF OPERATIONS

### TENDER ADVERTISEMENT

Aramco Gulf Operations Company Limited ("AGOC") and Kuwait Gulf Oil Company (K.S.C) ("KGOC"), (Al-Khafji Joint Operations) invites intending bidders to participate for the Tender No. **HT483MD17-MDD (Management Development) In-House Courses.**

Each intending bidder may purchase the tender documents upon payment of **Saudi Riyals Five Hundred (SR 500) or Kuwaiti Dinars Forty (KD 40) only** which is non-refundable by visiting our Contracts Department at Al-Khafji, Saudi Arabia, or KGOC's Kuwait Office located in Al-Ahmadi, Tender & Contracts Section, Building L (Ex-PTC Office). The bidder may review part of tender documents, before purchasing.

**Attending the Pre-Tender Meeting is Optional**

A Pre-Tender meeting will be held at Management Development Department (MDD), at Al-Khafji Joint Operations, Saudi Arabia, at **10:00 AM local time 11-April-2018.**

The sale of Tender Documents will be effective from March 18, 2018 to April 11, 2018 until 12:00 noon.

The bidder shall note that he shall be required to provide an irrevocable bank guarantee from a bank in Saudi Arabia or Kuwait, in the sum of **United States Dollars Nine Thousand only (US\$ 9,000.00/-)** only, to warrant the bid proposal. Such bank guarantee shall be on behalf of the bidder himself and valid for (120) days from the closing date the tender, any bid proposal received without the said bank guarantee will be rejected.

The bid proposal shall be delivered by hand-delivery or thru courier service to the Contracts Department in Al-Khafji Joint Operations, Al-Khafji Saudi Arabia on or before the closing date **14:00 Hours, Monday, May 7, 2018** of the time stipulated in the tender document.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, YOU MAY VISIT OUR KJO WEBSITE.**  
KJO website [www.kjo.com.sa](http://www.kjo.com.sa) E-Services - Tendering - Contractors - Ongoing Tenders to know more details about this tender

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## Analysis

Kuwait Times  
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E MAIL: info@kuwaittimes.net  
Website: www.kuwaittimes.netFree from Gaza's  
struggles, at least  
for a while

By Abier Almasri

I was born and grew up in Gaza. My father was a soccer coach for many years and his stories about his travels to other countries always made me want to travel too. But Israel imposed a land, air and sea blockade on Gaza in 2007 and has kept Gaza mostly closed ever since. So I never made it out until now, at age 31, I was allowed to leave - for just a little while.

I work for a global human rights organization and spent months seeking the exit permit from the Israeli government that would allow me to leave, to participate in security and research training sessions, to attend key organizational meetings, and to meet colleagues based just a short drive away in Jerusalem or Ramallah - to say nothing of those overseas. But I faced obstacles every step of the way to obtaining the documents and permissions I needed simply to get out of Gaza itself - until I got a phone call on Jan 28.

Someone who introduced himself as an employee of the Palestinian Authority's General Authority of Civil Affairs called to let me know that my permit had been approved and that I would travel in two days. I was in shock. The prospect of leaving the 25-by-7-mile territory for the first time in my life made me so anxious I could not sleep the night before my scheduled departure.

It didn't help knowing I would have to travel without my laptop, any food, or even shampoo and toothpaste, because Israeli authorities forbid Palestinians leaving Gaza from carrying any of these items. I also knew from talking to fellow Gaza residents who had missed out on scholarship opportunities or were prevented from obtaining necessary medical care that Israel could always bar me from leaving at the last moment without offering any reason at all.

My bus pick-up was scheduled for 6 am. I woke up early and headed out in the dark. When the bus arrived, I smiled. Then I cried. I can't describe the feeling. It was something more than happiness - maybe the feeling of peace or the taste of freedom. We went through the Erez crossing into Israel and then through Israel and the occupied West Bank to the Allenby Bridge border crossing, where we entered Jordan. I saw vast open green pastures and tall trees. As we passed Jerusalem's Old City, we could see the Dome of the Rock; we weren't allowed to stop to pray at the Al Aqsa mosque, but I managed to snap a quick photo from the bus window.

Though, as the crowd flies, the distance between my home in the Gaza Strip and Jordan's capital is less than 100 miles, the trip took us 12 hours. I arrived in Amman at 6 pm, exhausted but happy. I got into a taxi, and opened the window. I felt like a prisoner released on bail, thrilled just to breathe unpolluted air and to see open space, so much light and no darkness. I walked Amman's streets, filming myself in videos talking about how it feels to breathe freedom for the first time, so I could bring these feelings with me when I returned home. I got my US visa and flew to New York a week later.

## New experience

This experience has all been so new to me. During my first few days away, I'd wake up in the middle of the night to charge my phone before the next power cut, and then remember that, because I wasn't in Gaza, my life was not controlled by the electricity schedule. On the flight to New York, I had to ask the flight attendant where my tray table was, and how to find the bathroom, as I worried I'd accidentally open the door of the airplane.

And I may have been the only adult in New York City who was overjoyed to see the snow last week; I even went out and played in it. But I am slowly adjusting. I have proudly been taking the subway every day between Manhattan and Brooklyn, where I am staying with a colleague. When my co-workers went home at the end of our week of meetings, I felt sad, not knowing if I would ever see them again. They told me that they would see me next year, and I hope it's true.

Friends and family back home keep asking, "How's life outside Gaza?" I can't answer. How to tell people who live on four to six hours of electricity daily that high-rise buildings in New York leave their lights on 24 hours a day, simply because it looks nice? How it feels to live without generator noises, the deafening roar of Israeli military drones at night, or the constant fear of imminent conflict? Or that you can hop on a bus, train or plane on a whim, without needing a permit, and travel across the world?

I know that I have been more fortunate than many Gazans, 70 percent of whom rely on humanitarian aid, primarily from the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (whose budget is now endangered by the Trump administration's decision to withhold much of its planned contribution in order to pressure the Palestinian Authority to join its planned peace negotiations.) I graduated from college and, in a place where current unemployment rates hover around 40 percent for men and 70 percent for women, my father, sister and I all have jobs.

No one in my family has been harmed in any of the three military assaults Israel has launched during its armed conflicts with the Hamas-led Gaza authority since 2008, and our house hasn't been hit. And I know I probably could not have traveled if not for my organization's help. Still, I try not to think about how, later this month, I will enter the Erez checkpoint from the Israeli side and cross back into Gaza, unsure when, if ever, I will be allowed to leave again. It's easier to accept reality in Gaza when you haven't seen how other people live.

NOTE: Abier Almasri is the Gaza research assistant at Human Rights Watch —Reuters



## China widens Xi's corruption crackdown

Millions of Chinese public sector workers will be exposed to the harsh policing tactics of the Communist Party as President Xi Jinping brings his corruption crackdown to China's sprawling bureaucracy. The campaign to clean up the party's pervasive corruption has arguably been Xi's most popular initiative, pressuring its 89 million members to toe the line - with more than 1.5 million officials punished in the past five years.

Legislators are finalizing the creation of a new anti-graft apparatus that will also watch over non-party members - everyone from managers at state-owned companies to people in administrative roles at schools and hospitals. In Beijing alone, one of the areas where the new system was established on a pilot basis, the number of people under scrutiny quadrupled to one million, or about five percent of the city's population, officials said.

New national and local "supervision commissions" - investigative agencies focused on corruption - will operate alongside the Communist Party's Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI), sharing offices, personnel and perhaps leadership. Further blurring the line between the state and party bodies, the National People's Congress (NPC) yesterday named CCDI deputy secretary Yang Xiaodu as head of the National Supervision Commission.

The "anti-corruption powers are dispersed," explained one party leader during the NPC, saying the new body would harness and unify anti-graft efforts. Rights groups worry the new body will institutionalize some of the problems that have led to abuses and even torture of suspects, while vastly expanding the number of people under its purview. The system has a "veneer of legal legitimacy," said Maya Wang, China researcher at Human Rights Watch (HRW), without "any meaningful improvements to guarantee due process".

## Held without lawyer

Legislators wrote the new supervision commissions

Maduro challenger  
shakes up Venezuela  
presidential vote

At each other's throats for two decades, militants of Venezuela's socialist state and opposition seldom agree on anything. Yet mention the name of presidential candidate Henri Falcon, and both are liable to spit. "Traitor!" cry socialist stalwarts, who cannot forgive the former state governor for breaking with their beloved late leader Hugo Chavez in 2010. "Chavista lite!" say opposition radicals, always suspicious that Falcon came into their ranks as a Trojan horse.

Now that the 56-year-old former soldier is running for president in a May 20 vote, both groups are united in scoffing at his chances. After all, Falcon is up against not just a powerful President Nicolas Maduro but also an election system widely considered unfair and an opposition boycott that will deprive him of votes. And yet, a clutch of opinion polls show Falcon ahead, bolstering his campaign mantra that he is a natural transition candidate with appeal to a moderate majority fed up with political polarization and economic chaos.

Widely-followed pollster Datanalysis, for example, put him more than 10 percentage points ahead in voter intentions. "This government is finished," Falcon told Reuters, noting how few governments in history had survived hyper-inflation and economic chaos like Venezuela's current crisis. Opinion surveys in Venezuela are often divergent, politicized and misleading in hindsight. But Falcon, his campaign team and some pundits think he may be able to create an avalanche as the campaign gets underway. "If we really unite, get organized, construct a single narrative, and instead of discouraging people by asking them to abstain, we call them to vote, there's no way this government can beat us," said Falcon.

## Maduro's advantages

Despite such optimism and Maduro's unpopularity on the streets, there appear to be plenty of ways for the government to assure victory. It is ratcheting up welfare handouts and pressure on state workers, has skillfully

into the country's constitution last week and will approve a law laying out their powers on Tuesday. China's war on corruption has relied heavily on a shadowy, often brutal extralegal justice system known as "shuanggui", allowing investigators to hold party members in unofficial detention facilities until they "confess" to graft. At least 11 individuals died under shuanggui custody between 2010 and 2015, according to a 2016 HRW report.

Xi said last year that the shuanggui system would be phased out and replaced. But the new law provides for a form of detention called "liuzhi", which rights groups say is a "legal" reincarnation of the shuanggui system and

face investigation by a new supervision commission. Last year, he was held for almost two months as investigators probed two bribery cases against him. But when Chen was formally arrested and transferred into China's criminal law system, the number of cases had ballooned to 38.

"The other 36 cases Chen Qian confessed to on his own during detention," his lawyer said while pleading for leniency, according to court documents. Liu Jianchao, head of the Zhejiang supervision commission, told state media that suspects averaged 42.5 days in detention before being transferred into the criminal justice system. "We place special emphasis on persuading those under investigation to write their own confessions," Liu said.

## Who guards the guardians?

Xi's original anti-graft drive brought down party apparatchiks at all levels, from low-level "flies" to high-ranking "tigers". Previously led by his right-hand man Wang Qishan, who was named vice president on Saturday, critics say the CCDI also served as a weapon to eliminate Xi's adversaries. The new supervision commissions will institutionalise that setup, with the investigative organs written into the constitution as independent bodies overseen by the party-led people's congresses.

Rights groups and lawyers warn that it will put the bodies beyond judicial scrutiny, but in China's capital, officials say such independence is necessary to take down powerful officials. Zhang Shuofu, who leads the Beijing commission, said the new bodies were modelled on an ancient system, dispelling concerns by citing "internal and external oversight". That oversight relies on the people's congresses which are technically charged with supervising most of China's bureaucracy, but in practice do little. "Our oversight work has some problems," admitted Zhou Chengkui, a former deputy general secretary of the National People's Congress, in a recent interview with China Law Review. "Namely the people's congress doesn't dare supervise!" —AFP

Rights groups say  
liuzhi a 'legal'  
reincarnation of  
shuanggui system

allows graft suspects to be held for up to six months with no provision for legal counsel. In eastern Zhejiang province, shuanggui detention facilities are now being used as liuzhi centers, officials there said. Under liuzhi suspects' family members must be notified within 24 hours of their detention - except when they may "impede the investigation". "Liuzhi provides no fair trial protections, not even the basic ones that exist under China's criminal procedures," said Wang.

Chen Qian, 58, a researcher at Yangquan city's national development and reform commission in northern Shanxi province, was one of the first public servants to

fomented divisions within the opposition, barred Maduro's two main rivals from standing, brazenly uses state resources in its campaigns, and benefits from a compliant election board.

The board's head, Tibisay Lucena, is on US, EU and Canadian sanctions lists accused of violating democracy. Even its chosen vote machine operator, UK-based Smartmatic, accused her institution of fraud in a vote last year. "Though Falcon is twice as popular as Maduro and could beat him in a competitive race, the 20 May vote will not be competitive," wrote Eurasia consultancy.

In line with his promise of a government of "national unity", Falcon is reaching out to opposition leaders like former presidential candidate Henrique Capriles to relax the boycott and join his campaign. He has picked a Wall Street bank analyst, Francisco Rodriguez, to head his economic team. And in a nod to his former allies in the ruling "Chavismo" movement and a signal to the armed forces that they need not fear him, Falcon may keep Defense Minister Vladimir Padrino should he win, a campaign aide said.

But to win, Falcon needs to convince voters in places like La Vega, a poor hillside 'barrio' of Caracas that is a traditional 'Chavista' stronghold. At a bread shop there, chatter revolved around impossibly high food prices and the growing migration of Venezuelans to Colombia. There was next to no enthusiasm either for Falcon or Maduro. "I want to vote to change this disaster! But there are no good candidates," said Jose Sanchez, 25, an internet cafe worker whose minimum monthly wage - less than \$2 at the black market rate - does not even cover diapers for his twin babies. "Let's see if Falcon has changed since his Chavista days. I suppose I might vote for him, but only to get rid of Maduro," added Sanchez, who voted for the opposition in recent polls.

## 'Hunger pummeling us'

Driver Gustavo Isturiz, 56, said he voted for the government in multiple polls since Chavez won office in 1998 but was fed up with rising penury. "Hunger is pummeling our stomachs, but the opposition still has no chance," he said. "I

can't go over to them until a good candidate appears. I don't like Henri Falcon: he has no political project and he's not inspiring hope." Some in La Vega's winding streets said they were so reliant on state handouts they would not dare to vote against Maduro for fear officials would see their ballot and cancel their benefits.

Falcon, whose energy is evident in his daily pre-dawn jogs, plans to start street campaigning in the next few days. He vows to keep popular welfare benefits but also open Venezuela's economy along more business-friendly lines. His adviser Rodriguez recommends dollarizing the economy, seeking \$15-20 billion in annual foreign funding, lowering taxes for oil investors, and dismantling currency controls.

Falcon faces a tough job persuading western nations to withdraw their objections to the May 20 vote. The United States has been vociferous, threatening to extend sanctions on the Maduro government to hit the oil sector if it goes ahead with what critics are calling a "coronation" on May 20. Its top diplomat in Venezuela, Todd Robinson, met with Falcon recently, sources close to the candidate said, trying to persuade him to withdraw as his challenge was undermining US efforts to isolate Maduro.

Washington seems to be calculating that if Maduro scores a Pyrrhic victory, and is left governing a ravaged economy, military and social pressure will become unbearable. "If Maduro wins, as looks likely, it will be a very unstable government," said Caracas-based consultant Dimitris Pantoulas. "At home, he is flirting with a coup d'etat and abroad he will be a pariah." —Reuters



News

## Plan to revive Dead Sea edges closer...

Continued from Page 1

"The Dead Sea has historical, biblical, natural, touristic, medical and industrial values that make it an invaluable cultural, environmental and economic treasure," said Avner Adin, a specialist in water science at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. After years of studies, the \$1.1 billion Red Sea "Peace Conduit" deal was signed by Israeli, Jordanian and Palestinian authorities in 2013.

The project, located entirely on Jordanian territory, includes a desalination plant near Aqaba. After producing drinking water, the remaining highly saline liquid will be sent by pipeline to fill the Dead Sea, powering two hydroelectric plants along the way. A subsequent 2015 deal would see Israel get 35 billion cu m of potable water from the desalination plant for its parched southern regions. The mostly desert Jordan, for its part, would get up to 50 billion cu m of freshwater from the Sea of Galilee. Israel also agreed to sell 32 billion cu m to the Palestinian authorities.

Jordan announced in Nov 2016 that it had chosen five international consortiums to build the first phase of the canal. But talks on how to finance the deal, which calls for \$400 million of public funding, and geopolitical flare-ups have kept the project from moving forward. — AFP

## Pulling no punches: Saudi woman boxer...

Continued from Page 1

jump-start women's sports despite the risk of riling conservatives. Only four Saudi women featured in the Rio Olympics in 2016 after two were named in the team for London in 2012 - the first time the Gulf nation sent female athletes to the Games. The kingdom has since then been granting more prestige to the idea, appointing prominent princess Reema bint Bandar to oversee women's sports in the kingdom in 2016.

The country is also moving toward compulsory physical education classes for girls after a ban was scrapped in 2014. Alhamrani is involved in shaping the new public school sports curriculum. As the daughter of an American mother and Saudi father, she enjoyed a privilege denied most Saudi girls, in that her parents were open-minded and encouraged sports from an early age. That start has put her on track to become one of the kingdom's early pioneers of women's boxing training. For now, her low-profile gym operates out of a residential complex, behind opaque glass walls with no outdoor signage. The location is available on her website, but even so, some first-timers have to call to find

their way.

Some clients view the gym sessions as therapy. Alhamrani said. It offers them such a release that she says some of them end up crying. "I used to be a timid mother who could not look people in the eye," said a 36-year-old housewife and mother-of-four, and a regular at the gym. "The gym gave me a voice that I had lost. It gave me strength that I never knew existed."

But Alhamrani says some women have dropped out after they began "expressing themselves boldly" in a way that sometimes makes male relatives feel threatened. "My husband is unhappy", Alhamrani was told among the reasons. Under the country's rigid guardianship system, a male family member - normally the father, husband or brother - must grant permission for a woman's study, travel and other activities.

Also holding back women's sports is an acute shortage of professional female athletes and coaches. Women's gyms are slowly proliferating, but the idea of mixed gender sports remains taboo. And some female professionals still caution against offending cultural sensibilities. "Sports is empowerment," said Lina Almaena, a member of the kingdom's advisory Shura Council, and director of Jeddah United, Saudi Arabia's first women's basketball team. "We are not fighting for mixed gender, abaya-less sporting events. Our aim is not to go against our culture. Our goal is mass participation of women in sports." — AFP

## Turkish forces and Syrian allies drive...

Continued from Page 1

Rebels fanned out across the city, giving victory signs and taking pictures with Turkish tanks parked outside official buildings. The flags of Turkey and Syrian rebel groups were raised in the city and a statue of Kurdish hero Kawa, a symbol of resistance against oppressors, was torn down. Civilians were seen fleeing the city and plumes of smoke rose into the sky as mines exploded.

Around 250,000 civilians had left in recent days after pro-Ankara fighters took the surrounding region and all but encircled the city, fleeing southwards to territory still held by the YPG or controlled by the Syrian regime. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan announced that Turkish-backed fighters had taken control of the city center and said a "large number" of Kurdish fighters had "fled with their tails between their legs".

The Turkish leader has said the operation could move on to other Kurdish-controlled areas of northern Syria. "Our work is not finished... but terrorism is finished in Afrin," Turkish government spokesman Bekir Bozdag said. Residents said it appeared that YPG units had withdrawn from the city without a fight. But Kurdish authorities vowed to retake Afrin, one of three semi-autonomous Kurdish "cantons" in northern Syria. "Resistance... will continue until every inch of Afrin is liberated," authorities representing the Afrin canton said in a statement. "In all of Afrin's sectors, our forces will become a permanent nightmare" for pro-Ankara fighters, the statement said, promising "a switch from direct confrontation to hit-and-run attacks".

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a Britain-based war monitor, says more than 280 civilians have been killed since the campaign began on Jan 20. Ankara has denied the reports and said it takes the "utmost

care" to avoid civilian casualties. The Observatory said yesterday that more than 1,500 Kurdish fighters had been killed since the start of the offensive, most of them in air strikes and artillery fire.

More than 400 pro-Ankara rebels have also been killed, it said. The Turkish military says 46 Turkish soldiers have died. Turkey sees the YPG as a "terrorist" offshoot of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which has waged a decades-long insurgency against the Turkish state. But the Kurdish militia has also formed the backbone of a US-backed alliance that successfully expelled the Islamic State jihadist group from large parts of Syria.

On another front near Damascus, thousands of civilians continued to stream out of Eastern Ghouta for a fourth day as the regime's Russian-backed air and ground assault appeared to have eased up. Regime fighters have retaken more than 80 percent of the former rebel bastion since the offensive was launched on Feb 18, the Observatory says, slicing what remains into three pockets each held by different rebel groups. More than 1,400 civilians have been killed in the offensive and at least 65,000 civilians are reported to have fled the area in recent days.

Observatory head Rami Abdel Rahman said there had not been any air strikes yesterday and only sporadic mortar fire into a southern pocket of the enclave held by the Faylaq al-Rahman rebel group. "The area is awaiting the announcement of a deal between Faylaq al-Rahman and Russia on an evacuation of rebels to northern Syria," Abdel Rahman told AFP.

Assad met with soldiers in Eastern Ghouta yesterday, the presidency said, in the leader's first trip to the region in years. Syria state television broadcast photos of the president dressed in a shirt and jacket surrounded by soldiers, some perched on a tank behind him, in an unspecified part of Eastern Ghouta. Syria's conflict broke out in 2011 with protests against Assad. He has maintained his grip on power despite global calls to step down and outrage at the brutal offensives he has waged to retake towns and cities from rebel fighters. — AFP

## UK teacher named world's best, wins \$1 million prize

DUBAI: Briton Andria Zafirakou, who works in a school in one of the UK's poorest areas, yesterday won the \$1 million Global Teacher Prize for 2018 at a star-studded ceremony in Dubai. The arts and textiles teacher from the Alperton Community College of Brent, an inner-city school in London, was among 10 finalists from around the globe for the annual award. Thirty thousand candidates were in the running.

Dubai ruler Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum and British Prime Minister Theresa May were among the first to congratulate her. "Congratulations to Andria Zafirakou for having won the Global Teacher award," tweeted Sheikh Mohammed after handing her the prize. He said teaching "is the greatest job" ever, and described teachers as "stars". May, in a video message broadcast at the gala event, said: "Being a great teacher requires resilience, ingenuity, and a generous heart. These are the qualities that you share with your students every day. So thank you for all you have done and continue to do."

Formula One champion Lewis Hamilton raced to the venue to deliver the trophy while South African comedian Trevor Noah hosted the event which



DUBAI: British teacher Andria Zafirakou receives the "Global Teacher Prize" from Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai during an award ceremony yesterday. — AFP

included a performance by Oscar-winning actress and Grammy award winning singer Jennifer Hudson. Brent, where Zafirakou teaches, is considered an ethnically diverse and disadvantaged area and many of her students come from impoverished homes. The area is also rife with gang violence and Zafirakou faced "a daunting task when she joined the school", the organizers said in a statement. "But throughout the school and on the streets she is driving change" working "closely with the police to identify potential issues and (gang) recruiters." — AFP

## Qatar asks US to investigate...

Continued from Page 1

and Bahrain imposed an economic boycott on Qatar, accusing it of supporting Islamist militants and Iran.

"We believe NBAD has participated in an extraordinary and unlawful scheme to wage financial warfare against Qatar, including through the manipulation of Qatari currency and securities markets," said the letter to the US Treasury dated Feb 26, which has been seen by Reuters. "These actions should be halted immediately, and we ask that you investigate whether NBAD has directly or indirectly supported the manipulation of Qatar's markets, including through NBAD America's dollar-clearing or correspondent banking services in the United States," the letter said.

FAB, which was created from the merger of First Gulf Bank and National Bank of Abu Dhabi last year, did not respond to questions about details of the allegations. "As the UAE's largest bank and one of the world's largest and safest financial institutions, First Abu Dhabi Bank (FAB) works closely with all of its regulators in the markets in which it operates, to sustain and uphold the high standards of governance and regulatory compliance across the group," it said. The UAE government did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

A Qatari government spokesman confirmed the letters had been sent to US regulators but declined to comment on their content. New York-based law firm Paul, Weiss declined to comment. The US Treasury and CFTC did not immediately respond to requests for comment. Qatar's central bank said in December it had launched an investigation into possible manipulation of its markets by the countries that had imposed the economic blockade. Qatar, a small Gulf state and major gas exporter, denies the allegations that it has financed terrorism and says the blockade is an attempt to punish Doha for independent policies.

The UAE and Saudi Arabia have refused to soften their demands - which include Qatar cutting ties with Iran and shutting down state-funded broadcaster Al Jazeera. Qatar, which is also home to the largest US military base in the region, has repeatedly reached out to Washington to mediate in the crisis but the attempts have failed so far. Last week, US President Donald

Trump, who has previously accused Qatar of sponsoring terrorism, sacked US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, who had publicly defended Qatar and pressured Trump to moderate his stance.

Tillerson's sacking came ahead of a new diplomatic push to help mediate the dispute among America's Gulf allies. The United States is due to host a Gulf Cooperation Council summit later this year and before that Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed al Nahyan and Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al Thani are all due in Washington for separate state visits.

The Qatari central bank has previously accused unnamed banks of trying to manipulate the riyal by trading it between themselves offshore at artificially weak levels - to create an illusion Qatar's economy was crumbling. The riyal has been pegged to the US dollar at a rate of 3.64 for more than a decade, but in the initial months of the boycott it traded as low as 3.8950 offshore.

In the letter to the US Treasury, Qatar's lawyers said they suspected NBAD was driving the riyal lower during illiquid periods, such as Islam's Eid Al-Adha holidays last year, "reinforcing the manufactured narrative that Qatar's currency was increasingly volatile and its economy was too unstable for investment". "NBAD's quotes - and those of other banks involved in the manipulation - were likely all bogus," the letter said without naming the banks and referring to foreign exchange quotes posted by NBAD.

"There is evidence that at the same time NBAD was providing quotes with great frequency and at rates lower than the official rate of 3.64, its traders were unwilling to actually transact at those prices," the letter said. It cited one example on Nov. 22, 2017: when a counterparty reached out to NBAD to execute a deal, it was told by a representative of NBAD that it had no riyal to trade. FAB declined to comment when asked about the specific allegation.

The letter did not name the counterparty but said the central bank's lawyers were ready to provide regulators with a recorded chat between the two sides, on a confidential basis. It said NBAD stopped quoting the riyal in December after Qatar vowed to investigate. The central bank also pledged on Nov 23 to satisfy any market demand for dollars and the riyal has since rebounded in offshore transactions to trade close to its peg. Many bankers in the region say that with more than \$300 billion in central bank reserves and sovereign wealth fund assets, Qatar has more than enough financial firepower to block any attack on its currency. — Reuters

Kuwait Times

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## Sports

# Tributes to 'inspiration' Hawking as curtain falls on Paralympics

## Paralympic chief closes Pyeongchang Winter Games

**PYEONGCHANG:** The Pyeongchang Winter Paralympics closed yesterday with a dazzling ceremony featuring light shows, dancing and music, as well as tributes to late wheelchair-bound British physicist Stephen Hawking as an "inspiration".

Nine days of sporting action ended earlier in the day with a flurry of events, including victory for the United States in a hard-fought sledge hockey final, helping them to top the medals table with 36 overall. North Korea's athletes, who made their country's Winter Paralympics debut in Pyeongchang, were absent from the closing ceremony after heading home early, but it was a minor sticking point after the rapid inter-Korean thaw of recent weeks.

With thousands packing out the Pyeongchang Olympic Stadium, International Paralympic Committee president Andrew Parsons used his closing address to pay tribute to Hawking, who died last week aged 76. The scientist is seen as an inspiration by Paralympians. He never let his acute physical disability stop him from pursuing his dreams, and is fondly remembered for opening the London 2012 Games. Parsons hailed him as "a genius of a man, a pioneer and inspiration to us all".

"While Hawking tested the limits of his imagination, Paralympians, you have once again pushed the boundaries of human endeavour," he said. "Your logic-defying performances have focused the world not on what holds you back, but on what motivates you and pushes you forward." Hawking developed a form of motor neurone disease in his 20s that left him confined to a wheelchair, almost completely paralysed and only able to speak through a voice synthesiser.

But his disability did not stop him pursuing his ambition of unlocking the secrets of the Universe, and his best-selling book "A Brief History of Time" made him a household name. In a memorable speech at the opening of the 2012 Games, Hawking urged Paralympians to "look up at the stars and not down at your feet".

### TRIUMPH OVER ADVERSITY

Athletes carried their countries' flags into the stadium

at the closing ceremony but North Korea's was brought in by a Games volunteer, after Pyongyang's delegation headed home a few days ago. Pyongyang sent two novice sit-skiers to the Games and they finished at or near the back of their two events, but were still welcomed by South Korean fans delighted at the latest sign of détente on the Korean peninsula. The rapprochement began at last month's Winter Olympics, when the North sent 22 athletes to the Games and the two Koreas marched under a united flag at the opening ceremony.

The North's presence at the Paralympics was low-key compared to the Olympics-as well as leaving before the end, the North did not march with the South at the opening.

Sunday's closing ceremony included traditional Korean music and dancing, and also modern rock and pop, with K-pop star Ailee among the performers. There were also disabled performers, including a dancer with a hearing impairment and a wheelchair-bound dancer.

Towards the end of the ceremony, the Paralympic flag was hauled down and handed to the mayor of Beijing—which will host the 2022 Winter Olympics and Paralympics.

In a fitting finale to the Games' high-octane sporting action, the USA earlier Sunday beat Canada 2-1 with a dramatic goal in overtime to defend their Paralympic sledge hockey title.

It brought Team USA's gold medal haul to 13.

Russian athletes—competing as neutrals after their country was banned due to a doping scandal—picked up eight gold medals, second-highest after the USA and tied with Canada.

The Winter Paralympics broke records for ticket sales, which topped 340,000, as well as for the number of athletes competing at 567. There were numerous tales of triumph over adversity.

Dutch snowboarder Bibian Centel-Spee won two gold medals despite having had cancer surgery twice in recent months. American skier Oksana Masters—born with multiple birth defects due to the Chernobyl nuclear disaster—also won double gold. — AFP

### Dazzling ceremony featuring light shows



**PYEONGCHANG:** President of the International Paralympic Committee Andrew Parsons (C-L) and South Korean President Moon Jae-in (C-R) wave to the crowd during the closing ceremony of the Pyeongchang 2018 Winter Paralympic Games at the Pyeongchang Stadium in Pyeongchang yesterday. — AFP



**PYEONGCHANG:** Artists perform during the closing ceremony of the Pyeongchang 2018 Winter Paralympic Games at the Pyeongchang Stadium in Pyeongchang yesterday. — AFP

## Late Sheikh Faisal Al-Duaij shooting tourney concludes

By Abdellatif Sharaa

**KUWAIT:** Tournament of the Late Sheikh Faisal Al-Duaij Al-Sabah Cup, came to a conclusion Saturday at Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Shooting Complex in the presence of tournament patron Sheikh Sabah Faisal Al-Duaij Al-Sabah, President of Arab and Kuwait Shooting Federations Eng. Duaij Khalaf Al-Otaibi and Kuwait Shooting Sport Club Assistant Secretary General Eng. Mohammad Misfer Al-Ghurba and a large number of fans.

Engineer Al-Ghurba, on behalf of Chairman and board members welcomed those present, adding that the late Sheikh Faisal Al-Duaij Al-Sabah was with the first Kuwait Shooting delegation and made the first international achievement in the name of Kuwait Shooting.

Al-Ghurba said the Late Sheikh established the first Olympic shooting range with his own personal efforts to allow Kuwaiti youth practice this noble sport according to Olympic sports ethics that contributed to the development of the sport of shooting and placed Kuwait's name in prominence in the Olympic and World arenas.

Al-Ghurba thanked the family of the Late Sheikh Faisal Al-Duaij for their support and continued encouragement of Kuwait youth.

Final results of the tournament were as follows:

**Skeet - Men:**  
Mansour Al-Rashidi, Abdallah Al-Rashidi, Saad Habib.  
**Trap - Men:**  
Fahad Al-Mutairi, Khalid Al-Mudhaf, Tala Al-Rashidi.



**Double Trap - Men:**  
Mishal Al-Thafiri, Jarrah Al-Shuwaier, Saad Al-Mutairi.  
**Trap - Women:**  
Shahad Al-Hawal, Sarah Al-Hawal, Asmaa Al-Qatami.  
**Skeet - Women:**  
Afrah Adel, Eman Al-Shamma, Sheikha Al-Rashidi.  
**Skeet - Juniors:**  
Nasser Al-Mutairi, Ahmad Al-Awad, Hamad Al-Ablani.  
**Trap - Juniors:**  
Fares Al-Mutairi, Yousuf Al-Rashidi, Yousuf Al-Mutairi.

## Park grabs LPGA lead as Davies chases win

**LOS ANGELES:** South Korea's Park In-bee fired a nine-under par 63 to seize a one-stroke lead after Saturday's third round of the LPGA Founders Cup, where Britain's 54-year-old Laura Davies chased a historic triumph.

Park, a seven-time major winner, opened with four birdies and an eagle in the first five holes and vaulted atop the leaderboard at 14-under 202. That was one stroke ahead of Colombia's Mariajo Uribe with Thailand's Ariya Jutanugarn third on 204 at Wildfire Golf Club in Phoenix, Arizona. Davies shot a 63 for the first time since 2005 in jumping into a share of fourth with South Korea's Chella Choi on 205.

The Englishwoman would become the oldest champion in LPGA history by winning Sunday in the first event of the season on US soil. "I'll certainly have a crack at it," Davies said. "I've given myself a chance."

The sizzling start had Park pondering the all-time LPGA record low 18-hole score of 59 fired by Sweden's Annika Sorenstam in 2001. "For a little bit I think a 59, I got off to a really good start," Park said. "On the back nine, it was different, a little

bit more boring golf." But after the fantastic start, Park only birdied the par-4 ninth and par-5 11th until she closed her bogey-free round with a birdie at 18. "To finish with a birdie on the back nine was a big relief," Park said. "The front nine felt great. The back nine I was hitting pretty solid but the putts didn't drop like they did on the front nine. If they did I would've had a 59."

Park, who has won nine times in 15 prior attempts when leading entering the final round, matched Davies for the day's low round. Davies, who has not won since the 2001 Rochester Invitational, would break the oldest LPGA winner mark held by Beth Daniel, who was 46 when she won the 2003 Canadian Women's Open.

Davies, in her 32nd LPGA campaign, birdied five of the last six holes on the front nine, eagled the par-5 11th and birdied the par-5 15th and par-3 17th holes. "I hit a lot of fairways and that gives you a chance to get relatively close to the hole," Davies said.

"I haven't been holing the putts but today I did. The no bogeys part for me is the biggest key because that is what has been letting me down. "I know I can still play great golf. My short game is really coming around and a day like this tells me that we are really doing the right things." Davies is struggling to walk with a sore left calf and Achilles tendon.

"It's a struggle," she said. "It's just walking. Swinging is fine. I can swing as hard as I want to. But every step is just misery." — AFP

## Hamilton not close to 'final chapter'

**LONDON:** Lewis Hamilton has vowed to reign supreme in Formula One for years to come as the world champion prepares for the start of the new season next weekend. British star Hamilton is reportedly ready to sign a new contract with Mercedes, which could earn him up to £40 million (\$55 million) per year and solidify his position as

British sport's highest earner.

That would be the ideal preparation for the season opener in Melbourne as Hamilton eyes a fifth world championship. Along with Michael Schumacher and Juan Manuel Fangio, he would be only the third F1 driver to have won the title more than four times.

Even that historic feat wouldn't be enough for Hamilton to walk away from the sport however. "It doesn't feel like the start of the final chapter, and I don't feel as though I am about to embark on my last contract," Hamilton said.

"I am not sure how I will feel in two or three years' time but I am back here in March for my 12th

season and I am so excited. "I don't know where it comes from - this feeling of just wanting to excel - but I really, really, more than anything currently in my life, want to excel next weekend."

"I want to arrive in Melbourne fit. I want to hit my target weight. I want to kill it through practice, get pole position and I want to win the race convincingly. "I don't know how long this feeling is going to last when I go into a new season, but as long as I am still feeling like this I will keep going."

Hamilton won last year's championship with two races to spare. But he kept a low profile over the winter following criticism he received for comments he made in an Instagram video about his

young nephew wearing a princess dress.

Hamilton embarked on a mass deleting spree across both his Instagram and Twitter accounts - of which he has a combined 12 million followers - in the wake of the backlash. "Everyone has an opinion about everything," Hamilton said. "The world is moving drastically and no-one is perfect."

"We have a pie chart of our brand, what it means and we are constantly evolving that. "I am working with my team to figure out how we get our message across of where we have come from. "For example, what we have done as a working-class family is very different to a story of another racing driver." — AFP

Sports

# Memphis Grizzlies end their longest losing streak in franchise history

## James triple-double lifts injury-hit Cavs over Bulls

**MEMPHIS:** Dillon Brooks scored 24 points and Tyreke Evans added 20 points and seven assists as the Memphis Grizzlies ended a 19-game losing streak by beating the visiting Denver Nuggets 101-94. Wayne Selden scored 16 points on 6-of-7 shooting and Marc Gasol scored 14 for the Grizzlies, who won for the first time since defeating the Phoenix Suns on Jan. 29. Jarell Martin collected 13 rebounds and JaMychal Green grabbed 11 for Memphis. Nikola Jokic recorded 17 points and 12 rebounds and Jamal Murray scored 16 for Denver, which shot just 36.8 percent from the field.

### TRAIL BLAZERS 100, PISTONS 87

Damian Lillard led the way as host Portland turned back Detroit to extend its NBA-best win streak to 12 games. Lillard collected 24 points, eight assists and seven rebounds for the Trail Blazers, who have won nine in a row at Moda Center and 18 of their past 19 home games. CJ McCollum added 16 points for Portland, which had all five starters score in double figures. Andre Drummond scored 18 points and grabbed 22 rebounds for the Pistons, who have lost eight of their past 10 games overall and 15 of the past 16 away from home.



Donovan Mitchell scored 28 points and Rudy Gobert tallied 22 points and 13 rebounds to lift Utah past Sacramento in Salt Lake City, the Jazz's ninth consecutive win. Ricky Rubio added 14 points, nine rebounds and five assists for the Jazz, and Joe Ingles chipped in 14 points, nine assists and seven rebounds. Utah won for the 21st time in 23 games.

### JAZZ 103, KINGS 97

Buddy Hield scored 23 points to lead the Kings. Sacramento lost to the Jazz for the third time this sea-

son despite hitting 14 of 21 from 3-point range.

### WARRIORS 124, SUNS 109

Andre Iguodala had a three-point play and a 3-point basket to trigger a 16-2, third-quarter burst that allowed Golden State to turn a deficit into a lead en route to a victory at Phoenix. Quinn Cook and Nick Young, replacing the injured Stephen Curry and Klay Thompson, scored 28 and 20 points, respectively, helping the Warriors shake off a home loss to Sacramento on Friday night with just their second win in their last five games. A third Warriors star, Kevin Durant, also sat out due to an injury. Josh Jackson poured in a season-best 36 points for the Suns, who were short-handed as well, playing without injured leading scorer Devin Booker.

### Spurs continue revival

LeBron James notched his 70th career triple-double with 33 points, 12 rebounds and 12 assists as Cleveland held off a second-half rally by host Chicago. James, who has 15 triple-doubles this season, became the sixth player in NBA history to reach 70 for his career, joining Oscar Robertson (181), Magic Johnson (138), Jason Kidd (107), Russell Westbrook (101) and Wilt Chamberlain (78). Jeff Green added 21 points for Cleveland, which won for the second time in three games and finished its six-game road trip at .500. Denzel Valentine scored a career-high 34 points on a personal-best 8-of-11 shooting from 3-point range to lead Chicago.

### ROCKETS 107, PELICANS 101

James Harden had 32 points, 11 rebounds and eight assists as Houston defeated visiting New Orleans. Chris Paul added 21 points, Trevor Ariza scored 17 and



**MEMPHIS:** Briante Weber #3 of the Memphis Grizzlies looks to pass against the Denver Nuggets on Saturday at FedExForum in Memphis, Tennessee. — AFP

Clint Capela had 13 points and 11 rebounds for the Rockets.

Anthony Davis had 26 points and 13 rebounds, and Jrue Holiday scored 19 for the Pelicans, who lost for the fourth time in five games, further loosening their hold on a Western Conference playoff spot.

### SPURS 117, TIMBERWOLVES 101

LaMarcus Aldridge scored 39 points and pulled

down 10 rebounds to help lift San Antonio to a tougher-than San Antonio has won three consecutive games for the first time since Dec 23-28 and has pulled into a tie with Minnesota in fifth place in the Western Conference standings. Karl-Anthony Towns led the Timberwolves with 23 points and nine rebounds.

Bradley Beal scored 19 points and led the way as five Wizards finished in double figures, helping Washington post a victory over visiting Indiana. — Reuters

## Jumaa defeats Al-Awadhi to claim men's title

By Abdellatif Sharaa

**KUWAIT:** The Kuwait Ninth Tennis Open 2018, which started March 4th under the patronage of President of Arab and Kuwait Tennis Federations, Honorary President of Asian Shooting Federation Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Abdallah Al-Sabah were completed, except for the finals doubles match between Abdelhameed Jumaa and Abdelrahman Al-Awadhi against Hassan Al-Mousa and Abdallah Al-Mukaimi.

- The women's individuals final match was won by Sarah Behbehani by defeating Manar Al-Jazzaf 6-4, 6-3.
- The men's individuals final went to Abdelhameed Jumaa who defeated Abdelrahman Al-Awadhi by two sets to love.
- Junior's individuals title U-17 went to Ahmad Khamees who defeated Essa Qabazard 6-2, 7-5.
- Mohammad Al-Awadhi took the U-11 title by defeating Hassan Jamal 6-1, 6-1.

- Maxwell Indesit took the U-13 title by defeating Yaqoub Mohammad in the final match 6-4, 6-3.
- Kurtis Singh took over 55 title by defeating Subhi Al-Gharabally 6-0, 6-0.
- The pioneers doubles title went to Zoran Demitric and Bojan Alicic by defeating Windy Solomon and George Delegro 6-1, 6-2.
- The doubles final match was scheduled later.



Abdelhameed Jumaa



Sarah Behbehani



Maxwell Indesit

worst finish since they came bottom of the old Five Nations in 1983. Following last week's 22-16 loss to France in Paris, Jones made seven changes in personnel—the most radical shake-up of his reign as England coach.

### 'FIND OUT ABOUT YOURSELF'

But they couldn't stop the losing streak. Jones, who has made no secret of wanting to win next year's World Cup with England, said it was better the setbacks happened now than at Japan 2019.

"It is, unfortunately, something that you have to have because you never find out about yourself unless you have these runs," he told reporters. "Every team I have had that has been a champion team has had these runs which have been instrumental in how you re-make a team," added Jones, Australia's coach when they lost the 2003 World Cup final to England. The former Wallaby and Japan boss was appointed to his current post after tournament hosts England suffered the embarrassment of a first-round exit at the 2015 World Cup. England then set off on a winning run that only ended when Ireland denied them a Grand Slam in Dublin last year.

Until last month, that was the only blot on Jones's England record, which now stands at 24 wins from 27 Tests with three defeats.

"When you take over it is reasonably easy, like I did with England, it is quite easy to improve them quickly because you get fix

certain things that need fixing quickly," he said. "But internal mechanisms take time to fix and that is the slow burner. Unless you fix them they catch up with you when you get to the big tournaments such as the World Cup.

"So for us it has been an enormously beneficial tournament if disappointing because we are finding out about how to be a better team." Three converted tries from Garry Ringrose, CJ Stander and Jacob Stockdale put Ireland 21-5 up at the break and on the verge of a St Patrick's Day triumph.

Ireland scrum-half Conor Murray added a penalty and while England's Elliot Daly scored an unconverted try in each half, with fellow wing Jonny May crossed in stoppage time, the visitors never looked like losing their grip in front of a capacity Twickenham crowd of more than 82,000.

England were without injured powerhouse No 8 Billy Vunipola for the entire Six Nations and fellow back-row forwards Nathan Hughes, Courtney Lawes, Sam Underhill and Tom Curry were missing from the Ireland match.

"We're playing without five top back-rowers and other injuries," said Jones. "We have to get a greater depth to our squad that can play Test rugby." Jones praised Ireland by saying: "They played exceptionally well and we just weren't good enough. They play to their strengths, with good resolve and are an excellent team." — AFP

## Federer survives scare to face Del Potro in final

**INDIAN WELLS:** World No. 1 Roger Federer extended his season win streak to 17 matches, booking his spot in the Indian Wells Masters final by rallying past Borna Coric 5-7, 6-4, 6-4 on Saturday. The Swiss superstar survived a stern test from world number 49 Coric but managed to hold on for a 17-0 record this year, surpassing his prior career-best calendar year start in 2006 when he opened with 16 wins. "It took a while to get the record," Federer said. "But I'm happy. It was just a fighting match.... It didn't come easy, so I had to go get it. "I got a little bit lucky. I hung tough and put a lot of effort into it to get the record.

"The focus has to be the finals right now. But it's nice to get off to a good start this year, and I hope I can play well again tomorrow." The defending champion will be aiming for a record sixth Indian Wells title when he squares off against world number eight Juan Martin Del Potro in Sunday's championship match. The 36-year-old Federer said he had to draw on every ounce of experience and mental toughness to pull out the match. "Margins are slim at the top of the game," he said. "And I have been there so many times.

"You just hope to take the right decisions along the way, and then it ends up falling your way. "But for that you need to have a very positive mindset. You need to be match-tough, you need to be confident, have experience, and I think I have a bit of all of that right now."

Down a set and trailing 4-2 in the second, Federer had to claw his way back from the brink of defeat. In the third set he fell behind again 4-3 but won the final 11 points of the match to

claim the victory. Federer clinched the match when Coric hit a shot wide. The ball was called out but Coric challenged and after the video review the original call was confirmed.

"Borna was incredibly steady," Federer said. "Those 10 minutes when I was down a set and a break it was hard for me to accept. "I got a bit lucky. It was a good match." Federer had not dropped a set (8-0) entering the semi-final. But he looked out of sorts in the opening set Saturday as Croatia's Coric took it handily. The match was played under difficult conditions with winds swirling around the main stadium. Federer said he had to be conservative with his shotmaking to get back in it.

"At some point you are happy with very little," Federer said. Former US Open winner Del Potro improved to 16-3 on the season as he stormed past the hard-serving Canadian Milos Raonic 6-2, 6-3 in just 65 minutes.

### 'EASIER THAN EXPECTED'

Del Potro is looking for his 22nd career and second straight ATP title in a row after winning earlier this month in Acapulco where he beat three top eight players in a row. "I broke his serve quick in both sets and that gave me control of the match," said Del Potro. "It was an easier match than I expected." Federer is 18-6 lifetime against Del Potro, having rallied to win the last two contests in three sets, including a 6-7 (5/7), 6-4, 6-3 victory in the championship game last year in Federer's hometown of Basel. Federer said he is expecting another gruelling war of attrition with the Argentinian.

"We have had a lot of close matches. Big matches, close matches," he said. "Jeez, I just tried to think back at the French Open semis, US Open finals, Olympic semis, Basel finals. Just three-sets, five-sets the whole way," said Federer. Del Potro said he will be the underdog against Federer.

"He's the favorite to win tomorrow," Del Potro said. "But I beat him in the past, and I know I can repeat that. But it is not easy." — AFP



**INDIAN WELLS:** Roger Federer of Switzerland returns the ball to Borna Coric of Croatia during the semifinal match at BNP Paribas Open - Day 13 on Saturday in Indian Wells, California. — AFP

## Jones insists beaten England can bounce back by World Cup

**TWICKENHAM:** Eddie Jones said England's losing streak was a necessary part of their development ahead of the World Cup after a third straight defeat saw Ireland clinch a Grand Slam at Twickenham on Saturday.

Already assured of the Six Nations title, Ireland stormed to just their third Championship clean sweep of all time with a 24-15 victory. Ireland kicked off having both deposed England as Six Nations champions and in second place in the global rankings behind world champions New Zealand.

England, the Six Nations kings in both 2016 and 2017, could have regained second spot with a victory but instead suffered a third successive defeat following away losses to Scotland and France as they were beaten at Twickenham for the first time under Australian coach Jones.

And with Wales edging France 14-13 later Saturday, it meant England ended the Championship in a lowly fifth place—their

## Sports

# India win tri-series after Karthik blitz in tense final

## India survived late drama in pulsating final

### SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at close of play of final between India and Bangladesh yesterday at Colombo, Sri Lanka.

#### India win by 4 wickets

Bangladesh	
T Iqbal c Thakur b Chahal	15
L Das c Raina b Sundar	11
S Rahman b Unadkat	77
S Sarkar c Dhawan b Chahal	1
M Rahim c V Shankar b Chahal	9
Mahmudullah Run Out Shankar	21
S Al Hasan Run Out Rahul	7
M Hasan Not Out	19
R Hossain b Unadkat	0
M Rahman Not Out	0
Extras Ob 2lb Onb Open 4w	6
Total (20.0 overs)	166-8
Fall of Wickets: 1-27 Das, 2-27 Iqbal, 3-33 Sarkar, 4-68 Rahim, 5-104 Mahmudullah, 6-133 Al Hasan, 7-147 Rahman, 8-148 Hossain	
Did Not Bat: Islam	
Bowling: Jaydev Unadkat 4-0-33-2-8.25 (2w); Washington Sundar 4-0-20-1-5.00; Yuzvendra Chahal 4-0-18-3-4.50; Shardul Thakur 4-0-45-0-11.25 (1w); Vijay Shankar 4-0-48-0-12.00 (1w).	

India	
S Dhawan c (Sub) b S Hasan	10
R Sharma c Mahmudullah b N Islam	56
S Raina c M Rahim b Hossain	0
I. Rahul c S Rahman b Hossain	24
M Pandey c S Rahman b M Rahman	28
V Shankar c Mehedi Hasan b Sarkar	17
Dinesh Karthik Not Out	29
Extras Ob 2lb Onb Open 2w	4
Total (20.0 overs)	168-6
Fall of Wickets: 1-32 Dhawan, 2-32 Raina, 3-83 Rahul, 4-98 Sharma, 5-133 Pandey, 6-162 Shankar.	
Did Not Bat: Sundar, Thakur, Chahal, Unadkat.	
Bowling: Shakib Al Hasan 4-0-28-1-7.00; Mehedi Hasan 1-0-17-0-17.00; Rubel Hossain 4-0-35-2-8.75; Nazmul Islam 4-0-32-1-8.00 (1w); Mustafizur Rahman 4-1-21-1-5.25; Soumya Sarkar 3-0-33-1-11.00 (1w).	

**COLOMBO:** India survived late drama in a pulsating final to clinch the Twenty20 tri-series after Dinesh Karthik smashed the final ball for a six to secure their thrilling four-wicket victory against a gallant Bangladesh side yesterday.

With India needing 34 runs off the last two overs, Karthik hammered 29 not out off just eight deliveries, his third six sealing India's third, and the most hard-earned, victory over Bangladesh in the tournament.

Put into bat, Bangladesh made 166-8, a total they owe largely to number three batsman Sabbir Rahman who made 77 after their top order collapsed. Chasing



### Wild celebration by a young India team

167 to win, India lost openers Shikhar Dhawan and number three Suresh Raina early but skipper Rohit Sharma batted comfortably to score 56 and keep India's chase on track.

He and KL Rahul (24) found it easy going against the Bangladesh bowlers until Sharma went for a fatal slog-sweep of Nazmul Islam, departing with three sixes and four boundaries to his name. Mustafizur Rahman then bowled a masterly 18th over, when his first five balls at Vijay Shankar yielded only one run and Manish Pandey (28) perished off the sixth trying to accelerate the contest.

Next man in Karthik exploded immediately, hitting the first ball he faced for a six and plundering 22 runs



**COLOMBO:** India's team members pose with the Nidahas Twenty20 Tri-Series international cricket trophy at the end of the final Nidahas Twenty20 Tri-Series international cricket match between India and Bangladesh. — AFP

off that over from Rubel Hossain to turn the match on its head.

Needing 12 runs off the last over from Soumya Sarkar, Shankar fell to the fifth delivery with India still five runs away. Karthik nonchalantly hit the final ball for a six to trigger wild celebration by a young India team which had rested regular skipper Virat Kohli and stumper Mahendra Singh Dhoni, among others.

Interim captain Sharma had earlier opted to bowl after winning the toss, influenced partly by the fact that chasing teams had won five of the six matches prior to the final.

Bangladesh suffered early jolts and slumped to 68

for four midway through their innings after leg-spinner Yuzvendra Chahal (3-18) struck three blows, dismissing Tamim Iqbal, Soumya Sarkar and Mushfiqur Rahim.

Sabbir took the onus on himself to rescue Bangladesh and he got some support from Mahmudulla who made 21. Even though wickets kept tumbling at the other end, Sabbir brought up his half-century off 37 balls to keep the scoreboard ticking.

Paceman Jaydev Unadkat struck twice in the penultimate over of the Bangladesh innings, dismissing Sabbir and Rubel Hossain. Mehidy Hasan Miraz made 19 not out off seven balls to help Bangladesh cross the 150-mark. — Reuters

## Kuwait wins gold, silver, bronze in special Olympics in UAE

**ABU DHABI:** Kuwaiti athletes with intellectual disabilities won gold, silver and bronze medals at Special Olympics IX MENA Games Abu Dhabi 2018, as competitions kick off in UAE capital earlier yesterday. The Kuwaiti athletes succeeded in standing on podiums amidst competition from 32 countries, Rehab Burusly, Chairwoman of Al-Tomoooh Sport Club for Intellectual Disabilities of Kuwait, told KUNA.

She said athletes were very keen on achieving top places despite the fact the club was officially established days before the Special Olympic games. Burusly said Mohammad Sami and Mishal Al-Bader won the gold medals in the swimming butterfly and Chest stroke races. Fawziya Al-Sawwagh won the silver medal of the women bowling event, while Rashed Al-Qabandi won bronze of men table tennis.

Burusly said the team included 50 athletes competing in football, basketball, table tennis, swimming, track and field, bowling and bocce.

The special Olympics IX MENA Games and Special Olympics World Games Abu Dhabi 2018 are part of the UAE's National Vision 2021 that highlights full integration of people of determination into everyday society. —KUNA

## Hopeful SA name Rabada in Test squad

**CAPE TOWN:** Kagiso Rabada has been named in South Africa's squad for the third Test against Australia - but two other fast bowlers have been added in case he loses his appeal against a ban. Rabada's appeal against a ban for the last two Tests of the series will be heard by New Zealand judicial commissioner Michael Heron by teleconference today, with a verdict due to be announced within 48 hours. Meanwhile, Duanne Olivier and Chris Morris have been included in a 17-man squad for the Test that starts at Newlands on Thursday. Rabada was man of the match in South Africa's series-levelling six-wicket victory in the second Test in Port Elizabeth. But he made contact with Steve Smith after dismissing the Australian captain and was penalised three demerit points, which took him to the eight-point threshold which triggers an automatic two-match ban. If Rabada is absent, the selectors may be tempted to pick not just a direct replacement but to consider a also adding a fast bowling all-rounder such as Morris to bolster the bowling options.

Chief selector Linda Zondi said the squad would be pruned in time to allow players not selected for the Test team to play for their franchises in domestic matches starting on Thursday. Both teams took a break from cricket after the Port Elizabeth Test but will start their preparations for the third Test today.

South African squad: Faf du Plessis (captain), Hashim Amla, Temba Bavuma, Quinton de Kock (wkt), Theunis de Bruyn, AB de Villiers, Dean Elgar, Heinrich Klaasen (wkt), Keshav Maharaj, Aiden Markram, Morne Morkel, Chris Morris, Wiaan Mulder, Lungi Ngidi, Duanne Olivier, Vernon Philander and Kagiso Rabada. —AFP

## Hughes makes flying start as Southampton reach FA Cup semis

**WIGAN:** Mark Hughes enjoyed the ideal start to his Southampton reign as the struggling Premier League club reached the FA Cup semi-finals with a 2-0 win at Wigan yesterday. Hughes was hired as Southampton manager this week to replace the sacked Mauricio Pellegrino and the former Saints striker had an immediate impact on his new team.

Hughes' main goal is to help Southampton preserve their top-flight status and they dropped into the relegation zone on Saturday as Crystal Palace won in the league while the Saints were preparing for their quarter-final. Nevertheless, a trip to Wembley in the semi-finals could provide a welcome tonic as the new manager tries to make his presence felt. It was essential Southampton avoided following in the footsteps of Manchester City, West Ham and Bournemouth-top-flight sides who had all perished against third tier giant-killers Wigan in the FA Cup this season. They achieved that aim thanks to second half goals from Pierre Emile Hojbjerg and Cedric Soares.

Southampton joined Tottenham and Manchester United in the semi-finals, with Leicester and Chelsea meeting in the last quarter-final later on Sunday. It will be Saints' first appearance in the last four in 15 years. "It was an important day for the players today. I have been really impressed with the quality of the talent I have," said Hughes, who was sacked by Stoke earlier this season.

"They have lost a bit of confidence recently but they are good players. "We stood up to Wigan. It was a statement of intent and a start. "We have work to do in the Premier League, but we will enjoy this moment." After a scrappy first half, Southampton took the lead in the 62nd minute. Dusan Tadic's corner was stabbed goalwards by



**WIGAN:** Wigan Athletic's English striker Ryan Colclough (L) runs away from Southampton's Serbian midfielder Dusan Tadic and Southampton's German-born Portuguese defender Cedric Soares (R) during the English FA Cup quarter-final football match between Wigan Athletic and Southampton at DW Stadium in Wigan. — AFP

Hojbjerg and Wigan's Dan Burn couldn't react quick enough to clear off the line.

Manolo Gabbiadini had a chance to double Southampton's advantage in the 73rd minute when he got past Burn and the Wigan centre-back brought him down in the penalty area. But Wigan goalkeeper Christian Walton plunged to his left and pushed Gabbiadini's powerful spot-

kick round the post.

Wigan, FA Cup winners in 2013, applied plenty of pressure in the closing stages, but couldn't emulate their epic fifth round success against Premier League leaders City. In the first minute of stoppage-time, Southampton right back Soares surged into the area before side-footing past Walton. — AFP

## Jackets top Senators on Nutivaara's power-play goal

**OHIO:** Boone Jenner and Markus Nutivaara each scored a goal as the Columbus Blue Jackets rallied for a 2-1 victory over the Ottawa Senators on Saturday night in Columbus, Ohio. The Blue Jackets extended their winning streak to seven games. Goalie Sergei Bobrovsky made 23 saves to help Columbus earn its seventh consecutive home victory. Alex Burrows scored for the Senators, who got 33 saves from Mike Condon.

### BRUINS 3, LIGHTNING 0

Tuukka Rask had 23 saves while picking up his third shutout of the season and Torey Krug had three assists to lead Boston over host Tampa Bay. It was the 41st career shutout for Rask and marked the first time this season that the Lightning were shut out. David Pastrnak, David Backes and Riley Nash each scored goals for the Bruins, who moved within two points of the first-place Lightning with a game in hand. It also was the fifth time that Rask shut out Tampa Bay in his career. Andrei Vasilevskiy had 24 saves for the Lightning, who dropped their second straight game.

### DEVILS 3, KINGS 0

Keith Kinkaid made 38 saves as visiting New Jersey

beat host Los Angeles. Kinkaid improved to 9-2-0 in his last 11 starts and recorded his fourth career shutout. He stopped 19 shots in the first, eight in the second and 11 more in the third. He also helped kill off six Kings power plays. Michael Grabner scored a short-handed goal and Nico Hischier tallied on even strength in the opening period as the Devils won their third straight game on a season-high six-game road trip.

### FLYERS 4, HURRICANES 2

Valtteri Filppula had the go-ahead goal with 5:49 left, and Philadelphia scored four times in the third period to beat host Carolina. The Flyers snapped a two-game skid. Philadelphia's Travis Konecny tied the game 1-1 with 11:41 left in the third period. Carolina responded and retook the lead, 2-1, just over two minutes later on a goal by Jaccob Slavin. The Flyers tied the game again on a goal by Jakub Voracek with 8:02 remaining. Filppula then gave Philadelphia its first lead with his 11th goal of the season with 5:49 left. Michael Raffl provided a two-goal margin with just under two minutes left.

### MAPLE LEAFS 4, CANADIENS 0

William Nylander, Kasper Kapanen, Nazem Kadri and Andreas Johansson scored goals, and Toronto easily defeated visiting Montreal for its fourth consecutive win. Curtis McElhinney turned away 33 shots for the Maple Leafs. The Canadiens have lost two in a row and are 1-5-2 in their past eight games.

### OILERS 4, PANTHERS 2

Connor McDavid scored the tying goal and had an assist on the go-ahead score as visiting Edmonton rallied to defeat Florida. McDavid also added an assist on Ty Rattie's empty-net goal with 50 seconds left. McDavid has 19 goals in his past 22 games. For the season, he has 34

goals and 55 assists, ranking third in the NHL with 89 points entering Saturday night. All three of McDavid's points came in the third period. Despite the loss, the Panthers are 16-5-1 since Jan. 30 and 9-2-0 in their past 11 home games as they chase a playoff berth.

### SABRES 5, BLACKHAWKS 3

Nicholas Baptiste scored twice, including the go-ahead goal on the power play with 1:56 left in the third period, and Buffalo held on for a win over visiting Chicago. Benoit Pouliot, Ryan O'Reilly and Sam Reinhart also scored for Buffalo, which snapped a two-game winless streak.

Jordan Oesterle, Jonathan Toews and Tomas Jurco scored for Chicago. The Blackhawks have lost two straight and four of their past five.

### BLUES 4, RANGERS 3 (OT)

Brayden Schenn's wristed from the right circle at 1:02 of overtime gave St Louis a win over visiting New York. After goalie Jake Allen stopped Chris Kreider's point-blank bid for a game-winner, Schenn tallied his 25th goal off a pass from Alex Pietrangolo, who earned his third point of the night. St Louis forced overtime with Pietrangolo's second marker of the night at 5:15 of the third period. Mika Zibanejad scored twice for the Rangers.

### SHARKS 5, CANUCKS 3

Timo Meier scored two goals, including the winner, as visiting San Jose defeated Vancouver. Meier's second goal of the night broke a 3-3 tie at 6:07 of the third period as he wired a long shot home during a counterattack. Logan Couture, Tomas Hertl and Kevin Labanc each had a goal and an assist for the Sharks, who posted their fourth consecutive win. The Canucks took their season-worst sixth straight loss despite goals from Nikolay Goldobin, Bo Horvat and Alex Edler. —Reuters

Sports

# Late Alves goal sends PSG to massive 17 points clear

## Two teams provided a lively spectacle

**NICE:** With Paris Saint-Germain struggling to find inspiration, veteran defender Dani Alves did a surprising impersonation of injured compatriot Neymar to score the winner in Nice yesterday.

With eight minutes left and after better-known attacking talents had squandered a string of chances, Alves, who is just 1.72 metres (5-foot-6) ghosted into the centre forward position and out-leaped the defence to head in a cross from Adrien Rabiot to seal a 2-1 victory. "After the defeat against Real Madrid (in the Champions League), we have reacted very well. I'm pleased to see how the team has responded after that loss," PSG coach Unai Emery said. "We were lacking that little something to forget the defeat. Perhaps a tiny element of it will never leave. But we've won against Metz, Angers, and now here and I like that." A rare Sunday lunchtime (1200 GMT) kick-off was part of the developing French league strategy of emulating more successful European leagues and targeting Chinese viewers.

The two teams provided a lively spectacle which ended with PSG stretching their lead to 17 points over

Monaco. Allan Saint-Maximin gave the home team the lead after 17 minutes with a deft finish which was just the fifth touch of a breathtaking move that began on the Nice goal line. Angel di Maria quickly replied, speeding through a suddenly uncertain Nice defence and swerving in a shot that squirmed past Walter Benitez.

In the absence of Neymar, the two best known strikers on display almost gave the Chinese prime-time audience goals to cheer. Edinson Cavani of PSG hit a post from close range in the first half after hesitation in the Nice defence. Mario Balotelli forced a flying save from PSG keeper Alphonse Areola and later hit the bar with a

header. Saint-Maximin's pace repeatedly troubled PSG, but he was unable to repeat his cool finish, though he came close with one shot that clipped the knee of the sprawling Areola. At the other end, Di Maria forced a full-stretch save from Benitez with a daring volleyed back flick. Kylian Mbappe, who seemed out of touch, wasted a glorious close-range chance with 12 minutes left. Alves also forced a leaping save from Benitez with a bold overhead kick. — AFP



### Two best strikers on display



**NICE:** Paris Saint-Germain's Brazilian defender Daniel Alves (Bottom R) shoots on goal as (From L) Nice's French defender Malang Sarr, Paris Saint-Germain's Uruguayan forward Edinson Cavani, Nice's French defender Maxime Le Marchand and Nice's Argentinian goalkeeper Walter Benitez look on during the French L1 football match. — AFP

## 'No personality, no class' as Mourinho blasts Man Utd

**MANCHESTER:** Jose Mourinho launched an astonishing verbal tirade against his Manchester United players after they reached the FA Cup semi-finals, accusing them of "a lack of personality, lack of class and lack of desire."

Just 24 hours after the United manager had made a memorable defence of his own record in the pre-match press conference, Mourinho turned his attention to his players after a comfortable 2-0 quarter-final victory over Brighton. Only Nemanja Matic, who set up the opening goal for Romelu Lukaku before scoring a late second himself, and youngster Scott McTominay were spared massive criticism. And after Mourinho claimed he was looking for a response to the midweek Champions League exit to Sevilla, the Portuguese veteran even claimed some of his players lacked the personality and desire to play for the famous Premier League club.

"I didn't like the game," said Mourinho. "I think we deserved to win but I didn't have the reaction from all of them. I had the reaction from some of them. Some of them were mentally strong enough with the football quality to play—that was the reason we won. "But a team of 11, when you have a minimum of six or seven players performing and wanting to

play, who want the responsibility to have the ball, who have the desire really to play—it is difficult to have a good performance "So I am not happy with the performance all all. But I am happy with the result."

England full-back Luke Shaw was the one player named by Mourinho as having failed to follow his game plan and was, accordingly, substituted at half-time. That made Shaw an obvious target for Mourinho to be questioned about although the United manager clearly had other players in mind when issuing his widespread critique. "I wanted more personality in the team because many, many times I felt that Matic was an island of personality, desire and control surrounded by lack of personality, lack of class and lack of desire."

"I have to say that for example McTominay lost more passes today in all the matches he played put together but he was a Manchester United player. "And for me a Manchester United player is one who when he plays badly still gives to the team. That is a question of personality, that is a Manchester United player for me. And that is what some of the others did not have." Mourinho had hinted before the game that many of his stars are currently under-performing and, tellingly, Paul Pogba and Alexis Sanchez were both left out of his starting line-up.

**'SCARED TO PLAY'**  
But the United manager's response to what was, after all, a comfortable victory was an astonishing psychological tactic that may, ultimately, backfire—a point that Mourinho accepted when asked why he had made such a calculated outburst.

"My calculation is that without pressure, they don't perform well. What can I



Jose Mourinho

lose?" he said. "And the ones that are always there are the ones that will always be there. And that is an example of personality."

"You have the kid that didn't play well at all (McTominay). I told him already, he was the first one I spoke to individually in the dressing room. "And instead of being critical with him, I was positive with him because 'You played very bad but you did the basic things that one player has to do.' "The basic things is to keep the emotional balance to play with that red shirt, which is a heavy shirt to wear. And the kid, in his worst performance by far, he was there and he had body to wear that shirt. "He was not afraid to play. He played bad, and every player can play bad. "But to feel not comfortable to play - 'Please Mister, take me from the pitch.' I felt that."

Mourinho, whose only hope of a trophy this season is the FA Cup, warmed to his theme. He said that some of his big name stars are simply scared of the job in hand at Old Trafford. "A few of the guys, I saw them scared to play. You know when the sun is shining—and in football the sun is shining when everything goes well, you win matches, you score goals, everything goes in your direction—every player is a good player and every player wants to play and every player wants the ball and every player is confident to play and every player looks amazing."

"When it is dark and cold, and that in football means a period of bad results or a bad result like what happened to us a couple of days ago, not everybody has the confidence and the personality to play really." — AFP

## Salah can pass Messi and be best in world, insists Klopp

**LIVERPOOL:** Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp believes comparisons between Mohamed Salah and Barcelona's five-time Ballon d'Or winner Lionel Messi are premature, but that the Egyptian is on his way to one day becoming the best player in the world.

Salah's stunning season continued with a four-goal haul in a 5-0 thrashing of Watford at Anfield to take his tally for the season to 36 on Saturday—the most goals ever scored by a Liverpool player in their debut year at the club.

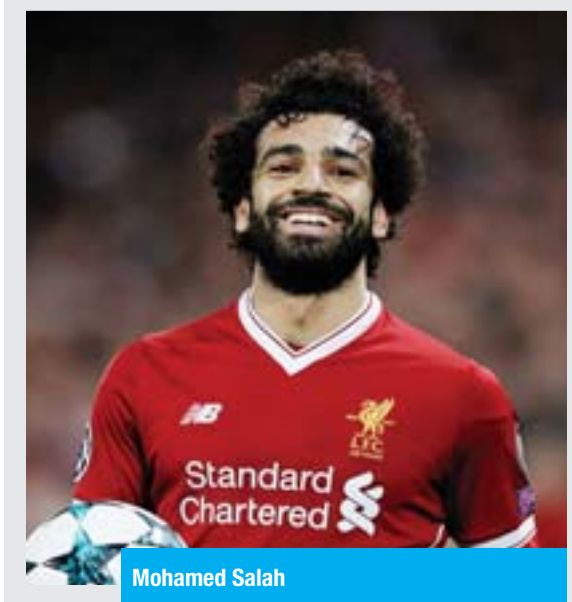
Messi showed why he is still widely considered the world's best by scoring his 100th Champions League goal in tearing Chelsea apart in a 3-0 win on Wednesday. But Klopp believes Salah, 25, has time on his side to succeed Messi and Real Madrid rival Cristiano Ronaldo, both now in their thirties, as the world's best player. "I think Mo is on the way (to being the best in the world)," said Klopp. "I don't think Mo or anybody else wants to be compared with Lionel Messi. He is the one who is doing what he's doing for what feels like 20 years or so."

And Klopp challenged Salah to maintain the standards he has set this season in the manner Messi and Ronaldo have for the past decade. "As it always is in life, if you have the skills, you have to show that constantly, and consistently he is very good and he helps us a lot." Salah even defied the slippery conditions of a snow storm as he weaved his way past Jose Holebas to slot home the opener after just four minutes.

"Conditions were difficult. It was obviously slippery and everybody suffered, but not Mo in that situation. It was really special," added Klopp. Liverpool had to wait until two minutes before half-time to double their advantage, but there was no surprise who was on the end of a sweeping team move as Salah got his second of the evening from Andy Robertson's inch-perfect cross.

Watford have now lost nine and drawn one of their last 10 away games. And manager Javi Gracia admitted his side had been completely outclassed. "We know we play against one of the best teams in Europe at this moment and they were much better than us," said the Spaniard. "We need to compete with the best 11 we can and it was not the best performance for us today." Salah turned provider immediately after the break when his cross was wonderfully backcheeked past Karnezis by Roberto Firmino.

The Egyptian made it 4-0 with 13 minutes remaining as, despite falling over, he managed to slide the ball past Karnezis. And he then capped off a brilliant personal performance in the dying seconds, thrashing into the roof of the net after Karnezis had fumbled Danny Ings' shot. — AFP



Mohamed Salah

## Magic Batshuayi strike seals narrow Dortmund win

**BERLIN:** A superb goal off the outside of his boot by Michy Batshuayi gave Borussia Dortmund a 1-0 win over Hanover yesterday and kept them third in the Bundesliga. Batshuayi, on loan from Chelsea for the rest of the season, gave Dortmund the three points at home with a wonderful piece of individual skill midway through the first-half.

The Belgian international claimed arguably the best of his eight goals in just 12 games for Dortmund by flicking the ball into the net from a corner. Having hit the post after just 35 seconds, Batshuayi has his back on goal when he stabbed at Andre Schuerle's cross on 24 minutes and his effort sailed past Hanover's goalkeeper. It was his sixth German league goal in seven Bundesliga games with Dortmund after spending the first half of the season stuck on Chelsea's bench. "I saw the path to the goal wasn't clear, but there was just a small gap and luckily it came off," Batshuayi told Eurosport about his wonder goal.

"We were very physical and mentally very strong. You could see that the team really wanted the three points." Hanover had their chance to equalise on 81 minutes when Brazilian striker Jonathas headed on from a free-kick and the ball was poked over the line, but the goal was ruled offside. "We lacked that bit of final luck," lamented Hanover goalkeeper Philipp Tschauer, but Dortmund deserved the win after creating 25 shots on goal to just nine by the visitors.

Just before the final whistle, Dortmund winger Maximilian Philipp hit the post as the hosts tried to stretch their lead. The home win buoyed Dortmund after Thursday's disappointing Europa League exit in



**DORTMUND:** Dortmund's German midfielder Mario Goetze (R) and Hanover's Nigerian midfielder Noah Joel Sarenren Bazeze vie for the ball during the German first division Bundesliga football match. — AFP

the last 16 when Borussia was held to a goalless second-leg draw at home to Red Bull Salzburg after losing 2-1 in Austria. The home Bundesliga win at Signal Iduna Park leaves Dortmund 18 points behind runaway league leaders Bayern Munich, who are at RB Leipzig later.

Dortmund's win and Schalke's 1-0 victory at

Wolfsburg on Saturday mean Bayern's confirmed title victory must be put on ice until after next weekend's international break. Later yesterday afternoon, Bayer Leverkusen can draw level with Dortmund on 48 points if they win at bottom side Cologne in the Rhineland derby. — AFP

**12** Tributes to 'inspiration' Hawking as curtain falls on Paralympics



**14** India win tri-series after Karthik blitz in tense final



**15** Late Alves goal sends PSG to massive 17 points clear



**BARCELONA:** Barcelona's Argentinian forward Lionel Messi (L) vies with Athletic Bilbao's Spanish defender Inigo Martinez during the Spanish League football match between FC Barcelona and Athletic Club Bilbao at the Camp Nou stadium in Barcelona yesterday. — AFP

## Messi scores as Barca beat Athletic

### Sevilla defeated by Leganes

**BARCELONA:** Barcelona moved 11 points clear at the top of La Liga yesterday after beating Athletic Bilbao 2-0 at home with a goal from Paco Alcacer and a thumping strike from Lionel Messi in the first half.

Alcacer took the place of suspended striker Luis Suarez in the starting line-up and scored a first goal in three months to put Barca ahead in the eighth minute, side-footing home a pass from Jordi Alba after Messi had cut in from the left.

The Argentine scored for the sixth game in a row in all competitions and for the 25th time in this league campaign when he doubled Barca's lead in the 30th minute with a deadly strike into the bottom corner

from the edge of the area.

Barca lead the standings on 75 points, 11 ahead of nearest challengers Atletico Madrid who were visiting Villarreal later on Sunday, with champions Real Madrid hosting Girona. The Catalans were missing injured midfield linchpin Sergio Busquets as well as Suarez. However, they were rampant in the first half and could have taken a heavier lead into the break as Brazilian midfielder Philippe Coutinho hit the woodwork twice and his compatriot Paulinho struck a post.

The unbeaten league leaders slowed down in the second half and Athletic came into the game for the first time but despite numerous forays into Barca's

area they rarely got close to troubling goalkeeper Marc-Andre ter Stegen.

Earlier yesterday Sevilla suffered a hangover from their Champions League triumph over Manchester United as they lost 2-1 at mid-table Leganes in La Liga yesterday, their sixth defeat in 12 league games under coach Vincenzo Montella. Sevilla qualified for the quarter-finals of Europe's elite competition for the first time by beating United 2-1 at Old Trafford on Tuesday but went behind to Leganes four minutes before halftime to a looping header from defender Unai Bustinza.

Montella made three changes from the side that

had stunned Old Trafford, giving a starting berth to Wissam Ben Yedder after he scored twice after coming off the bench on Tuesday, but his side rarely got going against Leganes.

Forward Javier Eraso side-footed home a second goal for the home side in the 69th minute and things got worse for Sevilla when midfielder Pablo Sarabia was sent off in the 84th for picking up two yellow cards inside 11 minutes.

Miguel Layun pulled a goal back for Sevilla in the 90th minute. Sevilla are fifth in the Liga standings on 45 points, 12 behind fourth-placed Real Madrid and one ahead of Villarreal in sixth. — Reuters

### Pedro halts slide, sends Chelsea into FA Cup semi-finals

**LEICESTER:** Pedro Rodriguez came off the bench to halt Chelsea's slide with an extra-time winner in a 2-1 victory at Leicester yesterday to reach the FA Cup semi-finals. Alvaro Morata's first goal since Boxing Day on his return to the Chelsea starting line-up put the visitors on course to bounce back from their Champions League elimination at the hands of Barcelona in midweek.

However, Jamie Vardy's equaliser 15 minutes from time made them do it the hard way in an extra 30 minutes. Yet, for all Antonio Conte's complaints this season about his side's strength in depth, the Italian was able to call on Pedro to turn the game in Chelsea's favour when he headed home former Leicester favourite N'Golo Kante's cross.

Chelsea had lost three of their past four matches to fall behind in the race for a top-four finish in the Premier League as well as their European exit. But victory does at least keep their chances of silverware to end the season alive. Chelsea will meet Southampton in the last four, while Manchester United face Tottenham Hotspur for a place in the final. Both Morata and Pedro had a point to prove after being left out of the Spain squad on Friday just three months ahead of the World Cup.

Morata was recalled for just his second start since the sides last met in a 0-0 draw at Stamford Bridge back in January. And after a quiet start, Chelsea's club record £70 million buy from Real Madrid was presented with his first big chance of the afternoon when he was brilliantly picked out by Marcos Alonso's low cross, but his shot was far too close to Kasper Schmeichel.

Morata headed another half-chance from a teasing Willian cross over and then hit the outside of the post from the narrowest of angles. The goal he craved finally arrived three minutes before half-time, but much of the credit must go to Willian who surged through the heart of the Leicester midfield on the counter-attack before feeding

Morata. And Morata coolly clipped the ball beyond the advancing Schmeichel with an assuredness unbecoming of a striker who had gone 13 games without a goal. Despite going in front, Conte still withdrew Tiemoue Bakayoko at half-time after another awful 45 minutes for the Frenchman in a desperately disappointing debut season in English football following a £40 million move from Monaco.

The visitors were happy to take their chances on the counter-attack in the second period as they began to feel the after-effects of their run around at Barcelona in midweek. Leicester's search for an equaliser was largely laboured and, even when a big chance did arise, Vardy headed wastefully over when completely unmarked inside the area. However, the England international made amends 15 minutes from time when he forced the ball home at the third attempt after Vicente Iborra's first two efforts were blocked and then saved by Willy Caballero. Only a fine low save from Caballero prevented Vardy from turning the tie completely around eight minutes later as both sides settled for extra time. Crucially, Conte was able to refresh his side as Pedro, Gary Cahill and Olivier Giroud were all introduced in the first half of extra time. — AFP



**LEICESTER:** Leicester City's English striker Jamie Vardy celebrates after scoring his team's goal. — AFP



## Business

MONDAY, MARCH 19, 2018

**18** Average monthly crude prices dropped for first time in 8 months**19** Top govt officials, global business leaders to participate in KIF 2018**21** TEC holds event for employees to discuss future plans

SYDNEY: This general view shows the Leaders' Plenary Session of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)-Australia Special Summit in Sydney yesterday. — AFP

# ASEAN, Australia slam trade protectionism

## Summit says multi-nation trade key to prosperity

**SYDNEY:** The leaders of Australia and Singapore closed a regional summit yesterday with a stand against protectionism, arguing in favor of multi-nation trade deals as fears mount that US plans for new tariffs could stoke a global trade war.

"We strongly believe that a free, open and rules-based multilateral trading system is key to the region's growth and prosperity," Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong said at a news conference to mark the end of a summit between Australia and the Association of Southeast Asian

Nations (ASEAN). President Donald Trump announced the tariffs on March 7 to protect domestic steel and aluminum producers on national security grounds. The United States is also looking at tariffs on up to \$60 billion worth of Chinese imports, targeting technology and telecommunications sectors. Lee and Turnbull urged ASEAN to speedily agree to the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, a China-backed alternative to the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade pact that Trump withdrew the United States from last year. "If we

secure a good agreement, this would be, as one of our colleagues said this morning, an antithesis of protectionism, it would ensure, on the back of the TPP-11, that the Indo-Pacific continues to be the fulcrum of open and free trade," Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull said.

Officially, the summit was focused on fostering closer economic ties among the members of ASEAN and Australia, and countering the threat of Islamist militants returning to the region from the Middle East. Australia hosted the weekend meetings despite not being a member of the 10-

nation bloc, aiming to tighten political and trade ties in the region amid China's rising influence.

In a joint communique issued at the conclusion of the summit, ASEAN and Australia also called for "self-restraint" in the South China Sea, where aggressive Chinese expansion has irked ASEAN members. "We emphasize the importance of non-militarization and the need to enhance mutual trust and confidence, exercise self-restraint...and avoid actions that may complicate the situation," the communique said.

ASEAN members Brunei, Malaysia, Vietnam,

the Philippines, also have claims in the important trade waterway that is mostly claimed by China, which has been building artificial islands on reefs, some with ports and air strips.

"This is a security and stability question in Southeast Asia which will affect all ASEAN countries if it goes wrong," Lee said. ASEAN also called for the "complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula" and urged all UN members to strictly apply Security-Council sanctions on North Korea. — Reuters

## Zain offers the all-new Galaxy S9 and Galaxy S9+

**KUWAIT:** Zain, the leading telecommunications company in Kuwait, announced the offering of Galaxy S9 and Galaxy S9+, Samsung's latest flagship devices that reimagine the way we communicate, share and experience the world.

Zain offers the new generation of Samsung's flagship devices knowing the passion customers have for the latest and most advanced products in the world of technology. The all-new Galaxy devices feature a curved Super AMOLED display and a revolutionary redesigned camera with a new dual aperture lens, reimagine the way we take photos and communicate with the world.

Zain's postpaid customers can now get the new Galaxy S9 device with a variety of new plans starting at KD 34 monthly, including 500 GBs of 4G LTE Internet and 5000 local minutes. The company is keen on offering the most flexible and competitive plans to suit customers' unique personal and professional needs.

The latest addition to Samsung's Galaxy smartphone lineup is built on the best-in-class

Galaxy Foundation of design innovation and cutting-edge technology. Made for the way we increasingly communicate and express ourselves more with images, videos and emojis, the Galaxy S9 and S9+ drive innovation with Samsung's most advanced camera ever. Redesigned with a new dual aperture lens that powers an innovative low light camera technology, Super Slow-mo video capabilities and personalized AR Emoji, the Galaxy S9 and S9+ ensure you never miss a moment and make your everyday epic.

The new Galaxy S9 and S9+ devices offer a number of state-of-the-art features, making them among the best and most advanced smartphones in the market. Features include a curved Super AMOLED Infinity Display, Octa-core processor, IP68 water resistance, Rear Super Speed camera with a new dual aperture lens, stereo speakers, and more. This offering comes in line with Zain's aim to provide its customers with a superior telecommunications experience, and springs from its core understanding of their needs. The company aims at providing its customers with an unmatched experience on Zain's most advanced network.

Zain emphasized its commitment to the needs of the largest customer base in Kuwait, and will continuously look into expanding its horizons to introduce the latest and most advanced solutions in the market to meet its customers unique needs and aspirations.



Abu Dhabi, where most of the UAE's vast oil reserves are located, is in the process of awarding new oil concessions, as previous agreements have either expired or will run out this month. It has already granted concessions to ExxonMobil, BP, Shell, Japan's INPEX, China's CNPC, Spanish Cepsa and a state-owned Indian consortium led by ONGC Videsh.

The new concessions have been offered at nearly half the duration of the old concessions, with ADNOC taking majority stake in the projects. ADNOC aims to increase its oil production capacity from 3.2 million barrels per day to 3.5 million by the end of 2018. — AFP

## US crude exports becoming bigger presence in global oil

**NEW YORK:** Boosted by surging output, the United States is becoming a significant exporter of crude oil, a shift that is remaking American infrastructure and altering the global petroleum market.

Now pumping more than 10 million barrels per day, the US has become the second biggest oil producer in the world behind Russia and ahead of Saudi Arabia. The bounty is the result of the shale oil boom due to new drilling and production techniques.

Eying this jump, the US at the end of 2015 scrapped its embargo on exports, a policy in place since the 1970s oil shocks. Energy companies have seized on the opening, exporting 1.1 million barrels per day to 37 countries in 2017. Canada is the leading destination of American crude, but the US has also been exporting more to Asia, long a major market for the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and Russia.

China is the second biggest market for US exports, data shows. Over the last decade, US crude imports have fallen from 10 million barrels a day to eight million barrels a day. But the US remains a major importer of crude oil, in large part because American oil refineries are not designed for the lighter-weight crude that comes out of shale fields. Rather, many plants are built to run on heavier oils from Canada, Mexico or Venezuela that are cheaper to procure and result in lofty profit margins after they are processed into gasoline. "The choice was made to invest in a more expensive, more sophisticated refinery that is a lot more costly to run, with the view that you are getting crude oil to a discount," said Harry Tchilinguirian, senior oil market strategist at BNP Paribas global markets. "Considering that it takes five to seven years

to build a refinery, you cannot just switch."

### Rethinking infrastructure

Prior to the shale boom, which dates to 2010 or 2011, the US had been planning new pipeline capacity to allow greater crude imports from Canada. But the shift in the US oil production picture has also altered the outlook for energy infrastructure. US companies are now focusing on adding domestic pipelines and export terminals in the Gulf Coast region to ship American oil abroad.

"The US cannot become completely independent of foreign oil," Tchilinguirian said.

In this context, President Donald Trump's idea of "energy dominance" or "the golden era of American energy" means not only reducing the role of imports, but "also being able to actively capture market share abroad," he said. Perhaps the most emblematic project is the reinvention of the Louisiana Offshore Oil Port, the only terminal in the US capable of servicing supertankers.

The facility was used for oil exports instead of imports for the first time in February. Farther west, the port of Corpus Christi, Texas is expected to become a bigger venue for crude exports and plans a \$327 million project to widen and deepen the port's channel. Experts think US oil exports could grow to as much as four to five million barrels a day in the medium term, prompting questions on which markets will buy the additional oil. In the near-term, John Coleman of consultancy Wood Mackenzie expects much of the crude to reach Europe, given the compatibility of the oil with the continent's refineries. But beyond 2022, the outlook is cloudier, in part because of new refineries coming on line in Africa and the Middle East, thus limiting their exports. — AFP

## Abu Dhabi awards France's Total stakes in oil concessions

**ABU DHABI:** Abu Dhabi state energy company ADNOC said yesterday it had awarded French oil giant Total stakes in two offshore oil concessions, as it looks to boost production by year's end. Total now holds a fifth of the Umm Shaif and Nasr concession and 5 percent of the Lower Zakum concession, together worth some 5.3 billion dirhams (\$1.4 billion, 1.2

million euros), ADNOC said in a press release.

Both concessions are effective March 9 for a duration of 40 years and are operated by ADNOC Offshore, a subsidiary of ADNOC, according to the statement. Sunday's signing was hosted by the Louvre Abu Dhabi, the billion-euro French-Emirati project that is the first Louvre-branded museum outside of France.



Business

# Top govt officials, global business leaders to participate in KIF 2018

Forum to be held under the patronage of HH the Amir tomorrow

**KUWAIT:** The Kuwait Investment Forum (KIF) 2018 will be held in Kuwait tomorrow (20th March 2018) under the patronage of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah at the Bayan Palace and the Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Center. KIF 2018 is co-organized by the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) and the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI).

The two-day event will highlight important investment partnerships and strategic investment opportunities available in Kuwait. KIF 2018 boasts remarkable guest speakers from the Kuwaiti public and privates sector, as well as prominent international business executives.

Speakers will include: His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, Prime Minister of Kuwait, Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense, Sheikh Sabah Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Anas Al Saleh, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs, Dr Nayef Al-Hajraf, Minister of Finance Kuwait, Hind Al-Sabeeh, Minister of Social Affairs and Labor and Minister of State for Economic Affairs, Khalid Nasser Al-Roudan, Minister of Commerce and Industry, Minister Sheikh Salman Al-Humoud Al-Sabah, Head of the General Directorate of Civil Aviation, Dr Mohammad Yousef Al-Hashel, Governor of the Central Bank of Kuwait and Sheikh Dr Meshal Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Director General for KDIPA.

Participating in the Forum, prominent private sector leaders in Kuwait, including Ali Mohammed Thunayan Al-Ghanim, Chairman of the Board of Directors of KCCI, Isam Jassem Al-Saqer, Group Chief Executive Officer of the National Bank of Kuwait Group, Hamad Al-Marzouq, Chairman Kuwait Finance House, Manaf Al-Hajeri, CEO of Kuwait Financial Center, Omar Kutayba Alghanim, CEO of Alghanim Industries and Chairman of Gulf Bank, and Tareq Sultan, Chief Executive Officer and Vice Chairman of Agility.

The Forum will also be attended by several international delegations, including a high-ranking Chinese delegation from the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT), as well as speeches and participations by top executives of major international companies, including Ebru Ozdemir, Chairwoman, Limak Investments-Turkey, Timothy Keating, Executive Vice President of Government Operations, The Boeing Company-USA, and Jason Channell, Managing Director and Global Head of Energy &

Cleantech, Citi Research - London, England. The Forum agenda will address the important topics of: Investing for the future Kuwait, trade facilitation: a driver for development, investment opportunities - lucrative options in dynamic sectors, financing for sustainable development and an open dialogue on "Kuwait

Development Path: The Vision & the Determination". There will also be a special session that will provide an update on New Kuwait. This exclusive session is the first public event since the vision's launch in January 2017 and will shed light on the progress to date on each of the program's seven pillars. Dr. Nayef Al-

Hajraf, Minister of Finance Kuwait, and Hind Al-Sabeeh, Minister of Social Affairs and Labor and Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Khalid Nasser Al-Roudan, Minister of Commerce and Industry, Minister of State for Youth Affairs will be speaking at this session.

NBK Money Markets Report

## Hot US politics dictates market trajectory; rate hike on horizon

**KUWAIT:** Recent inflationary figures out of the US were not too hot, neither too cold, but just enough to fortify the outlook for three interest rate hikes this year by the Federal Reserve. The inflation data from the US last week strengthened market sentiment temporarily, with S&P 500 futures rising and bond yields dipping. The inflation report was neutral enough that it was swiftly dominated by political turbulence in Washington when President Donald Trump fired Secretary of State Rex Tillerson. US stock markets immediately reversed gains. The absence of a major upward surprise in the inflation numbers may assist equity and bond markets to find some calmness after markets were shaken by January's labor report which showed wages rose much faster than anticipated. With inflationary fears out of the way US political turmoil continues to overshadow the goldilocks era in America, which the equity market cherished.

Looking back at the dollar's trajectory, the green back continued to maneuver in greater response to political issues than economic fundamentals. The continuous shift in crucial employees at the White House is elevating concerns that the current administration could pursue an even more aggressive and protectionist policy agenda moving forward. Donald Trump's top economic adviser Gary Cohn resigned following Trump's pronouncement to enforce tariffs on steel and aluminum imports, a move Cohn and the treasury secretary have strongly opposed. Moreover, Reuters reported that President Trump is pursuing to impose tariffs of up to \$60 billion on Chinese imports and will target the technology and communication sectors. Politico reported that US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer offered Trump a package of tariffs targeting \$30 billion a year on Chinese imports. However, the president insisted on a greater number. It is not a surprise that investors are demanding a greater risk premium for dollar investments.

As for the ECB's president, who cited last week that the present monetary strategy will remain cautiously loose despite increased confidence on the future path of inflation, therefore further upside price growth data is needed. The conclusion from the remarks of Draghi and Chief Economist at the ECB was that additional inflationary signs are desired before policy setters press the brakes on the loose monetary approach. Policy rates will need to persist at their present altitudes well past the end of net asset purchases until then. Thus, the first interest rate rise is not expected until around the middle of 2019.

Since the start of the year, currencies around the globe haven't hesitated to take advantage of the Dollar's weakness. Draghi stressed on the issue by stating the Bank remained alarmed about the strength of the euro that is not fully backed up by improving economic fundamentals in the euro-zone but more by external factors according to the ECB's analysis. External factors such as heightened political instability in the US have been more important drivers of the stronger euro at the start of this year, even as fundamental economics favors a stronger green back.

Last week in the FX market, the Dollar index was on the back foot after Secretary of State Rex Tillerson was removed from office by President Trump. Moreover, the possibility of additional import charges against China played a role too. The downward momentum in the index persisted until Thursday when the Dollar was saved by the robust Empire State Manufacturing figure. The

USD index ended Friday's session at 90.139, almost unchanged over the week. The single currency was in a hawkish mode at the start of the week as the US dollar was subdued. It was a light week in terms of economic data for the euro-zone, hence the euro's direction was mainly correlated with US dollar movements. The euro also managed to close the week over it started off, at 1.2287.

It was a different story for the Sterling pound. The pound was one of the best performing currencies last week supported by some renewed optimism over ongoing Brexit negotiations. UK junior Brexit minister Robin Walker stated that "we recognize how important it is to secure the deal on the implementation period as soon as possible. I want to stress that we are very close to a deal at this time". On the EU side, an unnamed diplomat was quoted saying "the UK was seriously prepared", and that "means let's get on with it". The GBP gained 0.62 percent over the USD last week. Safe haven yen continues to be in demand as investors are worried about global trade tensions and high turnover rate at the White House. The yen encountered some weakness on Tuesday pressured by political scandal surrounding Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's government, however the weakness was short lived. The Japanese yen has already appreciated 6 percent versus the US dollar in 2018 and as geopolitical risks continue to mount that opens further room for the yen to increase. The USD depreciated by 0.94 percent versus the JPY in last week's session. In the commodities complex, the precious metal was consolidating throughout last week as global trade tensions were matched by expectations that the FED will hike interest rates next week on March the 21st. Gold closed the week at \$1313.

US inflation

Both headline and core consumer price growth accelerated by 0.2 percent on a monthly basis in February, in line with earlier projections. In annual terms, consumer inflation came in at 2.2 percent from 2.1 percent recorded in the previous reading, while the core data remained stagnant at 1.8 percent. The inflation data came after the latest jobs report, which showed wage growth remained subdued. Combining both wage and consumer inflation data together decreases the probability for US policy makers to speed up the pace of monetary tightening. For the core figure to pick up more significantly and raise the pace of overall inflation, wages need to accelerate. The main theme was that core inflation remained unchanged. The data will have little impact on this month's FOMC meeting, at which Fed Chairman Jerome Powell is broadly expected to raise rates by 25 basis points.

On the producer front, prices in the wholesale market progressed to an annual rate of 2.8 percent from 2.7 percent in January as the PPI increased by 0.2 percent m/m. The robust inflationary data however was in the core figure that excludes food, energy and trade services grew 0.4 percent, matching January's gain. In the 12 months through February, core PPI increased 2.7 percent, the biggest gain since August 2014.

Retail sales data

Growth in US retail sales has been sluggish recently with sales deteriorating for a third consecutive month, the sequential occurrence of such negative data has not transpired in nearly six years. One reason why overall retail sales have weakened recently relates to reduction in auto sales. Auto sales surged to a high of 18.5m annually last September, due to a wave of replacement purchases for vehicles that were damaged by Hurricanes Harvey and Irma. Since then, auto sales have dropped back, slowing to 17.0m. The Commerce Department concluded that retail sales slipped 0.1 percent last month, while the core data rose by 0.1 percent. After persistent negative data in retail sales, which accounts to a significant portion of US GDP, the Atlanta Fed reduced its estimate for Q1 growth to a 1.9 percent annualized rate from an earlier estimate of 2.5 percent.

Europe & UK

February's consumer inflation figure declined to an annual rate of 1.1 percent from 1.3 percent seen in the previous month. In the same month last year, the rate was 2 percent. The fall back in the headline data is attributed to deflation in unprocessed food prices and declining energy prices, data from the European Union's statistics office Eurostat showed. The core figure remained unchanged at 1 percent. On the wages front, annual hourly labor costs growth slowed from 1.6 percent in Q3 to 1.5 percent in Q4. Overall, the central banks goal of a widespread rise in underlying inflation is no wear to be seen and although the Bank may end its bond buying program at the end of 2018, increasing interest rates in early 2019 seems less likely.

Inflation expectations

As anticipated, the Swiss National Bank sustained its policy rates (sight deposit rate at -0.75 percent and 3-month Libor target range at -1.25 percent/-0.25 percent) that were implemented in early 2015. The slight surprise was that the SNB revised down its inflation estimates by 0.1 percent for 2018 and 0.2 percent for 2019, while maintaining its growth forecast of 2 percent for the current year. The modification of inflation projections is due to the appreciation of the CHF. As a result, the central bank described the franc as highly overvalued and stressed once again the significance of negative rates and FX interventions to curb the currency's strength. They expect inflation to reach 2 percent in late 2020, thus policy rates may not tighten before 2019.

BoJ's meeting minutes

Meeting minutes from the Bank of Japan revealed most monetary policy makers on the board share the view that the current strategy should persist due to the lack of inflationary pressures. The Governor articulated the Bank could engineer a smooth withdrawal from its easy monetary policy. However, it is too early to debate specifics with price growth still distant from its target. Inflation is barely above 1 percent, so the BoJ is in no urgency to scale back stimulus even as the costs of prolonged easing mount. In regards to Japan's public debt, the current monetary strategy has greatly enhanced the country's debt making it more challenging to maintain the current policy rate. Sluggish wage upturns have become the main drag on BoJ's efforts to raise inflation even as the government forced corporations to elevate employee salaries.

Robust data out of China

Industrial production and fixed asset investment incurred a robust start for the current year, with advancements for both measures coming in above estimates. In the first two months of the year, industrial output accelerated to a six months high of 7.2 percent annually, up from 6.3 percent in 2017. The positive shift is attributed to strong production in machinery, equipment and electronics. High-tech merchandises saw robust annualized growth of 25.1 percent with a 178 percent increase in volumes. Looking at fixed asset investment, the figure grew 7.9 percent year on year from 7.2 percent. Higher investment also coincides with the improving expectations component of the PMI survey, with greater future demand is expected and therefore more investment plans to go ahead. Economic forecasters had projected a slight decline due to a crackdown on heavily polluting industries. But the data showed otherwise as steel production rose to its highest in months.

Kuwait

Kuwaiti dinar at 0.29990  
The USDKWD opened at 0.29990 yesterday morning.

## Burgan Bank announces winners of Yawmi account draw



**KUWAIT:** Burgan Bank, the second largest in terms of assets, announced yesterday the names of the daily draw winners of its Yawmi account draw, each taking home a cash-prize of KD 5,000.

The lucky winners are:

1. Ali Hussain Akbar Mohammad, 2. Mohammad Hussain Khudair Aljazzaf, 3. Saleh Ali Hussain Alkhamees, 4. Faisal Faleh Aved Alsubaiei, 5. Abdullah Shah Noor Jahan Shah. In addition to the daily draw, Burgan Bank also offers a Quarterly Draw with more chances to win higher rewards, offering the chance to one lucky customer to win KD 125,000 every three months. The Yawmi Account offers daily and quarterly draws, wherein the quarterly draw requires customers to maintain a minimum amount of KD 500 in their account for two months prior to the draw date. Additionally, every KD 10 in the account will entitle customers to one chance of winning. If the account balance is KD 500 and above, the account holder will be qualified for both the quarterly and daily draws.

Burgan Bank encourages everyone to open a Yawmi account and/or increase their deposit to maximize their chances of becoming a winner. The higher the level of the deposit, the higher the likelihood to win. Established in 1977, Burgan Bank is the youngest commercial Bank and second largest by assets in Kuwait, with a significant focus on the corporate and financial institutions sectors, as well as having a growing retail, and private bank customer base. Burgan Bank has majority owned subsidiaries in the MENAT region supported by one of the largest regional branch networks. The Bank has continuously improved its performance over the years through an expanded revenue structure, diversified funding sources, and a strong capital base. The adoption of state-of-the-art services and technology has positioned it as a trendsetter in the domestic market and within the MENA region. Burgan Bank's brand has been created on a foundation of real values - of trust, commitment, excellence and progression, to remind us of the high standards to which we aspire. 'People come first' is the foundation on which its products and services are developed.

Business

# Wall St tech love affair might end in tears

SAN FRANCISCO: Outsized returns delivered by Amazon.com, Netflix and other heavyweight technology stocks have made them heroes on Wall Street, but some strategists warn that investors' reliance on them exacerbates the risk of a steep downturn.

Amazon's 35 percent surge in 2018 has pushed its market capitalization up to \$770 billion, equivalent to 3 percent of the S&P 500 and close behind Apple's nearly 4 percent share of the index.

Apple, Facebook, Amazon, Netflix and Google-parent Alphabet have grown their collective market value by more than 40 percent in the past year to \$3 trillion, and they now account for a quarter of the Nasdaq Composite Index. Technology stocks have been widely viewed in recent months as a "crowded trade," a situation where most investors have the same opinion, increasing the potential for a volatile selloff if sentiment changes.

"It's a big momentum trade, investors don't care if they're paying 15 or 20 or even 50 times earnings," said Mike O'Rourke, Chief Market Strategist at JonesTrading. "The problem is, once those names start giving up those gains, then the market starts to have problems."

Investors have been attracted to those stocks for good reason: Amazon's revenue ballooned 31 percent to \$178 billion last year, while Netflix is expected by analysts on average to more than double its net income to \$1.2 billion in 2018.

An expected interest rate hike by the US Federal Reserve on Wednesday may not have a strong effect on technology companies, which generally rely less than other kinds of companies on debt.

The S&P 500 information technology index dipped by an average of 0.3 percent in the five-session period following the Fed's four most recent rate hikes, in line with S&P 500, according to Thomson Reuters data. Investors nervous about how much longer a nine-year bull market can last have favored big tech names as among the most reliable on the stock market because their business models are often viewed as disruptive and less susceptible to economic downturns, at least over the long run.

The popularity of Amazon, which is pushing beyond online retail and cloud computing into supermarkets and even healthcare, has left it trading at 167 times expected

earnings, up from around 100 a year ago, according to Thomson Reuters Datastream. By comparison, the S&P 500 is trading at about 17 times expected earnings.

"If you ask anyone right now, if it's a business owner they'll say they're afraid of Amazon. If they're an investor, they'll tell you Amazon is going up forever," said Andrew Bodner, president of Double Diamond Investment Group in Parsippany, New Jersey.

"Overall, it creates more volatility for the market because everyone owns Amazon, and if Amazon goes down you'll see that reflected," Bodner said. Investors' increased reliance on passively managed index funds has also contributed to the rally in technology shares because the companies' inclusion in the S&P 500 and other indexes means money will be poured into them even if they have expensive earnings multiples, O'Rourke said.

Momentum for some major technology stocks is already showing signs of moderation. Facebook has fallen 5 percent after hitting a record high at the start of February, with some investors worried that people are spending less time on the social media platform.

Posing a potential threat to the rally, the S&P 500 technology index is trading at a relatively expensive 18.8 times expected earnings, 12 percent above its 15-year average, according to Thomson Reuters Datastream. While S&P 500 information technology earnings per share are expected to grow by a healthy 17.5 percent this year, that's less than last year's 20.8 percent surge and lower than the 19.5 percent earnings expansion expected for the entire S&P 500, according to Thomson Reuters I/B/E/S. Technology companies may be benefiting more modestly than others from corporate tax cuts enacted this year, according to CFRA investment strategist Lindsey Bell.

Even as the S&P 500 wavered over worries that President Donald Trump might spark a trade war, the Nasdaq on Monday closed at a record high, more than bouncing back from a deep selloff across Wall Street only a month ago. "People are going with what works, and if tech was working before the shakeout in February, then they're going to stay in it," said Joe Saluzzi, co-manager of trading at Themis Trading in Chatham, New Jersey. — Reuters

Daily Kuwait Stock Exchange Report						
Index	Change	Closing	Last Closing			
Price Index	▼ -2.73	6,757.50	6,760.23			
Weighted Index	▲ 1.10	413.20	412.10			
KSX 15	▲ 7.90	965.89	967.99			

Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last	Change
PG	410	410	10	4	1	410	▲ 48.0
NAPESCO	844	830	89,388	57,546	14	838	▲ 8.0
ENERGIYH	26.8	23.0	15,025	362	6	25.2	▼ -1.8
GPI	28.3	27.7	136,285	3,795	9	27.9	▼ -0.4
ABAR	87	85	44,448	3,856	2	87	▲ 0.0
<b>Oil &amp; Gas</b>			<b>265,156</b>	<b>65,662</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>963.34</b>	<b>▲ 20.50</b>

Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last	Change
KFOUC	253	248	173,018	43,342	29	253	▲ 4.0
BPCC	698	693	103,773	136,204	20	693	▼ -2.0
ALKOUT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	690	▲ 0.0
ALQURAIN	349	345	242,309	84,449	17	347	▼ -1.0
<b>Basic Materials</b>			<b>609,160</b>	<b>262,895</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>1329.26</b>	<b>▲ 1.20</b>

Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last	Change
KCEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	445	▲ 0.0
CABLE	430	416	36,200	11,174	8	429	▲ 5.0
SHIP	214	210	290,015	52,763	11	214	▼ -4.0
PCEM	1,080	1,079	72,537	78,318	13	1,080	▲ 0.0
PAPER	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	250	▲ 0.0
MRC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	65	▲ 0.0
ADICO	245	226	42,500	9,673	4	245	▲ 0.0
HCC	75	75	1,200	90	1	75	▼ -10.0
NCBM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	170	▲ 0.0
EQUIPMENT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	36.4	▲ 0.0
NCCI	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	86	▲ 0.0
GYPSUM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	96	▲ 0.0
SALBOOKH	49.9	49.5	4,750	236	3	49.9	▲ 0.0
AGLTY	850	847	410,702	348,785	60	850	▲ 3.0
EDU	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	312	▲ 0.0
CLEANING	64	62	42,530	2,643	11	64	▲ 1.0
KDL	103	100	120,877	12,109	16	102	▲ 0.0
KCPK	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	148	▲ 0.0
HUMANSOFT	4,200	4,000	84,080	337,146	15	4,149	▲ 139.0
GFC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	84	▲ 0.0
SHOOTING	18.5	17.0	55,101	938	6	18.5	▲ 0.0
CSG	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	455	▲ 0.0
MTCC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	56	▲ 0.0
UPAC	720	631	2,061	1,444	3	720	▲ 20.0
ALAPCO	377	375	70,000	26,320	3	377	▲ 0.0
MUBARRAD	69	67	44,550	3,003	3	67	▼ -0.1
LOGISTICS	52	51	560,336	28,794	39	51	▼ -0.5
SCEM	85	85	22,000	1,870	1	85	▼ -3.0
GCEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	82	▲ 0.0
QIC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	82	▲ 0.0
FCEM	78	78	75,000	5,850	2	78	▲ 0.0
RKWC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	82	▲ 0.0
SPEC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	68	▲ 0.0
<b>Industrials</b>			<b>1,884,238</b>	<b>921,126</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>1941.48</b>	<b>▲ 25.60</b>

Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last	Change
PAPCO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	80	▲ 0.0
CATTAN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	199	▲ 0.0
DANAH	74	74	15,000	1,104	3	74	▼ -0.9
FOOD	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	1,004	▲ 0.0
<b>Consumer Goods</b>			<b>15,000</b>	<b>1,104</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>734.27</b>	<b>▼ -0.50</b>

Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last	Change
ATC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	1,100	▲ 0.0
YIACO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	136	▲ 0.0
<b>Health Care</b>			<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1403.66</b>	<b>▲ 0.00</b>

Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last	Change
KGIN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	1,099	▲ 0.0
KHOT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	197	▲ 0.0
SULTAN	60	54	980,117	52,634	85	54	▼ -13
CABLETV	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	15.0	▲ 0.0
IFAHF	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	110	▲ 0.0
OUJAFUEL	113	113	2,025	229	6	113	▲ 0.0
MUNTAZAHAT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	69	▲ 0.0
JAZZERA	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	629	▲ 0.0
BOOR	113	113	2,413	273	3	113	▼ -3
FUTUREKID	110	110	10,000	1,100	1	110	▲ 0.0
ALRA	134	129	1,362,750	176,352	105	129	▼ 4
Jad	93	92	1,768,954	163,921	163	93	▲ 1
Mezzan	797	797	50,000	39,850	3	797	▲ 7
<b>Consumer Services</b>			<b>4,174,259</b>	<b>434,358</b>	<b>368</b>	<b>858.65</b>	<b>▼ -17.40</b>

Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last	Change
ZAIN	470	461	6,356,549	2,954,287	317	466	▲ 5
OOREDOO	1,001	1,001	710	711	4	1,001	▼ -15
AAN	21.0	20.2	181,500	3,668	4	21.0	▲ 0.0
VIVA	770	751	19,733	14,858	32	770	▲ 16
<b>Telecommunications</b>			<b>6,558,482</b>	<b>2,973,524</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>532.61</b>	<b>▲ 6.10</b>

Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last	Change
NBK	783	778	3,955,638	3,081,168	190	781	▲ 6
GBK	261	258	1,089,250	283,051	29	259	▼ -3
CBK	457	450	79,400	35,810	13	457	▲ 6
ABK	355	340	118,491	41,374	10	355	▲ 15
ALMUTAHED	327	322	150,000	48,825	9	327	▼ 3
KIB	235	234	1,818,389	425,925	53	234	▼ -2
BURG	287	283	214,250	61,028	19	287	▲ 2
KFIN	591	585	3,079,146	1,813,291	188	591	▲ 4
BOUBRYAN	483	481	181,169	77,712	42	482	▲ 0
AUB	214	213	1,322,034	281,823	34	214	▼ -1
ITHARI	35.9	35.0	817,400	29,027	25	35.9	▲ 1
WARBANK	233	230	1,245,232	286,241	80	231	▼ -3
<b>Banks</b>			<b>14,048,399</b>	<b>6,467,275</b>	<b>704</b>	<b>940.99</b>	<b>▲ 3.60</b>

Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last	Change
KINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	290	▲ 0.0
GINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	695	▲ 0.0
ANS	440	440	5,614	2,470	1	440	▼ -79.0
WINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	61	▲ 0.0
KUWAITRE	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	192	▲ 0.0
FTI	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	82	▲ 0.0
WETHAQ	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	29.0	▲ 0.0
BKWHF	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	358	▲ 0.0
<b>Insurance</b>			<b>5,614</b>	<b>2,470</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>964.14</b>	<b>▼ -25.50</b>

Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last	Change
SOKOUK	42.1	42.0	1080	45	3	42.1	▲ 0.0
KRE	52	52	2,804,001	145,951	56	52	▲ 0.0
URC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	60	▲ 0.0
NRE	113	111	117,112	13,150	19	112	▲ 1.0
SRE	337	336	50,500	17,018	4	336	▼ -5.0
TAM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	340	▲ 0.0
AREEC	147	147	11,403	1,676	2	147	▼ -15.0
MASSALEH	36.0	36.0	31,000	1,119	2	36.0	▼ -0.5
ARABREC	34.3	33.7	21,100	711	2	34.3	▲ 0.0
ERESCO	40.0	32.6	159,000	5,378	4	32.6	▼ -2.3
MABANEI	717	716	33,783	24,189	18	716	▲ 2.0
INJAZZAT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	92	▲ 0.0
INVESTORS	15.7	15.3	1,983,939	28,736	44	15.4	▲ 1.0
IRC	31.5	29.0	2,521,751	75,192	69	30.0	▲ 1.0
ALTUARIA	86	85	141,250	12,106	7	86	▲ 0.0
SANAM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	32.0	▲ 0.0
AAYANRE	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	71	▲ 0.0
ADAR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	75	▲ 0.0
ALAGARSA	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	26.5	▲ 0.0
MAZAYA	110	109	6,736,555	730,481	49	109	▼ -1.0
TUARA	61	51	38,520	1,972	2		

Business

# Mezzan Holding announces FY 2017 financial results; revenue KD 204.5m

## Board recommends a cash dividend of 22 fils per share with a total payout of KD 6.8m

**KUWAIT:** Mezzan Holding KSC, one of the largest manufacturers and distributors of food, beverage, FMCG and pharmaceutical products in the Gulf, yesterday announced the company's financial results for the year 2017. The company maintained its revenue performance despite a challenging economic environment, a testament to its defensive product offering and strong fundamentals. The year presented numerous unanticipated one-off external factors that challenged profitability but also helped identify areas for further improvement.

Despite those challenges, and on the back of a strong balance sheet and enhanced working capital position, Mezzan invested in value-add projects including capacity enhancements, value chain improvements, warehouse infrastructure, as well as branding all aimed at driving future growth and enhance efficiencies.

Mezzan Holding Executive Vice Chairman Mohammad Jassim Al-Wazzan said: "2017 proved to be a challenging year; where Mezzan was faced with a number of one-off unanticipated challenges. However, we maintain our focus on strengthening our regional presence with leading positions in each of the our categories. The year 2017 witnessed the highest capital expenditure year on record, and we expect these investments to grow our profitability in 2018 and beyond."

Garrett Walsh, CEO of Mezzan Holding added "Disruptions to our supply chain in Qatar and temporary halt of operations in Afghanistan ultimately dragged on our profitability in 2017. We have taken the necessary steps to recover from these external factors. We are confident of our future, as our core business continues to prove its resilience, with our Food Manufacturing and Distribution division showing modest topline growth despite the headwinds. Our capital spending added production capacities in our core sectors, and others, will enhance efficiencies going forward."

### FY 2017 Financial Performance Review

Food Business Line: The Food Business Line accounted for 75.4 percent of Group Revenue. The Business Line comprises the following three divisions: Manufacturing and Distribution (generating 53.9 percent of Group

Revenue), Catering (generating 14.4 percent of Group Revenue) and Services (generating 7.0 percent of Group Revenue). Total Revenue for the Food Business Line reached KD154.2 million, a slight decrease of 0.7 percent compared with the same period in 2016.

Revenue) and Industrials (generating 2.8 percent). Revenue reached KD50.3 million, a decrease of 3.3 percent compared with the same period in 2016.

**FMCG and Pharmaceuticals:** FY Revenue decreased by 3.7 percent.

**Industrials:** FY Industrials revenues decreased by 0.4 percent.

### Regional Business Highlights

**In Kuwait:** FY Revenue grew by 1.8 percent due to steady performance as the local retail market returns to buoyancy.

**In UAE:** FY Revenue decreased by 12.7 percent due to lower exports to Qatar and the impact of excise tax introduced in October 2017.

**In Qatar:** FY Revenue grew by 3.2 percent driven by resolving supply chain issues putting sales and profitability back on track.

**In KSA:** FY Revenue grew by 243.5 percent as Mezzan continues to focus on gaining a foothold in the region's largest consumer market.

**In Jordan:** FY Revenue decreased by 44.8 percent due to challenges to tenders driven business.

**In Afghanistan:** FY Revenue decreased by 16.1 percent as operations were suspended for three months. The situation was resolved in August

**In Iraq:** FY Revenue grew by 34.3 percent.

Financial year net profit KD 12.9 million

**Manufacturing and Distribution:** Revenue increased 1.0 percent.

**Catering:** FY Revenue increased by 10.2 percent.

**Services:** FY Revenue declined by 25.7 percent.

**Non-Food Business Line:** The Non-Food Business Line accounted for 24.6 percent of Group Revenue. The Business Lines comprises FMCG and Pharmaceuticals business division (generating 21.8 percent of Group

### FY 2017 Financial Highlights

**Revenue:** KD204.5 million, down 1.4%  
**EBITDA:** KD20.9 million, down 15.5%  
**Underlying Net Profit:** KD12.9 million, down 26.6%  
**Reported net profit attributable to equity holders of the parent company:** KD12.9 million, down 24.7%

## TEC holds special event for employees to discuss future plans

**KUWAIT:** The Touristic Enterprises Company (TEC) recently organized a special event for its employees to discuss the efforts currently underway to develop the Company's new strategy and future vision. The employee engagement forum was held at Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Centre, and was attended by members of TEC's Board of Directors, its senior management and employees from across the organization.

At the event, TEC's CEO, Abdulwahab Ahmed Al-Marzouq, discussed the development of the Company's new strategic direction and its plan for the next few years. He also laid out TEC's new vision and corporate values, which are currently being developed under the umbrella of the Company's strategy development exercise.

"We have been working with our global partners and consultants to put in place a comprehensive development strategy focused on rejuvenating and upgrading the tourism and entertainments sectors in Kuwait," said Al-Marzouq. "Our plans are robust and ambitious, and given their mag-



nitude, it was very important for us to get our employees involved from the very beginning in our strategy development process. After all, they are the most integral component in realizing our plans and translating our strategy into tangible results."

In line with the overall theme of strategic planning and development, the event also featured special guest speaker Dr. Robert S. Kaplan, the renowned business academic, best-selling author and Harvard Business School professor. Dr. Kaplan, presented a talk to the TEC employees in attendance about strategies in the business world, entitled: "Transformation: From Strategy to Results", where he addressed the importance of strategy development in the realm of business.



## Malabar Group's Mall of Travancore to go on stream: Kerala CM to open

**THIRUVANANTHAPURAM:** 'Mall of Travancore,' the largest shopping mall of the capital city, is all set to open its doors to the people of Trivandrum, adding colors to their life. This state-of-the-art mall is designed to give a world-class shopping experience and is positioned as a preferred shopping destination. On March 23rd, at 3 pm, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan will dedicate the Mall of Travancore to the public.

The genesis of setting up a mall under Malabar Group was born in the year 2005. For this, Malabar Group representatives had visited over 1,000 malls in India and abroad to learn and get a hand-on experience about the functioning of malls. With this regards, a detailed marketing study was conducted in Kerala. Based on these studies, it was decided to set up a Mall in Trivandrum District. In 2006, Malabar Group had started the process of acquiring seven acres of land in Enjakkal near Thiruvananthapuram International Airport. The land acquisition was completed by buying plots measuring from four cents to 2 acres from 27 different landlords. The management had decided to go green and to have a complete eco-friendly and nature friendly construction. The height of the mall was limited to three floors since the property is adjacent to Thiruvananthapuram International Airport. On November 27, 2014 the then Chief Minister Oommen Chandy laid the foundation stone of the mall.

It was after studying the peculiarities of Thiruvananthapuram, the management had decided to set the mall there. Thiruvananthapuram not only enjoys the speciality of being the capital city of the state and the headquarters of the government, but is known for its century old cultural heritage, and economic prosperity. It has also shown the way for development to other parts of the state. Being the capital city, it is home for numerous Central and State PSUs and establishments including ISRO, private firms, and several techno parks. The total population of the city is 12 lakhs. Every day, around four lakh people commute to and from the city for various purposes. The city population consist of highly educated, secular, cultured, and economically well-to-do people. In tourism, the district has a leading position. A lot of foreign tourists visit the internationally renowned Kovalam beach every year.

74 aircraft operate everyday from the modern International airport of Thiruvananthapuram. Around 8,000 people transit through the airport daily. Around 70



trains originate or pass through the Thiruvananthapuram railway station every day and almost one lakh people depend on it. Around one lakh people commute everyday through the bus station operating more than 1,000 buses daily. This shows the dynamic nature of the place. Trade is also very vibrant here. Business worth around Rs 40 crore is transacted here every day. Purchasing power of the people is also high here. These are the positive factors that insisted Malabar Group to set up the mall here. Compared to other districts, Thiruvananthapuram did not have a convenient umbrella shopping center. Mall of Travancore will solve this problem.

Spread over 6.5 lakh sq ft in three floors, there are large collection of world class branded items to offer. Along with shopping, there are facilities for entertainment within the Mall, both for kids and grownups. A hypermarket offering products that fit the requirements of all kinds of people who can select products as per their choice, a vast jewelry showroom to satisfy ornament lovers, electronics and home appliances showroom, lifestyle products, gaming zone, food plaza, seven multiplex theaters from carnival group and other entertainment facilities makes

the mall a true shopping destination. Around 300 brands including international brands like Adidas, Allen Solly, Apple, Arrow, Baskin Robbins, Bata, Delsey, Jockey, KFC, Life Style, Malabar Gold & Diamonds, Pantaloons, Park Avenue, Louis Philippe, Titan, Van Heusen, VIP and Woodland will be available in more than 160 showrooms within the mall. Besides, the mall will also have showrooms of prominent retailers like Eham Digital, and Kalyan Silks.

Parking facility for around 1,000 cars and 1,200 two-wheelers at the same time is also available. Mall of Travancore is the result of meticulous planning and efforts of thousands of people including the management team.

There are huge employment opportunity offered in Mall of Travancore. Currently, the mall will give direct employment for 2,000 people and indirect employment for 1,000 people.

Besides people from Kerala, people hailing from the nearby districts of Tamil Nadu such as Tirunelveli, Nagercoil, and Kanyakumari can easily reach and shop from Mall of Travancore. Malabar Developers, the real estate wing of Malabar Group of Companies is behind the world class structure and has completed its work in the given time.



## CBK announces winners of Al-Najma account draw

**KUWAIT:** Commercial Bank of Kuwait held the daily draw on "Al-Najma Account" yesterday at the Bank's head office to select five winners to win a cash prize of KD 7,000 for each. The draw was held in the presence of Abdulaziz Ashkanani, representative of the Ministry of Commerce & Industry. The following names were announced as winners of the prizes:

1. Abeer Dekheel Al-Rasheed
2. Abdulkhaleq Al-Noubi Farahat Othman
3. Najah Hammoud Al-Nayef
4. Abu Al-Fadhl Hussain Mohammad Ballash
5. Fatema MohammedAli Attallah Mobarak

Al-Najma Account allows its customers to win a daily prize of KD 7,000 which is the highest daily prize in Kuwait. In addition, the Account offers quarterly draws that provide customers with opportunity to get their dreams turned to reality by winning great

prizes starting from KD 100,000 for the first quarter escalating thereafter by KD 50,000 for each quarter to reach KD 250,000 in the last quarter. Customers can enjoy additional benefits including obtaining ATM card and a credit card against the customer's account along with enjoying all other banking services.

The bank congratulates all the lucky winners and draws their attention that the cash prizes will be credited into their accounts with the Bank. Further, the bank appreciates the Ministry of Commerce & Industry's significant role and its continuous cooperation and effective supervision on the draw that was smoothly and transparently organized.



## X-cite offers 10 trips to Russia to watch games with new promotion!

**KUWAIT:** Football fans are up for the most coveted prizes with X-cite by Alghanim Electronics, Kuwait's largest electronic retailer, launching their new promotion where customers can get a chance to win one of the 10 trips to Russia and watch the football games which will be held from June 14 to July 15.

X-cite offers the opportunity to enter the draw for a chance to win with every KD 50 spent on thousands of electronics ranging from TV's, smartphones, laptops, projectors, home theaters, house appliances and the latest gadgets from the largest selection of products and

brands available in stores in Kuwait.

In addition to X-cite's big promotion, a special offer is also available for university students. X-cite provides a unique purchasing experience where university students are capable of purchasing on credit with their monthly student allowance. Instead of receiving 1 chance to win, students can double their luck with two chances for every KD 50 spent.

Each prize package consists of round trip flights tickets between Kuwait and Russia, hotel accommodation, and tickets to attend a football game, all for two guests. The promotion to enter the draw runs from March 15 to April 14 and the names of the ten winners will be announced on April 18, 2018.

Through its customer-centric concept, X-cite offers customers competitive quality and prices to serve every segment of its customer-base, providing them with the highest level of service, engaging with them, and earning their trust through supporting services and offerings. X-cite also enables customers to shop from the

comfort of their homes through its free mobile app and shopping website at [www.xcite.com](http://www.xcite.com).

X-cite has established itself as a leading brand in providing the latest products to customers as it continues to build strong relations with international brands in the electronics sector. Continuously seeking to satisfy the needs of its customers, X-cite provides them with diverse services that enable customers to experience products and interact with them, whether in their showrooms or through the website, designed to make online shopping a fast and easy experience.

With 20 showrooms located across Kuwait, X-cite offers customers an unraveled shopping experience thanks to its wide range of products available at the best prices. X-cite also offers premium maintenance and purchase services at most of its major showrooms throughout Kuwait and other services such as payment with installments, free delivery, installation and additional warranty.

## Technology

# Retail sector boost with Al Babtain's largest LG brand shop in the Gulf

Reflects Al Babtain's strong market leadership and LG's growing brand loyalty in the region

**KUWAIT:** According to industry reports, Kuwait's retail industry has grown dramatically over the past 10 years, driven by rapid urbanization, expatriate workforce influx, and a rising population of the young and affluent. To meet the needs of this vibrant market, which are set to continue underpinning further growth and diversification over the coming years, Al Babtain Electronics has opened the largest LG showroom in the Gulf in Kuwait.

Located in Rozana Mall at the junction of 4th Ring Road and Airport Road, Al Rai, Kuwait City, the new LG brand shop marks the success of LG's brand in Kuwait and its increasing brand loyalty and growth in the region. The new 436sqm store is the first of its kind in Kuwait, following similar successful store openings in the region. As a flagship store, the brand shop will showcase the entire range of LG consumer products, including its, home entertainment systems, home appliances, residential air solutions, IT and mobile products.

Commenting on the strides made by the two companies Mr Abdulrahman

Babtain, Vice President and member of the Board of Directors, Abdul Aziz S. Al Babtain & Sons Group of companies said, "We are delighted to be a part of LG's journey in Kuwait and their continued growth in the Middle East. The new flagship LG store demonstrates our commitment to offer quality and value to our customers through globally recognized brands. LG's latest technologically innovative products are a cut above the rest and we are glad we can make it available to the consumers in Kuwait".

The new LG brand shop is a state-of-the-art two-story shopping experience. The store follows LG's minimalist design ethos, allowing for clean, uncluttered, immersive engagement with LG's complete range of consumer products. Customers of the new brand shop will be able to experience LG's award-winning smart home solutions, innovative OLED TVs, and LG's premium collection of LG SIGNATURE products in a comfortable and premium ambience.

"We are very excited to witness this momentous occasion that marks our suc-



cess, not just in Kuwait, but the whole region, and to unveil our latest exclusive standalone brand shop. This is a testament to our tremendous growth in the region and our way of acknowledging the immense

brand loyalty of our valued consumers. Our continued success in the region would not be possible without strong support and dedication from our distributor-Al Babtain Electronics, said Yong Geun Choi,

President, LG Electronics Gulf. Established in 1999, Al Babtain grew to become a retailer, distributor and commercial solutions provider for world leading consumer electronics brands with the objective of maintaining consistency in the delivery of the highest quality of products and services making Al Babtain a well-known distributor in Kuwait.

"Enhancing customer touch points has always been a priority, and our latest offering in Kuwait reiterates our commitment to the vibrant Kuwaiti market. Flagship brand stores provide an ideal platform to showcase LG's technological expertise with products that are designed and created with a customer-first approach under a common platform. We would like to thank Al Babtain Electronics for their continued support, which has been key to our success in Kuwait," said Kevin Cha, President, LG Electronics, Middle East & Africa. For more information and to experience the whole range of LG's award-winning consumer products in Kuwait, please visit the new LG brand shop in Rozana Mall.



## World's biggest battery in Australia to trump Musk's

**SYDNEY:** British billionaire businessman Sanjeev Gupta will build the world's biggest battery in South Australia, officials said Friday, overtaking US star entrepreneur Elon Musk's project in the same state last year. The 120MW/140MWh battery storage facility will support a new solar farm at the Whyalla Steelworks, which was taken over by Gupta's GFG Alliance when it bought Australia's cash-strapped steelmaking giant Arrium last year.

The push towards more renewable energy projects in South Australia followed an "unprecedented" storm that hit in 2016, causing a state-wide blackout. "Today's announcement is another example of how South Australia ... is leading the world in renewable energy," state Premier Jay Weatherill said in a statement. "As well as being the most powerful battery in the world, SIMEC ZEN Energy's storage facility will help underpin the long-term viability of the Whyalla steelworks, as well as provide additional benefits to the South Australian grid."

The announcement came a day before the Labor state government goes to the polls in a tight election race that has seen energy policy at the heart of the final days of campaigning. The state's main opposition party, the Liberals, has sought to distinguish its energy policy from Labor by supporting the development of an additional connection to the power grid instead.

The new battery storage project-at Port Augusta some 300 kilometers north of Adelaide-will be supported by a Aus\$10 million (US\$7.8 million) grant from Weatherill's government. Musk, the maverick billionaire and founder of Tesla, had pledged on Twitter last year to build a battery farm with a self-imposed deadline of having it ready in 100 days. The 100 MW/129 MWh battery, located in the rural town of Jamestown north of Adelaide, was switched on in late 2017 and connected to a wind farm operated by French energy firm Neoen.

It is meant to help tackle power shortages, reduce intermittencies and address demands in summer, when most of the country experiences its highest energy usage. Musk is also working with the state government on a landmark plan to give 50,000 homes solar panels and Tesla batteries. The network of solar panels linked to rechargeable batteries will be financed by the sale of excess electricity generated by the network, Weatherill said last month. — AFP



AUSTIN, Texas: Elon Musk, Ashton Kutcher and St. Vincent attend the Sound Ventures "The Party" at Hotel Van Zandt. — AFP

## China to see driverless cars in 3-5 years: Baidu

**BEIJING:** Self-driving cars will hit the roads in China "within three to five years", the founder of Chinese internet giant Baidu, one of the world's leading designers of driverless cars, said. That is a lot sooner than predicted by China's information technology minister, who last week said it would only be reality in 8-10 years, citing constraints related to security. "I'm more optimistic than him, I think it will come sooner," Baidu CEO Robin Li said in Beijing on the sidelines of a consultative political assembly of which he is a member.

Baidu, often referred to as China's Google, operates the country's leading search engine and also invests heavily in

services ranging from online payments to connected devices and artificial intelligence. Like Google, the Chinese company is spending on research and development to put a driverless car on the road.

In 2019, in cooperation with local manufacturers, the Beijing-based company plans to launch a car featuring "a high degree of autonomy," Li told reporters. "Highly automated driving means ... for example, on a Beijing to Shanghai trip, as long as you stay on the highway, you will not have to worry about anything—you can eat hotpot or sing inside while you're waiting to arrive," he said.

The driver would still, however, need to take the wheel again as soon as the car moved away from major highways. "But in the next three to five years, I believe totally autonomous cars will make their appearance on the roads," he said. In September the company established a \$1.5 billion fund dedicated to developing driverless cars. It also manages an open platform where it shares its technologies with designers and builders. — AFP

## Facebook critics want investigation after data misuse

**SAN FRANCISCO:** Facebook Inc faced new calls for regulation from within US Congress and was hit with questions about personal data safeguards on Saturday after reports a political consultant gained inappropriate access to 50 million users' data starting in 2014. Facebook disclosed the issue in a blog post on Friday, hours before media reports that conservative-leaning Cambridge Analytica, a data company known for its work on Donald Trump's 2016 presidential campaign, was given access to the data and may not have deleted it.

The scrutiny presented a new threat to Facebook's reputation, which was already under attack over Russians' alleged use of Facebook tools to sway American voters before and after the 2016 US elections. "It's clear these platforms can't police themselves," Democratic US Senator Amy Klobuchar tweeted. "They say 'trust us.' Mark Zuckerberg needs to testify before Senate Judiciary," she added, referring to Facebook's CEO and a committee she sits on.

### Root of the problem

Facebook said the root of the problem was that researchers and Cambridge Analytica lied to it and abused its policies, but critics on Saturday threw blame at Facebook as well, demanding answers on behalf of users and calling for new regulation. Facebook insisted the data was misused but not stolen, because users gave permission, sparking a debate about what constitutes a hack that must be disclosed to customers.

"The lid is being opened on the black box of Facebook's data practices, and the picture is not pretty," said Frank Pasquale, a University of Maryland law professor who has written about Silicon Valley's use of data. Pasquale said Facebook's response that data had not technically been stolen seemed to obfuscate the central issue that data was apparently used in a way contrary to the expectations of users. "It amazes me that they are trying to make this about nomenclature. I guess that's all they have left," he said.

Democratic US Senator Mark Warner said the episode bolstered the need for new regulations about internet advertising, describing the industry as the "Wild West." "Whether it's allowing Russians to purchase political ads, or extensive micro-targeting

based on ill-gotten user data, it's clear that, left unregulated, this market will continue to be prone to deception and lacking in transparency," he said.

With Republicans controlling the Senate's majority, though, it was not clear if Klobuchar and Warner would prevail. The New York Times and London's Observer reported on Saturday that private information from more than 50 million Facebook users improperly ended up in the hands of Cambridge Analytica, and the information has not been deleted despite Facebook's demands beginning in 2015.

### Exploring legal action

Some 270,000 people allowed use of their data by a researcher, who scraped the data of all their friends as well, a move allowed by Facebook until 2015. The researcher sold the data to Cambridge, which was against Facebook rules, the newspapers said. Cambridge Analytica worked on Trump's 2016 campaign. A Trump campaign official said, though, that it used Republican data sources, not Cambridge Analytica, for its voter information.

Facebook, in a series of written statements beginning late on Friday, said its policies had been broken by Cambridge Analytica and researchers and that it was exploring legal action. Cambridge Analytica in turn said it had deleted all the data and that the company supplying it had been responsible for obtaining it. Andrew Bosworth, a Facebook vice president, hinted the company could make more changes to demonstrate it values privacy. "We must do better and will," he wrote on Twitter, adding that "our business depends on it at every level."

Facebook said it asked for the data to be deleted in 2015 and then relied on written certifications by those involved that they had complied. Nuala O'Connor, president of the Center for Democracy & Technology, an advocacy group in Washington, DC, said Facebook was relying on the good will of decent people rather than preparing for intentional misuse.

Moreover, she found it puzzling that Facebook knew about the abuse in 2015 but did not disclose it until Friday. "That's a long time," she said. Britain's data protection authority and the Massachusetts attorney general on Saturday said they were launching investigations into the use of Facebook data. "It is important that the public are fully aware of how information is used and shared in modern political campaigns and the potential impact on their privacy," UK Information Commissioner Elizabeth Denham said in a statement. Massachusetts Attorney General Maura Healey's office said she wants to understand how the data was used, what policies if any were violated and what the legal implications are. — Reuters



VERTOU: This file photo taken on December 28, 2016, shows logos of US online social media and social networking service Facebook. — AFP

Health

# NBK sponsors Flare Sports Festival for the second consecutive year

**Al Rushaid: Sponsorship comes in line with its support towards youth and health**

**KUWAIT:** National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) sponsored the Flare sports festival for the second consecutive year. The festival was organized by Flare Fitness at Gulf University for Science and Technology (GUST) and was attended by a large number of young participants. The sponsorship comes in line with NBK's commitment to support youths' health. This sponsorship aims to spread physical awareness and attract youth to participate in sporting events.

NBK Public Relations Executive Manager, Abdul Mohsen Al Rushaid, said: "NBK's sponsorship to this sports event comes in line with the bank's customary and ongoing spirit of corporate citizenship as well as the vital role it plays in supporting youth and their health. NBK always strives to empower youth to realize their potentials, providing different supportive opportunities".

"The competition participants were for public and University students. NBK's booth witnessed various sports challenges and distributed rewards to the winners and participants", added Al Rushaid. "The purpose of this event is to increase fitness awareness for all Kuwait citizens. This event shed light on the potential of youth in regards to fitness and sport awareness".

The Flare sports festival included sports challenges that attracted more than 800 participants from professional sports players. The competitions in this festival comprised a range of physical challenges that depend on the strength, flexibility and endurance. All of which contribute to raise the spirit of positive competition among student circles. NBK has always considered supporting youth an essential part of its social and philanthropic outreach which comes in line with the bank's commitment to encourage a merit-based system in health, education and environment that promotes the best and the brightest the country has to offer.



# CLINIC PAGE



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

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What's On

# LuLu Hypermarket holds prize distribution for 'Win to Drive'



LuLu Hypermarket, the leading regional retailer, held a prize distribution ceremony on 17 March at its Al Rai outlet to felicitate the lucky winners of the 'LuLu Win to Drive' promotion, which was held as part of the Hala February celebrations. The winners of the promotion were announced following a raffle draw, where their names were picked up at random. The highlight of the prize distribution ceremony was the handing over of the keys to the three first place winners, namely Fathimah Nasser, Nedenchezhian and MA. Luz Ticas, who each became the proud owner of a 2018 Chevrolet Equinox SUV.

A further 25 winners were awarded KD 100 gift vouchers, while 100 winners received KD50 gift vouchers. The Win to Drive promotion was held from 31 January to 10 March. During the promotion period, shoppers at any of the LuLu Hypermarket outlets in Kuwait received a raffle ticket for every KD5 worth of goods they purchased.

The 'LuLu Win to Drive' promotion is part of the Hypermarket's commitment to organizing family-friendly promotions to add excitement to customers' shopping experiences, while providing a range of high-quality products at competitive prices. The hypermarket has in the past undertaken numerous customer-centric initiatives and special promotions that give customers more value on their purchases and open new opportunities for them to be winners, while shopping at LuLu Hypermarket outlets in the country.



## Spend precious moments with mom at Symphony Style Hotel

Mother's Day is nearing, and Symphony Style Hotel Kuwait is as prepared as ever. For each family wondering where to treat their special lady, let it be known that every mum gets a complimentary meal. If your mum is a culinary enthusiast, then Symphony Style Hotel's cuisines are just the place for her. Treat your lovely lady to some of the loveliest dine experiences by a captivating view of the sea in Cucina. The contemporary outline of the restaurant is one that goes very much in line with the staff that will welcome your mum in celebration of the special lady's special day.

If your mum is a lady seeking further diversity, then a reservation in Luna will surely be a sheer expression of love. Beyond a breath-taking view of the gulf, and an immersive atmosphere, every mother will find delight in a diverse menu of Tuscan cuisine inspired seafood, meats and salad served by expert chefs. Furthermore, your lovely lady sure will be captivated by the alluring ambience of meticulously crafted drinks, served to add onto a day to remember.

An exuberant meal is not all you can treat your mum to in her special day, especially if she's a chocolate lover. In ultra-chic Chococafe, every mum will find delight in



the warm touches of chocolate to the taste buds, that will prove to be nothing less than impeccable. Mother's Day is not a day to be missed, and Symphony Style Hotel Kuwait eagerly awaits every mother to treat her in celebration.

On the first evening of the first Arab Youth Festival organized by LOAYC's Academy for Performance Arts (LAPA), the young magician, Abdul Wahab Al-Failkawi and LAPA's dancing teams presented a brilliant performance at Al-Shaheed Park. The event was organized jointly with NBK, Ghenwa and EVENTAT. The performance included several shows and tricks presented by Al-Failkawi including The Smoke, Escape, Snow, Origami, Appearance and The Lift, which were all highly appreciated by the audience.



## Marina Hotel launches poolside Barbeque nights every Wednesday

As the eagerly awaited spring season approaches, Marina Hotel Kuwait launches its poolside Barbeque. The hotel's visitors can enjoy a relaxing evening with live Oriental music and breath-taking views of the Arabian Gulf. On the occasion, Hammoud said: "We make sure to organize the BBQ nights at this time of the year so that people can spend a special time with their families and friends and enjoy the beautiful weather."

The BBQ station offers a range of mouth-watering dishes that is specially prepared for our guests to enjoy the grilled shrimps and seasoned vari-

eties of succulent meats, chicken and a delicious salad bar with the assorted breads in addition to some delectable desserts. The Marina poolside BBQ takes place every Wednesday evening, and has a capacity to accommodate up to 150 guests at a time and has a special area for groups and gatherings.



Mr Nabil Hammoud



## The Sheraton family - a happy world within us

The compassionate culture of the Sheraton & Four Points Kuwait family is seen in full splendor on the occasion of their Annual Staff Party, which was a memorable event for all of the associates. Celebrating and congratulating all the members of the hotel and their families for all their hard work, dedication, exquisite hospitality and services throughout 2017.

This year's Annual Staff Party was themed as Go Be Happy where the ballroom tables were decorated with colorful lantern, immediately capturing the eye upon entry to the ballroom. The stage was also decorated with large lantern to set the theme for the host and hostess of the event. During the event, members of the hotel enthusiastically prepared and participated in several forms of entertainment throughout the evening. It enabled everyone to enjoy the show which was filled with enriching knowledge about the cultural diversity of the international community we have at our hotels. This diversity has been a great unifying factor of the hotel associates and responsible for the hotel's success as the cultural differences within the hotel have balanced to create a multicultural community filled with understanding, mutual respect, and exquisite hospitality.



Filling the ballroom with friendly competition, several teams performed by singing or performance to express their unity, communication, and team work. Moreover, the hotel took this opportunity to show their great appreciation by honoring all those members of the hotel who have dedicated half a decade, a decade, two decades and more of their lives to both the hotels and to their esteemed guests.

On this special occasion, Mr Fahed Abushaar, the General Manager of Sheraton Kuwait, a Luxury Collection Hotel and Mr Mounir Amer, General Manager of Four Points by Sheraton Kuwait, thanked each and every member of both hotels and their families. Assuring them that their hard work, dedication and unwavering effort is always appreciated and is a great part of the remarkable success of the hotels. Going the extra mile to recognize and reward the



quality of teamwork and collaborative efforts put forth by associates is inherent to the hotel's family ethic and culture. It is events such as these that help in creating enjoyable employee relationships, networking, and overall the success of the hotels.





## TV

### AM MOVIES ACTION

01:30 Boorning II  
03:15 Inception  
05:45 I Am Wrath  
07:20 Boorning II  
09:00 Inception  
11:30 Armageddon America  
13:05 American Ninja  
14:50 Project Almanac  
16:40 Blood Circus  
18:20 Standoff  
19:50 Mechanic: Resurrection  
21:35 Extortion  
23:30 The Perfect Weapon

### ANIMAL PLANET HD

00:50 Untamed & Uncut  
01:45 Wild Africa: Rivers Of Life  
02:40 The Jeff Corwin Experience  
03:35 The Jeff Corwin Experience  
04:25 The Jeff Corwin Experience  
05:15 The Jeff Corwin Experience  
06:02 Biggest And Baddest  
06:49 Biggest And Baddest  
07:36 Escape To Chimp Eden  
08:00 Escape To Chimp Eden  
08:25 Night  
08:50 Night  
09:15 The Jeff Corwin Experience  
10:10 Biggest And Baddest  
11:05 Wildest Middle East  
12:00 Night  
12:28 Night  
12:55 The Bronx Zoo  
13:50 Missouri Mountain Family  
14:45 Biggest And Baddest  
15:40 Wildest Middle East  
16:35 Untamed & Uncut  
17:30 The Jeff Corwin Experience  
18:25 Lair Of The Killer Crocs  
19:20 After The Attack  
20:15 My Tiny Terror  
21:10 Predator's Prey  
21:38 Predator's Prey  
22:05 Lair Of The Killer Crocs  
23:00 After The Attack  
23:55 Wildest Middle East

### BBC FIRST

00:45 Trust Me  
01:45 Line Of Duty  
02:40 Death In Paradise  
03:40 EastEnders  
04:10 EastEnders  
04:40 Doctors  
05:10 Doctor Who  
06:00 Doctors  
06:30 EastEnders  
07:00 Father Brown  
07:45 Doctor Who  
08:45 Doctors  
09:15 EastEnders  
09:45 Father Brown  
10:30 Death In Paradise  
11:25 Doctor Who  
12:25 Call The Midwife  
13:20 Father Brown  
14:10 Doctors  
14:40 EastEnders  
15:10 Death In Paradise  
16:05 Doctor Who  
17:05 Call The Midwife  
18:00 Casualty  
19:00 Death In Paradise  
20:00 Cold Feet  
20:50 Silent Witness  
21:45 Death In Paradise  
22:40 Trust Me  
23:40 Casualty

### crime & investigation network

00:00 It Takes A Killer  
00:30 It Takes A Killer  
01:00 The Eleven  
02:00 The Eleven  
03:00 Robbie Coltrane's Critical Evidence  
04:00 It Takes A Killer  
04:30 It Takes A Killer  
05:00 The Eleven  
06:00 The Eleven  
07:00 Cold Case Files  
08:00 The First 48  
09:00 It Takes A Killer  
09:30 It Takes A Killer  
10:00 I Didn't Do It  
11:00 I Didn't Do It  
12:00 I Didn't Do It  
13:00 The First 48  
14:00 Homicide: Hours To Kill  
15:00 Homicide Hunter  
16:00 Homicide Hunter  
17:00 Cold Case Files  
18:00 Homicide: Hours To Kill  
19:00 It Takes A Killer  
19:30 It Takes A Killer  
20:00 Nightmare In Suburbia  
21:00 Nightmare In Suburbia  
22:00 Nightmare In Suburbia  
23:00 Britain's Darkest Taboos

### COMEDY CENTRAL

00:05 Kumail Nanjiani: Beta Male  
00:55 Another Period  
01:20 Chris Ramsey Stand Up  
01:45 Tosh.O  
02:10 South Park  
02:35 Real Husbands Of Hollywood  
03:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah  
03:25 Tosh.O  
03:50 South Park  
04:15 Idiotsitter  
04:40 Key And Peele  
05:05 Detroiters  
05:30 Disaster Date  
06:55 Ridiculousness Arabia  
06:20 Comedy Central Presents  
06:50 Disorderly Conduct: Video On Patrol  
07:40 I Live With Models  
08:05 Key And Peele  
08:30 Disaster Date  
08:55 Workaholics  
09:20 Idiotsitter  
09:45 I Live With Models  
10:10 Detroiters  
10:35 Friends  
11:00 Key And Peele  
11:25 Disaster Date  
11:50 Ridiculousness Arabia  
12:15 Friendszone  
12:40 Key And Peele  
13:05 Friends  
13:30 Friends  
13:55 Disaster Date  
14:20 Workaholics  
14:45 Detroiters  
15:10 Friends  
15:35 Key And Peele  
16:00 Idiotsitter  
16:30 Friendszone  
16:55 Friends  
17:20 Friends  
17:45 Disaster Date  
18:10 Punk'd (Bet)  
18:35 Punk'd (Bet)  
19:00 Friends  
19:25 Friendszone  
19:50 Real Husbands Of Hollywood  
20:12 Friends

20:35 Friends  
21:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah  
21:30 Why? With Hannibal Buress  
22:00 Teachers  
22:25 This Is Not Happening  
22:50 Nathan For You  
23:15 Real Husbands Of Hollywood  
23:40 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah

### Discovery Family

00:30 Ultimate Survival  
01:20 Nextworld  
02:10 Nextworld  
03:00 Nextworld  
03:50 Destroyed In Seconds  
04:15 Destroyed In Seconds  
04:40 Destroyed In Seconds  
05:05 Destroyed In Seconds  
05:30 Destroyed In Seconds  
05:55 Destroyed In Seconds  
06:20 How It's Made  
06:40 How It's Made  
07:00 Ultimate Survival  
07:50 How It's Made  
08:15 How It's Made  
08:40 Destroyed In Seconds  
09:05 Destroyed In Seconds  
09:30 Tanked  
10:20 Nextworld  
11:10 Finding Bigfoot  
12:40 Somebody's Gotta Do It  
12:50 How It's Made  
13:15 Destroyed In Seconds  
13:40 Destroyed In Seconds  
14:05 Destroyed In Seconds  
14:30 Tanked  
15:20 Ultimate Survival  
16:10 Nextworld  
17:00 Finding Bigfoot  
17:50 Somebody's Gotta Do It  
18:40 Destroyed In Seconds  
19:05 Destroyed In Seconds  
19:30 How It's Made  
19:55 How It's Made  
20:20 Tanked  
21:10 Finding Bigfoot  
22:00 Somebody's Gotta Do It  
22:50 Nextworld  
23:40 Ultimate Survival

### ID

00:50 Horror At The Cecil Hotel  
01:45 Ghosts Of Shepherdstown  
02:40 A Haunting  
03:35 My Father, The Serial Killer: People Magazine...  
04:30 Murder In The Heartland  
05:25 The Perfect Suspect  
06:20 Reasonable Doubt  
07:10 Disappeared  
08:00 California Investigator  
08:25 Deadline: Crime With Tamron Hall  
09:15 Swamp Murders  
10:10 The Perfect Murder  
11:05 Suspicion  
12:00 I Am Homicide  
12:55 Deadline: Crime With Tamron Hall  
13:50 I Almost Got Away With It  
14:45 The Perfect Murder  
15:40 The Perfect Murder  
16:35 A Crime To Remember  
17:30 Deadline: Crime With Tamron Hall  
18:25 Swamp Murders  
19:20 I Almost Got Away With It  
20:15 Blood Relatives  
21:10 The Perfect Murder  
22:05 Real Crime/Real Story  
23:00 True Conviction  
23:55 My Father, The Serial Killer: People Magazine...

### Disney HD

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

### Disney JUNIOR

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

### Discovery CHANNEL HD

00:15 Alaskan Bush People  
01:05 Heavy Rescue  
01:50 Railroad Australia  
02:35 Outback Truckers  
03:20 Extreme Engineering  
04:05 Flying Wild Alaska  
04:50 Dirty Jobs  
05:35 How Do They Do It?  
06:00 The Caravan Show  
06:23 Chaos Caught On Camera  
06:45 How Do They Do It?  
07:10 How Do They Do It?  
07:35 Flying Wild Alaska  
08:20 The Caravan Show  
08:45 Chaos Caught On Camera  
09:10 Dirty Jobs  
09:55 Heavy Rescue  
10:45 Outback Truckers  
11:30 Outback Truckers  
12:20 The Caravan Show  
12:43 Chaos Caught On Camera  
13:05 How Do They Do It?  
13:30 How Do They Do It?  
13:55 Dirty Jobs  
14:40 Alaskan Bush People  
15:30 Heavy Rescue  
16:15 Railroad Australia  
17:05 Outback Truckers  
17:50 Flying Wild Alaska  
18:40 Dirty Jobs  
19:25 Alaskan Bush People  
20:15 Extreme Engineering  
21:00 Gold Rush  
22:40 Junkyard Empire  
23:30 Flying Wild Alaska

### XD

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

### HD

06:00 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardasian  
06:55 E! News Middle East  
07:25 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardasian  
08:20 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardasian  
09:15 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardasian  
10:10 E! News Middle East  
10:40 Celebrity Style Story  
11:10 Keeping Up With The Kardashians  
12:05 Keeping Up With The Kardashians  
13:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians  
14:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians  
15:00 E! News Middle East  
15:30 Celebrity Style Story  
16:00 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry  
17:00 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry  
18:00 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry  
19:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians  
20:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians  
21:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians  
22:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians  
23:00 E! News Middle East  
23:15 WAGs LA

### itv CHOICE

00:10 Who's Doing The Dishes?  
01:00 Emmerdale  
01:30 Emmerdale  
02:00 Coronation Street  
02:30 Couples Come Dine With Me  
03:25 Dancing On Ice  
05:15 Don't Tell The Bride  
06:15 Who's Doing The Dishes?  
07:10 Couples Come Dine With Me  
08:05 Dancing On Ice  
09:55 Don't Tell The Bride  
11:00 Who's Doing The Dishes?  
11:50 Couples Come Dine With Me  
12:45 Emmerdale  
13:15 Coronation Street  
13:45 Coronation Street  
14:15 Who's Doing The Dishes?  
15:10 The Chase  
16:00 The Voice UK 2018  
17:50 Don't Tell The Bride  
18:50 Emmerdale  
19:15 Coronation Street  
19:45 Coronation Street  
20:10 The Chase  
21:00 The Voice UK 2018  
22:50 Emmerdale  
23:15 Coronation Street  
23:40 Coronation Street

### H2 HD

00:00 United Stuff Of America  
01:00 Missing In Alaska  
02:00 Missing In Alaska  
03:00 In Search Of Aliens  
03:50 In Search Of Aliens  
04:40 United Stuff Of America  
05:30 United Stuff Of America  
06:20 Missing In Alaska  
07:10 The Universe  
08:00 Missing In Alaska  
09:00 Missing In Alaska  
10:00 In Search Of Aliens  
11:00 In Search Of Aliens  
12:00 United Stuff Of America  
13:00 United Stuff Of America  
14:00 Missing In Alaska  
15:00 Missing In Alaska  
16:00 In Search Of Aliens  
17:00 In Search Of Aliens  
18:00 United Stuff Of America  
19:00 Cities Of The Underworld  
20:00 Brad Meltzer's Lost History  
21:00 Hangar 1: The UFO Files  
22:00 Ancient Aliens  
23:00 Bible Secrets Revealed

### HISTORY

00:20 Swamp People  
01:05 Swamp People  
02:00 American Pickers  
02:50 Pawn Stars  
03:15 Storage Wars  
03:40 American Pickers  
04:30 Swamp People  
05:15 Swamp People  
06:00 Mountain Men  
06:50 Forged In Fire  
07:40 Pawn Stars  
08:05 Storage Wars  
08:30 American Pickers  
09:20 Mountain Men  
09:10 Ax Men  
11:00 Forged In Fire  
11:50 Pawn Stars  
12:15 Storage Wars  
12:40 American Pickers  
13:30 Mountain Men  
14:20 American Pickers  
15:10 Mountain Men  
16:00 American Pickers  
16:50 Pawn Stars  
17:15 Storage Wars  
17:40 American Pickers  
18:30 Mountain Men  
19:20 Forged In Fire  
21:00 American Pickers  
21:50 The Zodiac Killer: Case Closed?

### NAT GEO people HD

00:15 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia  
00:45 What's For Sale?  
01:10 Miguel's Tropical Kitchen  
01:40 Chasing Time  
02:05 Chasing The Sun  
02:35 Restoration Man  
03:30 Cesar Millan: Viva Las Vegas!  
04:25 John Torode's Malaysian Adventure  
04:50 John Torode's Asia  
05:20 John Torode's Asia  
05:45 The Shelbourne  
06:15 One Man & His Campervan  
06:40 One Man & His Campervan  
07:10 Chasing Time  
07:35 Chasing The Sun  
08:05 Restoration Man  
09:00 Cesar Millan: Viva Las Vegas!  
09:55 John Torode's Malaysian Adventure  
10:20 John Torode's Asia  
10:50 John Torode's Asia  
11:15 The Shelbourne  
11:45 One Man & His Campervan  
12:10 One Man & His Campervan  
12:40 Chasing Time  
13:05 Chasing The Sun  
13:35 Restoration Man  
14:30 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces  
15:25 John Torode's Malaysian Adventure  
15:50 John Torode's Asia

John Torode's Asia  
16:45 The Shelbourne  
17:15 One Man & His Campervan  
17:40 One Man & His Campervan  
18:10 Eat Street  
18:35 Chasing The Sun  
19:05 Restoration Man  
20:00 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces  
21:00 John Torode's Malaysian Adventure  
21:30 John Torode's Asia  
22:00 John Torode's Asia  
22:25 The Shelbourne  
22:55 One Man & His Campervan  
23:20 One Man & His Campervan  
23:50 Eat Street

### NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC CHANNEL HD

00:10 Wicked Tuna  
01:00 Locked Up Abroad  
02:00 India's Mega Kitchens  
03:00 Yukon Gold  
04:00 Wicked Tuna  
05:00 Rebuilding Titanic  
06:00 Battle For Two Jima  
07:00 Locked Up Abroad  
08:00 Apocalypse: The Second World War  
09:00 Rebuilding Titanic  
10:00 Mega Food  
11:00 India's Mega Kitchens  
12:00 Mega Factories  
13:00 Hitler's Death Squad  
14:00 Apocalypse: The Second World War  
15:00 Locked Up Abroad  
16:00 Zoh's River Journey Thailand  
17:00 India's Mega Kitchens  
18:00 Mega Factories  
19:00 Locked Up Abroad  
20:00 Zoh's River Journey Thailand  
20:50 India's Mega Kitchens  
21:40 Mega Factories  
22:30 Locked Up Abroad  
23:20 Apocalypse: The Second World War

### NAT GEO WILD HD

00:20 Building Penguin Paradise  
01:10 Dr. K's Exotic Animal ER  
02:00 Tiger's Revenge  
02:50 Caught In The Act GPU Reversions  
03:45 Philly Undercover  
04:40 Saving Paradise Islands  
05:35 Tiger's Revenge  
06:30 Caught In The Act GPU Reversions  
07:25 Philly Undercover  
08:20 Saving Paradise Islands  
09:15 World's Weirdest: Animal Taboo  
10:10 The Invaders  
11:05 Secret Life Of Predators  
12:00 Secrets Of The Giant Manta Ray  
12:55 Planet Carnivore: Perfect Killers  
13:50 Caught In The Act GPU Reversions  
14:45 Philly Undercover  
15:40 Gorilla Murders  
16:35 World's Weirdest Pets  
17:30 The Invaders  
18:25 Secret Life Of Predators (2016)  
19:20 Philly Undercover  
20:10 Gorilla Murders  
21:00 World's Weirdest Pets  
21:50 The Invaders  
22:40 Secret Life Of Predators (2016)  
23:30 Secrets Of The Giant Manta Ray

### nick HD

00:12 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles  
00:36 Rabbids Invasion  
01:00 Rabbids Invasion  
01:24 Sanjay And Craig  
01:48 Sanjay And Craig  
02:12 Winx Club  
02:36 Winx Club  
03:00 Harvey Beaks  
03:24 Harvey Beaks  
03:48 The Loud House  
04:12 The Loud House  
04:36 Breadwinners  
05:00 Breadwinners  
05:24 Get Blake  
05:48 SpongeBob SquarePants  
06:12 SpongeBob SquarePants  
06:36 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles  
07:00 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles  
07:24 Rabbids Invasion  
07:48 Get Blake  
08:12 Harvey Beaks  
08:36 Sanjay And Craig  
09:00 SpongeBob SquarePants  
09:24 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles  
09:48 Henry Danger  
10:12 Game Shakers  
10:36 Regal Academy  
11:00 Winx Club  
11:24 SpongeBob SquarePants  
11:48 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles  
12:12 The Loud House  
12:36 Rabbids Invasion  
13:00 Breadwinners  
13:24 Massive Monster Mayhem  
13:48 I Am Frankie  
14:12 The Thundermans  
14:36 Sanjay And Craig  
14:50 Rabbids Invasion  
15:24 Harvey Beaks  
15:48 SpongeBob SquarePants  
16:12 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles  
16:36 The Loud House  
17:00 Massive Monster Mayhem  
17:24 I Am Frankie  
17:48 Hunter Street  
18:12 Henry Danger  
18:36 Nicky, Ricky, Dicky And Dawn  
19:00 School Of Rock  
19:24 Game Shakers  
19:48 The Thundermans  
20:12 Harvey Beaks  
20:36 SpongeBob SquarePants  
21:00 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles  
21:24 Sanjay And Craig  
21:48 Rabbids Invasion  
22:12 Breadwinners  
22:36 Harvey Beaks  
23:00 SpongeBob SquarePants  
23:24 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles

### nick jr.

00:17 Kid-E-Cats  
00:22 Shimmer And Shine  
00:44 Sunny Day  
01:07 Max & Ruby  
01:30 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom  
01:40 Kiva Can Do!  
01:52 The Day Henry Met  
01:57 Blaze And The Monster Machines  
02:19 Paw Patrol  
02:41 Kid-E-Cats  
02:58 Kid-E-Cats  
03:04 Shimmer And Shine

Nella The Princess Knight  
03:38 Paw Patrol  
04:01 The Day Henry Met  
04:07 Max & Ruby  
04:29 Dora The Explorer  
04:52 Sunny Day  
05:13 Nella The Princess Knight  
05:36 Shimmer And Shine  
05:59 Wallykazam!  
06:21 Zack & Quack  
06:32 The Day Henry Met  
06:38 Blaze And The Monster Machines  
07:00 Rusty Rivets  
07:13 Paw Patrol  
07:37 Dora The Explorer  
08:00 Nella The Princess Knight  
08:22 Kiva Can Do!  
08:33 Kiva Can Do!  
08:44 Blaze And The Monster Machines  
09:05 Paw Patrol  
09:29 Shimmer And Shine  
09:52 Nella The Princess Knight  
10:15 The Day Henry Met  
10:20 Paw Patrol  
10:43 Rusty Rivets  
11:07 Wallykazam!  
11:30 Bubble Guppies  
11:53 Team Umizoomi  
12:16 Kid-E-Cats  
12:21 Shimmer And Shine  
12:44 Sunny Day  
13:06 Max & Ruby  
13:29 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom  
13:39 Kiva Can Do!  
13:50 The Day Henry Met  
13:56 Blaze And The Monster Machines  
14:18 Blaze And The Monster Machines  
14:40 Paw Patrol  
14:52 Kid-E-Cats  
14:57 Kid-E-Cats  
15:03 Shimmer And Shine  
15:25 Nella The Princess Knight  
15:36 Paw Patrol  
15:59 The Day Henry Met  
16:05 Max & Ruby  
16:28 Dora The Explorer  
16:51 Sunny Day  
17:13 Nella The Princess Knight  
17:36 Shimmer And Shine  
17:58 Wallykazam!  
18:22 Zack & Quack  
18:32 The Day Henry Met  
18:38 Blaze And The Monster Machines  
19:00 Rusty Rivets  
19:13 Paw Patrol  
19:37 Dora The Explorer  
20:00 Nella The Princess Knight  
20:22 Kiva Can Do!  
20:33 Kiva Can Do!  
20:43 Blaze And The Monster Machines  
21:06 Paw Patrol  
21:30 Shimmer And Shine  
21:52 Nella The Princess Knight  
22:14 The Day Henry Met  
22:20 Paw Patrol  
22:44 Rusty Rivets  
23:07 Wallykazam!  
23:30 Bubble Guppies  
23:54 Team Umizoomi

### AM MOVIES HD Disney

01:45 Cars 3  
03:45 The Jungle Book  
05:45 Cars  
07:45 Cars 2  
09:45 Cars 3  
11:45 The Jungle Book  
13:45 Zootropolis  
15:45 The Little Mermaid  
17:30 The Lone Ranger  
20:15 Inspector Gadget  
21:45 Zootropolis  
23:45 The Little Mermaid

### AM SERIES HD

00:00 How To Get Away With Murder  
01:00 Secret City  
01:55 Claws  
02:45 Grey's Anatomy  
03:35 Scandal  
04:25 How To Get Away With Murder  
05:20 The Unit  
06:10 Emerald City  
07:00 Training Day  
08:00 Good Morning America - The Weekend  
09:00 The View  
10:00 Scandal  
11:00 The Unit  
12:00 Emerald City  
13:00 Chicago Fire  
14:00 Grey's Anatomy  
15:00 The View  
16:00 Live Good Morning America  
18:00 Emerald City  
19:00 The Unit  
20:00 Chicago Fire  
21:00 Suits  
22:00 The Good Doctor  
23:00 Absentia

### AM MOVIES HD COMEDY

01:35 Made  
03:15 No Stranger Than Love  
05:00 Boris And Natasha: The Movie  
06:35 Who Gets The Dog?  
08:20 Stop! Or My Mom Will Shoot  
09:55 Dad's Army  
11:45 Who Gets The Dog?  
13:30 Stop! Or My Mom Will Shoot  
15:05 A Midsummer's Hawaiian Dream  
16:40 The Bucket List  
18:25 Meet Dave  
20:10 The To Do List  
22:00 Top Five  
23:45 Mean Machine

### AM MOVIES FESTIVAL

01:10 Hostile Border  
02:45 One True Thing  
04:50 Pele: Birth Of A Legend  
06:50 Days Of Heaven  
08:30 One True Thing  
10:35 Pele: Birth Of A Legend  
12:25 The New Adventures Of Aladin  
14:20 Operation Avalanche  
16:05 African Safari  
17:40 The Benefactor  
19:25 Match  
21:05 Girl On The Edge  
22:55 Masquerade

### AM MOVIES HD KIDS

00:30 Azur & Asmar: The Prince's Quest  
02:15 Simba The King Lion  
04:25 Funny Little Cars  
05:35 Louis & Luca And The Snow Machine  
07:00 The Happy Cricket And The Giant Bugs  
08:30 The Secret Of Kells  
10:00 Help And Freedom

01:35 Ozzy  
13:15 Simba The King Lion  
15:25 Funny Little Cars  
16:35 The Adventures Of Scooter The Penguin  
18:05 Help And Freedom  
19:40 Back To The Sea  
21:25 Phantom Boy  
23:00 The Adventures Of Scooter The Penguin

### AM MOVIES HD

01:00 Days And Nights  
02:40 Cops And Robbersons  
04:20 Rocky III  
06:05 Batman: Return Of The Caped Crusaders  
07:30 Oleana  
09:10 Cops And Robbersons  
10:45 Rocky III  
12:30 Ice Age: Collision Course  
14:10 The Big Year  
15:55 Ride Along 2  
17:40 Cinderella Man  
20:05 The Internship  
22:05 The Revenant

### DISCOVERY SCIENCE

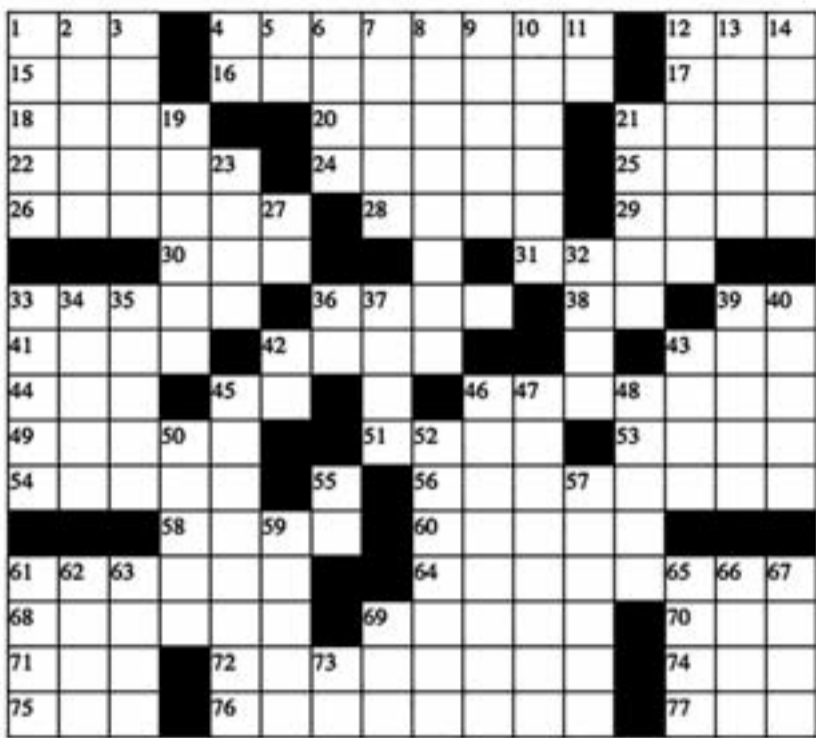
00:40 Race To Escape  
01:30 Race To Escape  
02:20 Race To Escape  
03:10 Hacking The Wild  
04:00 Mythbusters  
04:48 Mythbusters  
05:36 Mythbusters  
06:24 Mythbusters  
07:12 Mythbusters  
08:00 How Do They Do It?  
08:26 The Big Brain Theory  
09:14 Mythbusters  
10:02 Race To Escape  
10:50 How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

### STAR GOLD

01:30 No One Killed Jessica  
03:00 No One Killed Jessica  
03:55 Koffee With Karan  
05:00 Koffee

Stars

CROSSWORD 1861



ACROSS

1. A long thin fluffy scarf of feathers or fur.
4. A support or foundation.
12. The unit of frequency.
15. Electronic warfare undertaken to prevent or reduce an enemy's effective use of the electromagnetic spectrum.
16. A decrease of transmitted power in a mechanical system caused by slipping.
17. Any high mountain.
18. According to the Old Testament he was a pagan king of Israel and husband of Jezebel (9th century BC).
20. Building material used as siding or roofing.
22. A member of the Uniat Church.
24. The Tibeto-Burman language spoken in the Thailand and Burmese borderlands.
25. (British) A waterproof raincoat made of rubberized fabric.
26. United States surrealist painter (born in France) (1900-1955).
28. A group of cattle or sheep or other domestic mammals all of the same kind that are herded by humans.
29. On or toward the lee.
30. The month following January and preceding March.
31. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
33. God of the sky.
38. (astronomy) The angular distance of a celestial point measured westward along the celestial equator from the zenith crossing.
41. A British peer ranking below a Marquess and above a Viscount.
44. The smallest multiple that is exactly divisible by every member of a set of numbers.
49. 100 thebe equal 1 pula.
51. An amino acid that is found in the central nervous system.
53. Toward the mouth or oral region.
54. Essential oil or perfume obtained from flowers.
56. Completely free from dirt or contamination.
58. (Greek mythology) Daughter of Zeus and Demeter.
60. Sheet that forms a distinct (usually flat) section or component of something.
61. Naked freshwater or marine or parasitic protozoa that form temporary pseudopods for feeding and locomotion.
64. Or or related to acetic acid.
68. The vein in the center of a leaf.
70. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
71. Black tropical American cuckoo.
72. A bitter alkaloid found in coffee and tea that is responsible for their stimulating effects.
74. A machine-readable version of a standard dictionary.
75. Imperial dynasty that ruled China (most of the time) from 206 BC to 221 and expanded its boundaries and developed its bureaucracy.
76. Arranged like rays or radii.
77. A sweetened beverage of diluted fruit juice.

DOWN

1. An outstanding example of its kind.
2. Type genus of Ochnaceae.
3. At full speed.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Aries, you take stock of what things and people are actually worth. You will have opportunities to accumulate money and items during this new cycle: material wealth is significant to you now. Legacy is a priority; you focus on accumulating memories and things to be left behind. Home and family represent your inner most security goal; you long to have shelter from the storms of life. Marriage, contracts and partnerships are seen as keys to success and happiness and they have plenty of lessons to teach you. At some point today or this evening you may experience a sense of panic; will I be abandoned, will I reach my goals. Let these insecurities go and know that you will have all that you need and desire, Aries.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Taurus, you could make a change in where you live or remodel your present home. There seems to be great enjoyment of food and drink; putting on pounds could be a problem at this time. Sexual relationships and monetary gain hold far too much importance to you; let your practical nature speak to you. You want to push boundaries and may create a problem for yourself in doing so. Desiring a certain person could become obsessive due to the chemistry between you; be cautious. Monetary partnerships are indicated; making money and planning for the future are of utmost importance. Look more at your motivations than what is going on before your eyes. You are at a point of new beginnings and new self-awareness, Taurus.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Gemini, you may have a tendency to keep your head in the clouds today; the people around you demand your attention. Someone could accuse you of being unrealistic; you could find yourself in a difficult position. Most important now is your home, family, legacy. This afternoon, you may find yourself reflecting on your own youth or some event from the past. This is a perfect time to unite with others to reach realistic goals. Pay attention to your finances so that what is spent matches what is made; live within your means. An interesting article in the news paper or on the internet will tell you something you needed to know. You could hear from friends this evening involving a fun outing; relax and enjoy a little free time, Gemini.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Cancer, you may want to make improvements to your home; be mindful of your budget! You will see that the quality of life is better than ever. Putting your nose to the grindstone will come with relative ease and successful outcomes today. For once you allow yourself to work smarter not harder when you realize how much more you can get done. You could have some absorbing flashes of thought regarding sensitive issue. You will catch the vibes of those you work or live with as you enjoy spending time with them today or this evening. More than ever, you consider a home and family to be your safe place. If you find that your head is in the clouds, relax and let this work to relax you at the end of this very busy, productive day, Cancer.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Leo, your home is the place you hold dear above all other places; your legacy grows more important each year. You love being held in high esteem and viewed as someone who makes a difference. You want to achieve much and you want to do it in the best way possible; work smarter not harder comes to mind. You have no room for fiction or fantasy today and you are in a mood of making things happen in a realistic way; others depend on you for your foresight and enthusiasm. You may not be in a good position to teach or lead as this energy is low for you today. Focus on your happy home life and a new hobby you have started. Your evening will provide a perfect opportunity to observe and learn new ways to effect change, Leo.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Virgo, the energy is good for lending support to your commitment to self-control. Your sensitivities may threaten to boil over and spill all over your day; instead pause and close your eyes for a moment. You could have a new idea about a new recipe for healthier eating. There are lots of opportunities for active communications with like-minded people. Try not to push your high expectations of yourself onto others; this could cause more problems than you need. You long to leave a good respectable legacy for loved ones to enjoy after you're gone. Others could become upset if you mention what you may or may not leave them in a will. Leave room for dessert tonight and you could find yourself being treated to dinner by a special friend, Virgo.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Libra, the new year brings an eagerness to help those less fortunate; this could indicate people or animals but you feel a determination to make a difference in the world. The karma you build now is important as it could also serve to pay off old karmic debt. You jovial, lighthearted mood creates a fun environment for coworkers and even bosses! You won't be interested in theories or maybe today; only facts and documentation will do for the matters at hand. Home is where your true happiness and comfort lie for today and tonight; your sanctuary from the world and the rat race. Your intuition is right on today and you should take heed to what it is telling you. You will stand out in the crowd tonight when you and a date show up for a low-key dinner, Libra.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Scorpio, this morning in a meeting you will make a very important point. You will need to make an effort to stay out of a friend's drama; you have been there and done that. You want something that is yours and yours alone, not to be shared with the world or anyone else in it. Your head may not be right for making decisions just now concerning anything important; patience the time is coming. New prospects for future work could become known. Your artistic outlet is less common than most but it could attract some attention soon; perhaps your work will appear in an art crawl or coffee house concert. Laughing is more fun with two. Tonight could be the beginning of a new favorite meal and you could share it with someone you care for, Scorpio.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Sagittarius, your chart indicates that you will continue your commitment to being the best you can be in the areas of health, spiritual and mental growth. You attract people that are headstrong and confident. A temptation may arise that threatens your good sense. You could feel uncomfortable in your own skin and want to keep to yourself doing whatever you want to do today. You may find you need to reconsider some decisions you have made in the domestic area. If there is a problem with finances, these can be solved easily open your eyes. If you are approached in an aggressive way be sure to step away for a few moments before you respond. Each person is different; do what is best for you. Again, exercise control in all things, Sagittarius.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Capricorn, you desire security; a personal, close forever relationship, your fortress on the hill. You won't approve of a person's impractical treatment of a problem. This person does not think as you do and you may find yourself at odds. The timing couldn't be better for reaching out to others with innovative ideas; you feel animated and energetic. You will be chatty and jovial today. New concepts and strategies seem to materialize from thin air. You could speak to an older person regarding your personal and private circumstances; mutual respect grows from this interaction. This is a great time to return emails, letters or calls; a visit from you would be welcome. Unwind this evening with a friend and rest well, Capricorn.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

Aquarius, you could find your friends in need of your expertise. You are more into an innovative approach with less traditional methods at the forefront. Events requiring reworking and new plans crop up unexpectedly. What matters most to you right now is bringing your spiritual journey closer to your physical experience. Intuition will take a front seat throughout this cycle; you will have to use caution at first, then you will fly! Home is your safe place today and you will find a certain project will be easier than you thought. Take a few moments with your spouse or lover to express your true feelings. An answer will be discovered this evening. This evening you should definitely enjoy being off the clock and comfortably at your home, Aquarius.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Pisces, only the truth will work for you as you discover that a new mission has been laid in your lap. Back stabbing and carrying tales will ignite your temper and you will more than likely let it be known. Now is not the time to seek approval from everyone around you; being upright and honest is more important than being liked or agreed with just now. This could be the perfect time to begin new painting or book you want to create! You could stumble across a new and interesting, actually doable, diet that appears to be just what you have been looking for. Remember to do things for people for the sake of doing them and not for praise; assess your motives. Your words will make sense and be very easy to listen to when you address a small audience, Pisces.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Refrigerator

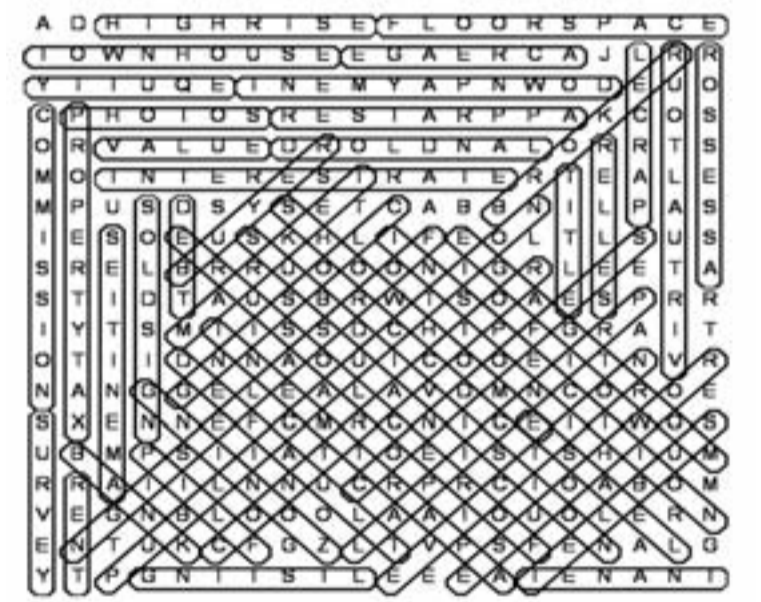
Find and circle all of the refrigerator items that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell an additional item found in many refrigerators.



- |          |           |             |              |
|----------|-----------|-------------|--------------|
| APPLES   | DRAWERS   | LETTUCE     | ORANGES      |
| BACON    | DRINKS    | LIGHTBULB   | PEAS         |
| BANANAS  | EGGS      | MAGNETS     | POULTRY      |
| BREAD    | GRAPES    | MAPLE SYRUP | PRODUCE      |
| BROCCOLI | ICE CUBES | MAISONNAISE | SHELVES      |
| BUTTER   | JAM       | MEAT        | SPINACH      |
| CAKE     | JUICES    | MILK        | STRAWBERRIES |
| CARROTS  | KETCHUP   | MUSTARD     | WATER        |
| CHEESE   | LEFTOVERS | OLIVES      | YOGURT       |
| COLD     | LEMONS    |             |              |

Yesterday's Solution

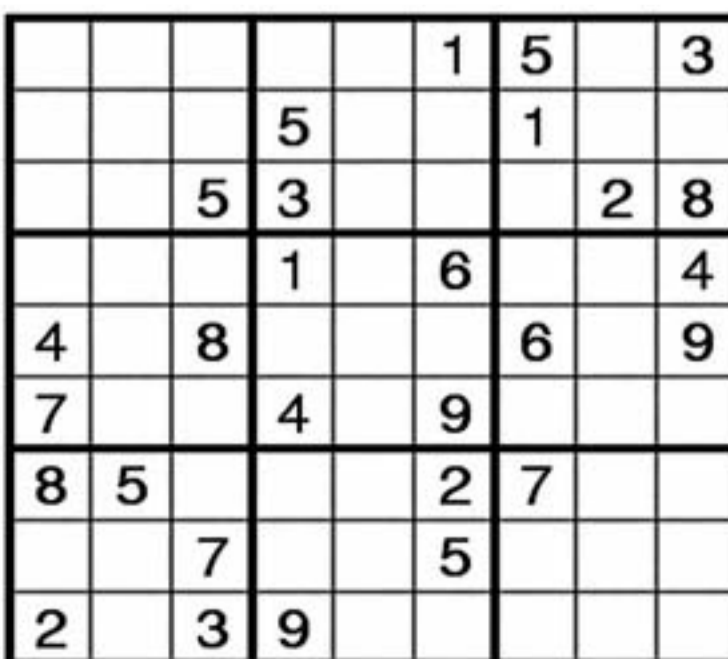
Real Estate 2



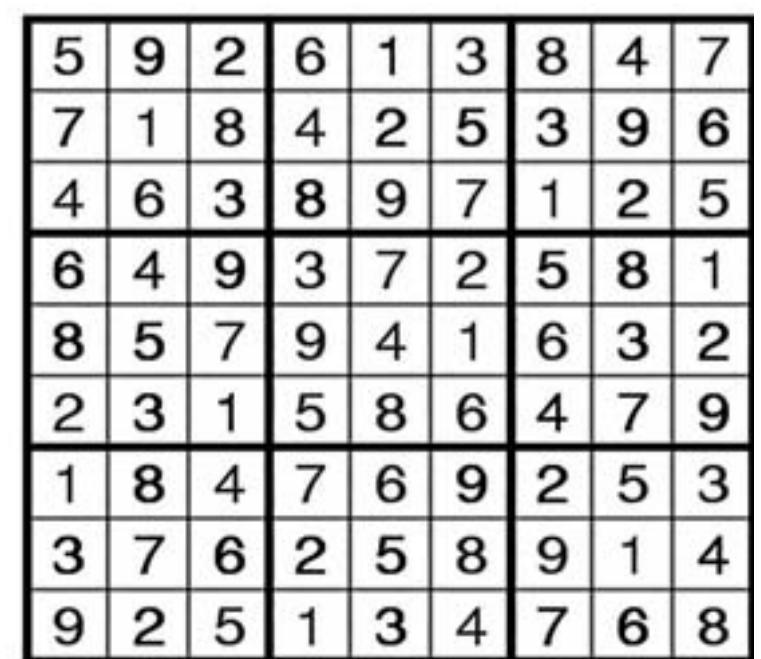
- |            |               |                |              |
|------------|---------------|----------------|--------------|
| ACREAGE    | DEBT          | LANDLORD       | SELLER       |
| APARTMENT  | DEFAULT       | LEASE          | SHOW HOME    |
| APPRAISER  | DOWN PAYMENT  | LISTING        | SOLD SIGN    |
| ASSESSOR   | EQUITY        | MARKET         | SUBDIVISION  |
| BANK       | EVICTION      | MORTGAGE       | SUBLET       |
| BROKER     | FLIP          | PARCEL         | SURVEY       |
| BUYER      | FLOOR SPACE   | PHOTOS         | TENANT       |
| CLOSING    | FOR SALE SIGN | PRINCIPAL      | TITLE        |
| COMMISSION | FORCLOSURE    | PROPERTY TAX   | TOWNHOUSE    |
| CONDO FEES | HIGH RISE     | PUBLIC AUCTION | VALUE        |
| CONTRACTOR | INSPECTION    | RENT           | VIRTUAL TOUR |
|            | INTEREST RATE | ROW HOUSE      | ZONING       |

The hidden message is: ADJUSTABLE-RATE MORTGAGE

Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



# Classifieds

Monday, March 19, 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



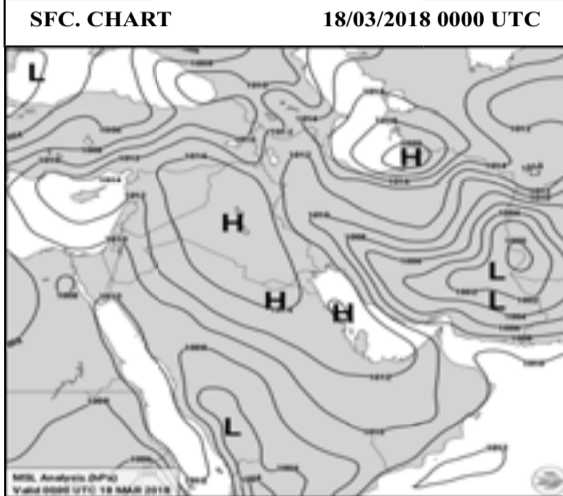
Tel: (+965) 161 Ext: 6819 - 6817  
 Fax: (+965) 24348714  
[www.met.gov.kw](http://www.met.gov.kw)



## Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

**BY DAY:** Warm with light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 12 - 35 km/h .

**BY NIGHT:** Fair with light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 12 - 30 km/h .

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings	
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 18/03/2018 0000 UTC	
KUWAIT CITY	28 °C	18 °C		
KUWAIT AIRPORT	27 °C	13 °C		
ABDALY	27 °C	12 °C		
BUBYAN	-- °C	-- °C		
JAHRA	28 °C	15 °C		
FAILAKA ISLAND	25 °C	16 °C		
SALMIYAH	26 °C	19 °C		
AHMADI	-- °C	-- °C		
NUWAISIB	25 °C	14 °C		
WAFRA	27 °C	14 °C		
SALMY	26 °C	11 °C		

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Monday	03/19	Partly cloudy	28 °C	15 °C	NW-VRB	10 - 28 km/h
Tuesday	03/20	Relatively hot	28 °C	14 °C	VRB-SE	08 - 30 km/h
Wednesday	03/21	Relatively hot	30 °C	16 °C	VRB-SE	06 - 26 km/h
Thursday	03/22	Relatively hot	32 °C	15 °C	NW	12 - 32 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	04:36
Sunrise	05:55
Zuhr	11:56
Asr	15:23
Sunset	17:58
Isha	19:15

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	28 °C
MIN. Temp.	19 °C
MAX. RH	86 %
MIN. RH	18 %
MAX. Wind	N 53 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

## CHANGE OF NAME

I, JAGADHABI SUJATHA (old name), R/o. TadiKalabytu, Chennarajupodu, Obulavaripalli Mandal, Kadapa District, A.P., India, have changed my name as SIBYALA SUJATHA (new name) W/o. SIBYALA SUB-RAMANYAM RAJU.

I, JAGADHABI NAGARAJU (old name), R/o. Door No. 10-4A, TadiKalabailu, Korlakunta, Obulavaripalli Mandal, Kadapa District, A.P., India, have changed my name as SIBYALA SUB-RAMANYAM RAJU (new name) S/o. SIBYALA SUB-BARAMA RAJU. (C 5386) 18-3-2018

## Embassy of India Kuwait

**Contract for supplying Local Security Guard (LSG) for round the clock security at Embassy of India premises**

The Embassy of India, Kuwait invites bids by 10th April, 2018 for awarding contract for hiring local security guard for round the clock security at Embassy premises. The details of scope of work, requirements, conditions etc are available on Embassy's website [www.indembkw.org](http://www.indembkw.org) under "Press Release".

All offers should be in two sealed covers marked "Technical Bid" To be opened by addressee only and "Financial Bid" - To be opened by addressee only" and addressed to the "Head of Chancery", Embassy of India, Daeya, Diplomatic Enclave, Arabian Gulf Street, Safat 13015, Kuwait. The offer must be delivered at the Embassy on or before 1200 hrs on 10th April, 2018.

Embassy of India, Kuwait

## SMART BUILDING TECHNOLOGY COMPANY REQUIRES

- 1- UPS Maintenance Engineer
- 2- UPS Technician
- 3- Electrical System Engineer

Should have good experience  
 Candidates must have Transferable Residence

Email your CV to  
[Smartjob182013@gmail.com](mailto:Smartjob182013@gmail.com)

## EMERGENCY

112

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

For labor-related inquiries and complaints:  
 Call MSAL hotline 128

## STAFF REQUIRED FOR A HEALTHY FOOD CONCEPT

We are looking for enthusiastic, creative and qualified restaurant staff for our new healthy food concept. The restaurant will offer a unique experience fully dedicated to serving healthy and nutritious food. Available positions are:

- Junior Sous Chef
- Demi Chefs
- Commi 1
- Kitchen Stewards
- Restaurant Supervisors
- Waiters
- Baristas

### Requirements:

- Previous experience within the healthy food business is preferred.
- A minimum of 2 years of experience is a must.
- Transferable visa

Interested candidates should send their CV's to :  
[jfrancis@alrecardo.com](mailto:jfrancis@alrecardo.com)



Directorate General of Civil Aviation Home Page ([www.kuwait-airport.com.kw](http://www.kuwait-airport.com.kw))

## DIAL 161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Monday 19/3/2018				Departure Flights on Monday 19/3/2018			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
JAI	572	Mumbai	00:05	MEV	405	Beirut	12:55
JZR	607	Kochi	00:10	IAW	158B	Al Najaf	13:00
KAC	504	Beirut	00:30	RBG	554	Alexandria	13:00
JZR	267	Beirut	00:30	JZR	176	Dubai	13:40
JZR	539	Cairo	00:50	MSR	611	Cairo	14:00
KAC	102	London	00:50	KNE	382	Taif	15:00
PGT	858	Istanbul	00:55	KAC	673	Dubai	15:05
THY	772	Istanbul	00:55	FDB	060	Dubai	15:10
RJA	642	Amman	01:05	GFA	222	Bahrain	15:25
DLH	625	Bahrain	01:45	KAC	785	Jeddah	15:25
THY	764	Istanbul	01:50	QTR	1079	Doha	15:30
JZR	555	Alexandria	02:15	SVA	501	Jeddah	15:45
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	KNE	530	Jeddah	15:45
QTR	1086	Doha	02:20	KAC	775	Riyadh	15:50
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30	KAC	283	Dhaka	15:50
KLM	446	Bahrain	02:30	IAW	158C	Al Najaf	15:55
WAN	548	KTM	02:40	KAC	743	Dammam	16:05
OMA	643	Muscat	02:55	KAC	563	Amman	16:10
KKK	1268	Istanbul	02:55	KAC	619	Doha	16:10
MSC	501	Alexandria	03:00	ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:10	OMA	646	Muscat	16:35
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	ABY	128	Sharjah	16:40
QTR	1076	Doha	03:50	KAC	615	Bahrain	16:40
KAC	382	Delhi	04:15	SAW	706	Damascus	16:55
KAC	1544	Cairo	04:25	JZR	240	Amman	17:15
KAC	418	Manila	04:25	QTR	1073	Doha	17:15
UAE	873	Dubai	04:25	FDB	052	Dubai	17:40
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:35	UAE	858	Dubai	17:45
KAC	284	Dhaka	04:50	RJA	641	Amman	17:55
FDB	069	Dubai	04:55	KAC	331	Trivandrum	18:00
JZR	609	Hyderabad	05:10	JZR	538	Cairo	18:15
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:20	SVA	511	Riyadh	18:15
JZR	143	Doha	05:25	GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
THY	770	Istanbul	05:25	JZR	184	Dubai	18:30
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	05:30	JZR	608	Hyderabad	18:40
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:40	KAC	381	Delhi	18:50
KAC	344	Chennai	05:50	FDB	064	Dubai	19:10
KAC	302	Mumbai	06:10	UAE	876	Dubai	19:30
KAC	362	Colombo	06:25	MSR	621	Cairo	19:30
KAC	678	Dubai	06:30	QTR	1081	Doha	20:00
WAN	338	Alexandria	06:40	ABY	124	Sharjah	20:05
KAC	206	Islamabad	06:50	GFA	218	Bahrain	20:15
KAC	204	Lahore	07:10	KAC	357	Kochi	20:30
BAW	157	London	07:10	FDB	058	Dubai	20:35
KAC	354	Bengaluru	07:35	KAC	345	Ahmedabad	20:40
FDB	053	Dubai	07:35	KNE	232	Riyadh	20:50
JZR	503	Luxor	07:45	KAC	301	Mumbai	20:50
KAC	384	Delhi	08:00	KAC	353	Bengaluru	20:55
IAW	157A	Al Najaf	08:00	OMA	648	Muscat	21:20
KAC	358	Kochi	08:05	KAC	1543	Cairo	21:20
UAE	855	Dubai	08:35	DLH	624	Bahrain	21:30
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:05	DHX	171	Bahrain	21:50
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	09:05	QTR	1089	Doha	22:00
QTR	1070	Doha	09:10	KAC	205	Islamabad	22:05
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	22:10
IRA	667	Esfahan	10:00	MEA	403	Beirut	22:20
WAN	342	Sohag	10:15	ALK	230	Colombo	22:25
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	GFA	220	Bahrain	22:30
AXB	890	Mangalore/Bahrain	11:10	KAC	383	Delhi	22:40
QTR	1074	Doha	11:20	KLM	445	Bahrain	22:50
JZR	165	Dubai	11:30	UAE	860	Dubai	23:00
WAN	134	Doha	11:55	ETD	310	Abu Dhabi	23:05
MEA	404	Beirut	11:55	QTR	1083	Doha	23:20
IAW	157B	Al Najaf	12:00	SVA	515	Riyadh	23:30
RBG	553	Alexandria	12:15	WAN	337	Alexandria	23:45
KAC	286	Dhaka	12:35				
JZR	561	Sohag	12:45				
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00				
KAC	774	Riyadh	13:40				
KNE	231	Riyadh	14:10				



## MENDES CRYPTICALLY TEASES NEW MUSIC?

**S**hawn Mendes appears to be teasing new music. The Canadian pop star has changed his social media display pictures to a grey icon with a floral design and added two blank coloured squares to his pages on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook, one in the same shade and the other baby pink, sending fans into overdrive. It comes weeks after Shawn tweeted saying he can't wait to get back to playing live with new songs. He told his 17.8 million fans: "Absolutely dying to get back on the road. With all new music. (sic)" Two weeks ago before, the 19-year-old singer shared a topless photo of him on a wooden swing on a beach from his vacation on Instagram, whilst dropping a hint that his new album will be with fans "soon".

He simply captioned the post: "album soon come (sic)" The heartthrob previously admitted that he wanted to "explore a little bit" with the much-awaited follow-up to his second studio LP 'Illuminate', which was released in 2016. And the 'Mercy' hitmaker was inspired by "some old school rockers" and Michael Jackson on his new tunes. He said: "I've been listening to some old school rockers; I've listened to a lot of Michael Jackson, and just [am] trying to explore a little bit. I think the album is gonna be not just one particular thing - it's gonna be a kind of exploration of music." The 'Stitches' star has a number of celebrity friends, including Taylor Swift, who he says offered him advice that he has taken through his performing life. He said: "She [Taylor] told me to never be

afraid to get on stage in front of people who want to be there. "Because they want to have fun and they're not there to judge you. Every single time before I get on stage now, I really, really think about that." Meanwhile, Shawn revealed much of the record would be penned on the road, but he'll be taking his time with it to make sure it's perfect. He shared: "We're trying to plan everything so that there's time to make music, too. I'll be writing and recording a lot on the road. I want to make sure I have a good amount of time to create the next album."

## Anne Marie & tour nerves



**A**nne-Marie is "nervous" about her forthcoming tour. The 'Friends' hitmaker kicks off her UK headline run at O2 Institute Birmingham on Monday, and while she is "excited" to perform for her fans, she's been struggling with insomnia after binge-watching wedding TV show 'Say Yes To The Dress'. Taking to Twitter on Sunday morning she explained: "I'm so excited/nervous about tour I've been watching Say yes to the dress on repeat every night all night for the past week. I repeat, I have not slept. I repeat, tour starts MONDAY! (sic)" The 26-year-old pop beauty then asked "the sleep God" to fix her. She added: "Who's the sleep god? The god of sleep. Can u tell them to help me out (sic)" The 'Heavy' singer previously confessed she is a "bit scared" about releasing her debut album. 'Speak Your Mind' is out next month and though she's been waiting ages for fans to hear her record, she is nervous about the reaction when it finally drops. She said:

"It's finally coming. It's actually so scary now as well. I was really impatient about it coming out, and now it's finally on, I'm a bit scared. "It's called 'Speak Your Mind', and yeah I'm excited. I can't wait... "It's scary because it's taken about five years, it's been in the making for five years. "People's expectation is scaring me, cos I hope that they like it, but you never know. I'm just hoping everyone likes it. I've tried to put as much as myself on it as possible. "Loads of different vibes, different subjects, different things that I'm talking about - it's just scary." Anne-Marie admitted she's had every detail of the record planned for a long time, but feigned ignorance when asked about it until recently. Speaking to BANG Showbiz, she said: "I knew everything about it, all of it. I knew the title of it. I knew what songs were gonna be on it, and I was like 'I don't know.'"



## Stefflon Don won't be boxed in

**S**tefflon Don doesn't want to be "boxed in". The 26-year-old star has recorded with the likes of Demi Lovato, Skepta, Halsey and French Montana, and insists she won't let genre restrict the sort of music she makes. She said: "I never ever want to be boxed in. I'm still Stefflon Don, no matter what kind of track I'm on - if I want to jump on an opera track, I will." The 'Hurtin' Me' hitmaker has learned a lot about quality control and living up to fans' expectations from studying her friend Drake. She explained to Q magazine: "What interests me about [Drake] is that he's so massive and he still cares about his craft. "He's got all these number ones, but if he dropped a song tomorrow and everyone hated it, he'd still care." Though Steff - whose real name is Stephanie Allen - is confident in her abilities, she doesn't like attending events and looking forward to global success so she doesn't have to make small talk with industry figures. She said: "Once I've conquered it all, the less events I'll have to show up for. I want to be like Adele." Meanwhile, the rapper previously vowed to use her music to speak out for "women who aren't so naughty" and who don't have a voice. She said: "I used to always be attracted to that [Lil' Kim and Missy Elliott's music]. It seemed so sick and so powerful as a woman to be able to express yourself and not care about what anyone thinks. That drew me to become a rapper. "You've got to say what a girl with not so much confidence would want to say. Women - especially women that aren't so naughty - they listen to that type of bad stuff to be in that little moment."

## Vikander's training dedication



**A**licia Vikander had to be "forced" to take time off from her 'Tomb Raider' training plan. The 29-year-old actress threw herself into her fitness plan to get in shape to play Lara Croft and her trainer Magnus Lygdback was impressed by her dedication to the project. He said: "I came into this project knowing Alicia would bring it. "She's a former ballerina and the work ethic of a ballerina is just something different, mentally. "If I asked for 15 reps, she would do 16. "I would force her to take a day off." Magnus has previously trained the likes of Alexander Skarsgard to play Tarzan, Ben Affleck for Batman, and 'Wonder Woman' star Gal Gadot and admitted he can be a "nerd" when it comes to creating programs for his famous clients. He told Grazia magazine: "I'm a nerd, I take it pretty far. "I use mood boards, it could be different female athletes or a particular

environment. "For 'Tomb Raider', I sat down with Alicia and the director, Roar Uthaug, to discuss the character, what background do they have? What skills do they need? She needed to have some physicality to it and also, obviously, fighting skills." Alicia relished the opportunity to star in an action movie, but she recently admitted she relied on stunt doubles to shoot certain scenes in the film. Asked whether she did all of her own stunts, the Swedish star said: "I tried to do as many of them as I could. And then you have an incredible team. I just stood there watching some of these stunt women that we had who, of course, kind of made sure that we can run all those stunts over and over again. "But I always did try first and they helped me. It was important for me to really try and get up to a physical level so I would be able to do it."

— Bang Showbiz

## Sarandon's dog accompanies her on set

**S**usan Sarandon always brings her pet pooch on set. The Hollywood legend has two Pomeranians Rigby and Penny, and she likes to take the latter with her to work as she adds a "gentle vibe" wherever she goes. She told Total Film magazine: "(The first thing I'll do is) set up my teapot and my dog's bed. "She's often photographed on the set. She helps a lot. She has a very gentle vibe and ends up being held by everyone." The 'Thelma & Louise' star previously admitted likes to hold her first dates at a pet cemetery. The 71-year-old actress thinks the morbid graveyard, which contains the remains of dead animals, in Hyde Park, London, is the ideal place to take a man she's trying to woo because it's quiet. She said when asked where she'd take someone on their first date: "Maybe the pet cemetery in Hyde Park? It's something you probably haven't done before and would give you lots of time to talk." The legendary star has started thinking about death and has decided to dish out collectibles - such as art pieces - to her children: Eva Amurri, 33, Jack

Robbins, 28, and Miles Robbins, 25, while she's alive. She explained: "Right now I'm in the process of giving everything away, so I did have a lot of fairly well-known photographs - and some art - but I'm passing everything on to my children while I'm still alive. I have some magnificent photographs from Sebastião Salgado that I'm giving to them - and some Picasso etchings ... "When you're on your deathbed, none of these other things will matter." Mary-Louise Parker told me that in the middle of a crisis." But just because she's getting older, Susan has no intention of slowing down and has admitted she would thoroughly enjoy wreaking havoc, while smoking cannabis, if she were let loose in a building in the English capital overnight. Asked what building she would choose, she said: "Maybe the National Gallery or the V&A Museum - that would be fun. I'd probably just get high and wander around."



## White can't please everyone

**J**ack White expects his new album will "upset" people. The 42-year-old singer is preparing to release 'Boarding House Reach' and he knows the diverse record - which features funk, psychedelia, spoken word and electro - won't please his entire fan base but it was something he "had to" put out. He said: "I know that certain things will upset people. "It's hard to say, 'Man, I know that some people are going to have problems with it but I still have to put it out.' " But Jack isn't too worried as he knows his fan base will always change, so the most important thing is for him to like the record. He added: "I don't know what it feels like to dislike one of your own albums. "So far, every time I've felt like I'm pushing myself in a new direction. "The public might be along for the ride for certain moments but I'm very happy with that number fluctuating." And the former White Stripes singer has never really been sure where he fits within the music world. He said: "I'm too strange for mainstream, I'm too mainstream for underground, I'm too this for that. "If 16 year olds run the Internet and popular perception, what does a 16 year old think is cool right now? "The last time I put out an album, that 16 year old was 12! So of course he or she can't be blamed for thinking, 'Who is Jack White?' " The 'Lazaretto' singer also can't understand

why people spend so much time trying to decode his lyrics. He told Q magazine: "People take songs too literally. "There's a perception that everyone is supposed to know exactly who this song is about, which sounds like death to me. "Why would you want everybody to know that?"



Lifestyle | Gossip



# HALE feels freed by clear skin

**L**ucy Hale enjoys wearing makeup more now her skin is clear. The 28-year-old actress said she likes to play around with her look and try new products now she has cleared her skin of any imperfections, and admits she only wears make-up when she wants to, now her skin is "smoother". Speaking to Cosmopolitan.com about her "miracle worker" products she said: "Now that my skin is clear I like using blushes. I used to not like to because it was hard to blend it when you have a bunch of other stuff on, but I like blush. [Biologique Recherche Lotion P50] it's got phenol in it, so it smells funky, but it's a miracle worker. Apparently you have to use it for nine months before you see any real benefit, but for me, it makes my skin look tighter and

smoother. I'm at the point now where if I don't have to wear makeup, I don't want to, and this kind of blurs everything out." The former 'Pretty Little Liars' star said her favorite deodorant is the Degree Ultraclear Black & White Deodorant in 'Pure Rain' because she likes to re-wear her stylish outfits without fear of ruining the clothing from deodorant. She said: "I'm someone who re-wears clothes. I used to be the girl who would buy a bunch of stuff, and now it's just more about quality than quantity, and there's nothing worse than not being able to wear something because of deodorant stains. The whole point of this deodorant is you can wear it with black and white clothing (which is my whole closet anyway) because on white, it doesn't turn [the top] yellow, and on

black, it doesn't leave white marks." And Lucy - who stars in the new show 'Life Sentence' which premiered this month in America - says her "all-time favorite" make-up products are Dior's Diorshow Brow Styler Precision Brow Pencil and Giorgio Armani Beauty Luminous Silk Foundation.

## Baldwin's 'super chill' date outfit

**H**aley Baldwin knows how to dress for lunch with an ex-boyfriend. The 21-year-old model has previously been romantically linked to singers Shawn Mendes, 19, and Justin Bieber, 24, in the past, but the blonde beauty is currently single and confessed she has perfected the art of break-up sarcasm by joking about wearing a "super chill" ball gown to a lunch date with an ex. In a video showcasing the new Pandora Shine jewelry collection for Vogue.com, Hailey is wearing a skin-tight red gown with a thigh-high split, and she joked: "So my ex called me, and he wanted to go for lunch and I wanted to wear something really kind of subtle, super chill, very casual. Because I just want him to understand that I'm over it and I just don't even really care anymore, so yeah, this was a good option." The 'Drop The Mic' host also shared snippets of her personal style from sunglasses for "blocking out the haters" to mixing up her jewelry for a "sexy" look. Showing off the 18k gold-plated jewelry stacked on her tanned skin, she said: "Now it's starting to get hot out, I want to go through my closet and pick out some of my favorite spring/summer looks. I love mixing a lot of shimmery shiny golden jewelry together, I think that when you have a tan it looks very [winks]. I like to stack up my jewelry because essentially I just think it looks cool, sexy. I like to wear a lot of rings because I feel like they're kind of my good luck charm. "As I see it, you don't need an excuse to wear something sparkly, you can do that every day" Meanwhile, Hailey - whose dad is actor Stephen Baldwin - did divulge the ideal qualities she looks for in a partner admitting she is "very, very picky". Speaking to Us Weekly magazine, she said: "I look for somebody who's like funny and can make me laugh. I'm very, very picky, like I am particularly very specific and I know like pretty much immediately if I'm gonna get along with somebody in the capacity of dating or not. "I mean, I hang out with people obviously and get to know them. It takes me a long time to feel like I can warm up to somebody before I ever even consider dating them."



## Kim Kardashian West's former assistant makes solo modeling debut

**S**tephanie Shepherd is making a name for herself without former boss Kim Kardashian West. Stephanie used to be the 'Keeping Up with the Kardashians' star's assistant but they parted ways after things got complicated when she became close to Kim's older sister Kourtney and now Stephanie is following in the Kardashian sisters' footsteps by modeling for a new jewelry line. She is the new face of jewelry brand 8 Other Reasons latest 'Woman' campaign which revolves around "strong, independent women everywhere". Kim's long-term assistant has racked up an impressive one million Instagram followers since joining



the Kardashian West team in 2013, but she was asked to leave her position in 2017 after Stephanie reportedly wanted to transition into a bigger role within Kim's empire and their friendship came in the way of the business. A source told People: "Kim gave her the chance but after a short period of time it became clear that Stephanie just didn't have the knowledge to take on a role like that. Kim made an executive decision to part ways. Steph went from being an assistant to being a celebrity, for a regular girl, she has a huge social media following. She loves the attention, but it took away from her job. There was a feeling that being Kim's assistant, Steph should stay more in the background. But Kim is the one who helped her get the followers by posting pictures with Steph." However, Kim revealed there is no bad blood between her and Stephanie - who was often pictured with the Kardashian sisters as they travelled the world - and their parting was "respectful". In an episode of 'Keeping Up with the Kardashians' Kim recalled their conversation before she asked Stephanie to leave saying: "I said, 'I love you a lot, like a sister, and this conversation is really hard for me to have. But I just think that you've outgrown your position here. She was like, 'I totally get it and I totally respect you and you've taught me everything. I'm so grateful and I've been with you for five years.'"

## Crawford revisits past in Reserved campaign



**C**indy Crawford has revisited her 1980s beginnings for her shoot for the new Reserved campaign. The 52-year-old supermodel has proved time hasn't changed her influence on the fashion industry as she looks fresh and youthful in the 'I LOVE YOU CINDY' campaign film - shot by Gordon von Steiner - for the Polish high-street brand, and the brunette beauty shows her playful side as she dances through the streets in a bright pink suit. Speaking to Vogue.com about her favorite outfits from the set, she said: "I loved all the suits we wore for the commercial but I have to say the pink one was my favorite. I love the color for spring and paired with flats made it look modern and perfect for dancing!" The 80s style of the campaign video reflects her early modeling years during the era which catapulted Cindy to fame, and she reflected on her favorite memories from the decade. When asked what her highlight from the 80s was, she said: "Wow, that's a hard question. I was just starting high school in the beginning of the '80s and by the end of the '80s, I was living in New York modeling. Certainly getting my first Vogue cover was a highlight!" Cindy is wearing a striped white suit on the set of a retro soap with 'Stranger Things' star Dacre Montgomery in one scene, and is exercising in colorful gym gear in another, but the model mum - who raises Kaia, 16, and Presley, 18 with husband Rande Gerber - admits her outfits are much more casual now. She said: "I live in Malibu so most days find me in jeans, a T-shirt and a leather jacket." Reserved launched only six months ago in the UK but has already had campaigns with famous faces including Kate Moss, Adwoa Aboah, Jourdan Dunn, Jon Kortajarena and Irina Shayk, and Cindy is happy to be following in their footsteps. She said: "What Reserved have done with their campaigns has been really smart. I loved Kate [Moss]'s really timeless visual, and then the incredibly current campaign at Christmas with Adwoa, Jourdan and Irina ... I'm happy to be added to this line-up with something that feels nostalgic but is also surprising. I think the brand is keeping people on their toes."

## CIARA'S HISTORIC PANDORA SHINE CAMPAIGN

**C**iarra feels "honored" to star in the new Pandora Shine campaign. The 32-year-old singer features in the new adverts, which show her singing 'Let It Shine', whilst sporting some of the new 18-karat gold-plated silver products - the first jewelry collection of its type created by Pandora since the company's inception in 1982 - and she admits she "feels a part of history" by collaborating with the brand she's been a fan of when she was growing up. Speaking to PeopleStyle, she said: "I feel like I am a part of history right now because it is the first time Pandora has done this type of collection. I've been a huge fan of the brand for years, since I was growing up. For me, I felt honored that they chose me." The Grammy Award-winning artist - who is also the face of make-up brand Revlon - said her favorite item from the collection was the honeycomb choker, which she wore in the campaign photos. She said: "In the campaign photo, I wore two together. I like stacking them. With this choker, you can mix anything with it and it looks good." And the mother-of-two said it's important for her to have sentimental jewelry to remind her of her husband, NFL player Russell Wilson and their two children, son Future, 3, and daughter Sienna, 10 months. Speaking about her own important pieces of jewelry, Ciara explained: "I actually have a few [sentimental pieces]. I would say my engagement ring and my hands obviously are really special for many reasons. Becoming one with someone, it doesn't get any more special and sweeter than that. "I also have these dog tags I got for myself and one for my husband with our kids' birth dates on them. I got it for him in celebration of Father's Day and of course I wanted to match, so I got them made for all of us. Future will not wear his,

but I think eventually he will want to. I take Sienna's and wrap it around my wrist like a bracelet sometimes." And Ciara has said that starring in Pandora's campaign made her want to ask her mother for some jewelry from her personal collection which she can pass on to her kids in the future. She said: "I actually don't have any jewelry pieces from my mom! I was thinking about that. But I think now being a part of this collection, it is kind of inspiring me to say like, 'Uh, what do you have in your closet that I can take?'



## Graham gives tips to feel confident on a bad hair day

**A**shley Graham admits her confidence always gets a huge boost if she's having a "fabulous" hair day. The 30-year-old model is adding to her growing list of high-profile jobs by joining forces with haircare brand Pantene and she believes having a good hair day can give her "a positive outlook". Speaking to PeopleStyle, she said: "Confidence comes from within, but having a great hair day definitely helps. My hair looks fabulous, I have a positive outlook on the day, and I know I can accomplish anything." Ashley - who also recently landed a contract as the newest Revlon spokesperson - has assured her fans that even top models like her can have bad hair days and she suffers from flat hair in the humid weather, but she picks herself up with a treat to the salon to help her feel "fresh". She said: "The best hair day is any day after I get my hair done at the salon. I always leave with my hair feeling soft, voluminous and fresh. The worst hair day always involves being outside in bad humidity or the rain! My hair is already

flat so the rain completely ruins it." The 'America's Next Top Model' host gushed her hair is so "easy to maintain" that she only has to use a texturizing spray to give it an extra boost. She said: "I can really do anything with my hair - it curls great, can be worn straight or pulled in a fun bun and overall it's easy to maintain. I wash my hair every three days. On a daily basis I throw a little texturizing spray at the ends and the middle. My hair is pretty easy and manageable so I don't use a ton of product daily, maybe just some hair spray before I leave the house." And Ashley's favorite product from the Pantene collection is the Foam Conditioner which leaves her luscious brunette locks feeling moisturized. Naming her favorite product, she said: "The Pantene Foam Conditioner, it's lightweight and leaves your hair feeling super moisturized. I'm telling you, try it out for yourself."

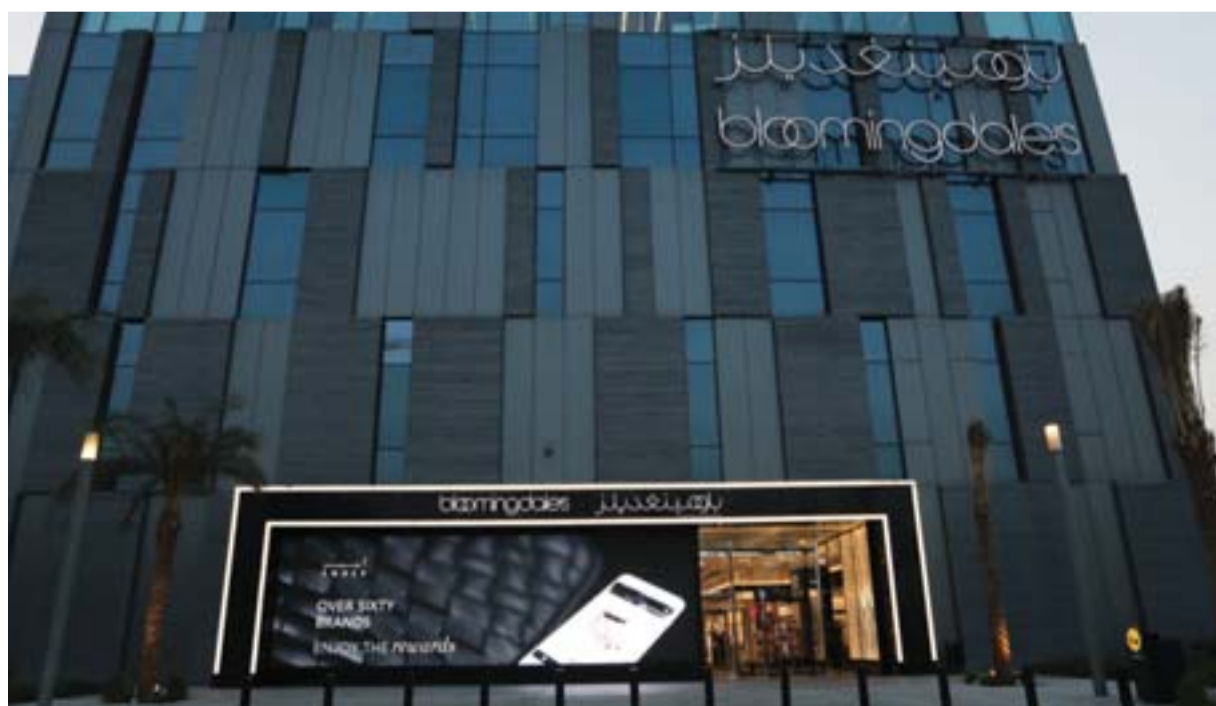




# THE AMAZON INDIA FASHION WEEK



## Bloomingdale's Kuwait turns one!



Over 300 VIP guests and dignitaries including Her Highness Sheikha Bashaya Al Sabah joined Tina Sharp, General Manager Bloomingdale's Kuwait on March 14th 2018, for a high-octane, fun-filled birthday party to celebrate the iconic store becoming one year young.

Throughout the day leading up to the event, the B-Squad dance troupe performed around 360 Mall to spread the word that the event of the year was happening, and they also performed at regular intervals in-store for the delighted guests, with their energetic break-dance routines.

The buzz was spread across all three levels of the store, with exciting and valuable spot prizes and offers, customization stations, make-up tutorials, a flip-book photo activity, special appearances by designers Manar of Kuwaiti



based handbag brand Moni & J, and Amanda Navai, candy floss and other sweet treats galore, and Bloomies Pizzeria was back by popular demand. All the while, DJ Miss Meg had the crowd dancing while they shopped, and the Big Brown Bear joined in the fun, showing off his dance moves and giving big bear hugs to everyone that he met.

The outstanding work of local artists was on display throughout the store, with Razag creating a live masterpiece in one of the ground floor windows during the course of the evening.

Popular cafe concept Scene also turned one, and launched a revamped menu in honor of the occasion, with a number of new delicacies that are sure to please their loyal clientele.

The most famous store in the world is set to continue giving its customers many reasons to celebrate, long after the party is over.

Lifestyle | Feature



A man holds up a preserved coin specimen during a historical relic auction at the Moudallal cafe, Arabic for "pampered", in the Iraqi capital Baghdad. — AFP photos



Specimens of Iraqi and other countries' banknotes on display at an auctioneer's table during a historical relic auction at the Moudallal cafe, Arabic for "pampered", in the capital Baghdad.

# Iraqi enthusiasts search for relics of royal past



An Iraqi One Dinar banknote specimen being exchanged between two hands during a historical relic auction.



A man holds up a preserved specimen of a Ten Iraqi Dinar banknote issued in 1947 and bearing the image of Iraq's former King Faisal II, during a historical relic auction.



A man holds up preserved specimens of Ten Iraqi Dinar banknotes, during a historical relic auction.

At the heart of a Baghdad flea market, nostalgia for Iraq's royal past is on full display as collectors and investors gather to buy relics from a bygone era. Inside the Moudallal cafe, Arabic for "pampered", a hundred men from across the country carefully follow the auction of mementos from the nearly four decades of monarchic rule that ended with a bloody coup in 1958. "There is a feeling of nostalgia among the customers. Take the banknotes, their manufacture and quality were much better before, that's why the prices go up," says 52-year-old auctioneer Ali Hikmat.

With a booming voice, the towering man who has worked in the covered market since 1992 offers his goods up for to the highest bidder. All sorts of keepsakes are up for grabs: banknotes, coins, stamps and decorations. Most date back to Iraq's royal era, but there are also a few items from the early days of the republic that followed after general Abdel Karim Kassem toppled the monarchy. Nothing is on offer from the decades of dictatorship under Saddam Hussein.



A man holds up a preserved coin specimen during a historical relic auction at the Moudallal cafe, Arabic for "pampered", in the Iraqi capital Baghdad.

**'It was better before'**

For the Iraqis hunting out their own souvenir of the past, the period of royal rule represents a golden age for their country. The founding of the Kingdom of Iraq under Faisal I—who fought alongside T.E. Lawrence during World War I—marked the emergence of the modern state after the fall of the Ottoman empire. The country gained independence in 1932 and the monarchy lasted until Faisal II was executed



A man holds up a preserved coin specimen during a historical relic auction.

during the coup. "Of course we are nostalgic for the royal period. All the main structures in this country were built during that period, be it bridges, dams and the rest," says 53-year-old Ahmad Kamal, who owns a real estate agency in Baghdad.

"The royal era marks the beginning of the Iraqi state," he says. "If we compare it to today, it was much better before." The comparison between the past and present is a potent one as Iraq recovers from its latest round of devastation and bloodshed following the campaign against the Islamic State group. That violence is just the latest to roil the country that has been through war with Iran, the US-led invasion and a brutal sectarian conflict since the 1980s. Saad Mohsen, a professor of modern history at the University of Baghdad, insists that back under the constitutional monarchy Iraq was "more democratic and cleaner than today."

"We were far from the blood and fighting that we have come to know," he says. For clothing merchant Hussein Hakim, searching out

souvenirs from previous epochs helps him to delve into Iraq's rich heritage. "The past fascinates me," he says. "I'm interested in the history of my country through the objects I collect

**"The royal era marks the beginning of the Iraqi state"**

from the Ottoman period up until the republic, but it's the royal era that I prefer most," the 43-year-old adds, proudly displaying two effigies of King Ghazi and King Faisal II.

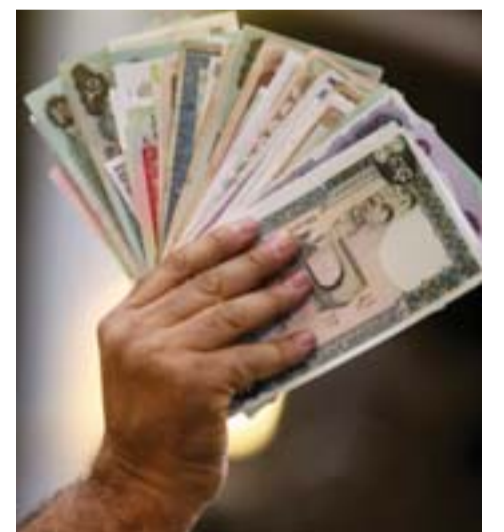
The weekly auction in this small cafe is exceptional not only because of the sheer num-

ber of items on sale, but also because everything must be sold regardless of the price, allowing a lucky few to do snap up some bargains. But the desire for all things connected with the era of royalty does not mean Iraqis are looking to bring back the monarch.

Sharif Ali Ben Hussein, who claims to be the legitimate heir to the Iraqi throne, has never managed to get elected to parliament. In the wake of the 2003 US invasion, he returned to Baghdad after 45 years in exile but his claim that "a clear majority" of people wanted the monarchy back failed to gain traction.

For Adel Karim Sabri, who runs the magazine "My Hobby" specializing in stamps and old bank notes, "the past is always more beautiful because it is made of memories".

And for many of those shopping at this market of memories, scouring for relics appears to have more to do with financial gain than historical interest. "They buy because they have money and it's a good investment," the 76-year-old says. — AFP



A man holds up preserved specimens of various banknotes, during a historical relic auction.



Iraqis attend a historical relic auction.



A woman walking past the entrance of the Moudallal cafe, Arabic for "pampered", in the capital Baghdad, where auctions for historical relics and items take place.

# Lifestyle

MONDAY, MARCH 19, 2018

## Giant yellow duck goes missing off Australia



This undated handout photo supplied on March 18, 2018 by Perth's Cockburn Masters Swimming Club shows swimmers posing with a giant inflatable duck they named Daphne in Perth. — AFP

An Australian swimming club is appealing for ocean watchers to find their giant yellow inflatable duck Daphne, after the mascot was blown into the Indian Ocean with reported sightings hundreds of kilometers from where it was launched. The duck, owned by Cockburn Masters Swimming Club, was last

seen at Perth's Coogee Beach in the early hours of March 11 as organizers prepared for a carnival. Club president Peter Marr said he tried to swim after Daphne, which is the size of a caravan, but it was moving too fast. "I probably overestimated my ability and underestimated Daphne's hunger for freedom and she just bolt-

ed," Marr told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation on Saturday. "After 50 meters she was just gone baby, gone. I couldn't keep up." The club has posted an appeal on Facebook for people to look out for the absconded bird, with a reward of free passes to next year's event as well as swimming merchandise if it is returned.

"We're expecting a ransom note," Marr quipped, adding that Daphne cost the club Aus\$900 (US\$695). "We'd look after them if they looked after us." The ABC said there were rumors the duck had been spotted off the western coastal city of Geraldton, some 440 kilometers (270 miles) north of Perth.

Giant inflatable rubber ducks drew international attention in 2007 when Dutchman Florentijn Hofman created one as an artwork. Hofman's 18-metre-tall (59-feet) bath toy travelled to different cities around the world, ranging from Brazil to Australia, and spawned many replicas. — AFP

## From 'the sticks' to opera top bill, thanks to karaoke

Swinging with the karaoke microphone, Lucas Meachem belted out an "I Believe I Can Fly" that would instantly put to shame any unsuspecting amateur who stumbled into the cozy New York bar. His voice packing an R&B brassiness yet refined with an unforced vibrato, Meachem is no dabbler in bar singing. He is one of opera's rising stars, recently completing a stint as a male lead in "La Boheme" at New York's Metropolitan Opera—and karaoke was key to his success.

Raised in rural North Carolina, Meachem got his big break in 2006 when he visited Paris for the first time as part of a fellowship and decided to make his move as opera glitterati went out drinking.



Operatic baritone Lucas Meachem, who is performing in 'La Boheme' at the Met, sings at a karaoke bar. — AFP

Meachem got on the karaoke machine and sang "I Believe I Can Fly," R. Kelly's ballad of discovering personal strength, and so impressed mezzo-soprano Susan Graham that she recommended him for a part at Lyric Opera of Chicago.

But karaoke runs deeper for Meachem. The skill needed to master it—imitating another's voice—is how he entered opera. One of four children supported by a schoolteacher mother, Meachem grew up with little exposure to opera, but would mimic songs on the radio by Top 40 artists from Michael Jackson to Aerosmith's Steven Tyler—whose screeching climax on "Dream On" is another of Meachem's karaoke tricks. One Christmas his mother gifted him a tape of the Three Tenors—the legendary trio of Jose Carreras, Placido Domingo and Luciano Pavarotti. "It was next to godliness to me that these people

could make this sound with the unamplified human voice," he told AFP at the Upper West Side bar where he showed off his karaoke prowess. "All of a sudden there was this type of singing that I could not replicate," he said. "After hearing that, it changed my life forever." "Sorry, Steven Tyler, Whitney Houston and Michael Jackson—rest in peace but you couldn't pique my interest in the same way, because I could already do that."

### Straddling two worlds

Meachem—who has the strapping frame of a college athlete yet with piercing blue eyes and a natural affability-voiced pride in his North Carolina roots but joked that he came from "the sticks." He acknowledged that starring at the Met, the most prestigious US opera house, gave him limited cachet with childhood friends. "I could go home and say, 'I'm singing at the Met and in Vienna and London and San Francisco and Chicago and then I say that I sang the national anthem at the Rangers game in New York and they say, 'The Rangers game—that's something else!'" With his insight into two worlds, the 39-year-old has taken to writing strikingly forthright essays aimed at aspiring singers.

Devoid of any diva-like pretension, The Baritone Blog offers everything from advice on taxes (make sure you pay them!) to his thoughts on feeling out of place as an opera singer when he won a Grammy last year. Elsewhere on the blog, in what could have been a scene from "Les Miserables," he admitted stuffing his coat with food to survive when he was a student. He also resorted to calling up food companies to compliment them on their products, leading them to send him packages of samples that would hold him over. He said his experiences helped in "La Boheme" as he played Marcello, the struggling painter living among Paris bohemians. "Somebody who can't pay the bills—been there before. Somebody that can't pay his utility bill, so it's cold in the house, and he can't afford firewood been there, too," Meachem said. "There's a lot of life imitating art in that opera for me personally." Meachem also offers artistic guidance to new singers on The Baritone Blog. The most common mistake, he said, is not to sing in a forward position as opera, much unlike karaoke, involves no microphone. — AFP

## From Paris with love: Depardieu votes in Russian election

One of Russia's most famous citizens, French film star Gerard Depardieu, joined the millions who cast ballots in yesterday's presidential election. Depardieu, a friend of President Vladimir Putin who presented him with a Russian passport in 2013 during a tax row between the actor and French authorities, voted at the Russian embassy in Paris. The embassy tweeted a picture of the 69-year-old, wearing a coat with fur trim and sunglasses perched on his head, popping his ballot in the box. "Gerard Depardieu voted in the Russian presidential election at a polling station at the Russian embassy in France. Come!" it tweeted, urging other Russians in France to follow suit.

A video of the moment, tweeted by a reporter from Russian broadcaster RT, was widely circulated on French news sites, where it triggered a tide of mostly contemptuous responses. "I don't like insults but for me this man is a sellout," one person tweeted in French. Another posted a GIF of a man vomiting. Depardieu caused an uproar in 2012 when he declared he would hand back his French passport and move to Belgium to avoid a tax hike by the then Socialist government. His popular-



In this file photo French actor Gerard Depardieu poses during a photocall for the second season of the French TV show 'Marseille' broadcasted and co-produced by US streaming video giant Netflix, in Marseille, southern France. — AFP

ty slumped further after he accepted a Russian passport—and a bear hug—from Putin.

The larger-than-life star of "Cyrano de Bergerac" and the Asterix & Obelix franchise, who is still a French citizen, has since become a staunch defender of the Kremlin's policies,

including its annexation of Crimea. "I'm a citizen of the world," he told Italian newspaper Corriere della Sera in 2016. "France is likely to become a Disneyland for foreigners, populated by imbeciles making wine and stinky cheese for tourists." — AFP

## Thai graffiti artists lionize slain panther

Bangkok graffiti artists painted a mural on Friday of panthers seated at a "Last Supper" table, the latest subversive depiction of an animal that has come to symbolize injustice after a tycoon was accused of poaching the wild cat. Construction magnate Premchai Karnasuta, one of Thailand's wealthiest moguls, was arrested in a wildlife sanctuary in February with guns and animal carcasses, including that of a black leopard. The brazen violation of park rules unleashed a wave of anguish from environmental and political activists fed-up with the impunity enjoyed by the kingdom's elites.

With public protests still banned under a junta that grabbed power in 2014, the anger has taken the form of sly street art focused around the image of the panther. But the movement has turned into a cat-and-mouse game with authorities suspected of quickly painting over the panther art cropping up in public spaces around the nation. An animal rights group recently stepped in to pair street artists with private businesses willing to offer up their walls. That's how ten graffitiists found themselves free to decorate the side of a Bangkok veterinary clinic on Friday. The group spent the afternoon spraying large black cats seated

behind a table in a nod to Leonardo da Vinci's "The Last Supper", which depicts Jesus' final meal with his apostles before his crucifixion. "There are (panthers) from each artist at the same table having dinner for the last time,"

explained a 28-year-old graffiti artist who goes by "Panda Dew". Phureerut Ratanavanich, who co-owns the veterinarian clinic, told AFP he hoped the mural would keep the panther story from falling off the front pages. — AFP



Graffiti artists spray paint a mural of panthers, in protest against the illegal wildlife poaching by construction tycoon Premchai Karnasuta, in Bangkok. — AFP