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# Rain victims can file claims from Sunday; forms online

## Iraqi mines unearthed in desert disrupt camping season

### NOTICE

Kuwait Times will be closed on Thursday, November 22, 2018 in observance of the Prophet's (PBUH) birthday public holiday. As a result, Friday Times will not be published this week. But readers can stay updated

on breaking news and events on our digital media channels including our website [www.kuwaittimes.net](http://www.kuwaittimes.net) and Instagram, Twitter and Facebook.

## MP warns govt over granting citizenship to non-Muslims

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Islamist MP Mohammad Hayef yesterday warned that the entire government will fall if it votes in favor of an amendment to allow granting Kuwaiti citizenship to non-Muslims. Hayef joins several lawmakers who have already said they will oppose the amendment when it comes up for voting in the National Assembly. The amendment was passed earlier this

week by the legal and legislative committee. The amendment was warmly welcomed by liberal and Shiite MPs who insisted it will rectify a constitutional injustice introduced in 1981 that deprived non-Muslims from becoming citizens.

Hayef said that if the government agrees to grant nationality to non-Muslims as approved by the legislative committee, this will mean its total collapse. But liberal MP Rakan Al-Nasef welcomed the amendment and called for referring it to the Assembly for voting as quickly as possible. The issue is expected to stir a new controversy in the country between Islamists and conservatives who are the majority in the Assembly and liberals and their allies. The position of the government, which has 16 voting ministers, is very crucial for the passage of the amendment.

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KUWAIT: Minister of Social Affairs and Labor and Minister of State for Economic Affairs Hind Al-Sabeeh said yesterday that the compensation team tasked with assessing damage inflicted due to the heavy downpour last week will start receiving compensation requests from Sunday. Sabeeh, who also heads a team to follow up and deal with the repercussions of the rain and floods, said in a press statement that the requests for compensation will be received at the Public Authority for Compensations Assessment in Shamiya.

Finance ministry undersecretary and chairman of the compensation team Saleh Al-Saraawi later said compensation forms will be provided at the building of the compensation authority or through the website of finance ministry ([www.mof.gov.kw](http://www.mof.gov.kw)). He added that the requests for compensation will be received from Sunday from 8:30 am to 1 pm. Meanwhile, the civil defense yesterday warned citizens and residents to be prepared for rainfall forecast in the coming hours. It appealed to people to ignore rumors, abstain from spreading them and seek accurate information from official sources. The government has already activated a contingency plan to cope with any more rain.

A senior official said on Tuesday that the government will help owners of damaged houses return to their homes as soon as possible. Ministry of Electricity

and Water Undersecretary Mohammad Bushehri said the heavy rainfall and floods damaged many houses. Bushehri, head of a government team assessing damage of housing units, was speaking to Kuwait TV during a visit to block one in Fahaaheel to examine houses damaged by the floods. "The government will take care of them," Bushehri said.

The unprecedented heavy rains which recently lashed Kuwait also unearthed dozens of landmines planted by Iraqi troops during their 1990-91 occupation, disrupting the state's popular desert camping season, officials said yesterday. Authorities have closed 18 desert sites and have so far removed at least 48 mines after receiving complaints from the campers, they said. The civil defense committee has urged campers to delay their plans until after the defense ministry has searched the areas, said Fahd Al-Shutaily, deputy director of Kuwait's Jahra and Farwaniya governorates.

"Floods have uncovered and carried away scores of mines, bombs and ammunition left by the Iraqi army in desert areas. We are waiting for the defense ministry to hand over the areas after clearing them," Shutaily told AFP. The ministry of defense is currently searching at least 18 sites which are normally used for camping.

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## UAE sentences British student to life for spying

DUBAI: A United Arab Emirates court sentenced British student Matthew Hedges to life in jail on spying charges yesterday, prompting a "shocked" Britain to warn of repercussions for relations with its longstanding Gulf ally. Hedges, a 31-year-old PhD student, had protested his innocence ever since his arrest at Dubai airport on May 5 and British ministers had raised his case at the highest level. "We can confirm that he was sentenced to life in prison," a family spokesperson told



File handout photo shows Matthew Hedges and his wife Daniela Tejada posing in an undisclosed location. — AFP

AFP. "The hearing lasted less than five minutes, and his lawyer was not present."

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## Indian man raped, killed nine children

NEW DELHI: A jobless 20-year-old Indian man has confessed to raping and killing at least nine girls aged between three and seven in New Delhi, the capital, and three other cities over the past two years, police said yesterday. The case spotlights the number of young children who go missing every year in India and raises the question of whether the police have sufficient resources to investigate such brutal sex crimes.

The confession followed Monday's arrest of the man on charges of raping and killing a three-year-old girl on Nov 11 in a slum area of the city of Gurugram, best known for its glitzy shopping malls and luxury apartments, that borders Delhi. "He used to first break

the legs of the victims before attempting rape," said Subhash Boken, an assistant sub-inspector and public relations officer with the Gurugram police. "Then he would murder them."

A court on Tuesday granted police remand of the man for eight days, Boken said, adding that he did not yet have a lawyer. Reuters could not reach him in prison to seek comment. Police have linked three cases of dead children to his statement and are investigating the rest, Boken added. Four of the cases are in Delhi, three in Gurugram, and one each in the northern city of Jhansi and the central city of Gwalior. He has not been formally charged and Indian police often claim success in solving crimes before a defendant has had his day in court.

The man, who was unemployed apart from occasional work as a daily laborer, said he mostly targeted community kitchens such as those distributing free food to the needy. He would target young girls who went to pick up food, offering them sweets or

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KUWAIT: Health Minister Sheikh Dr Basel Al-Sabah and CEO of Central Circle Company Dr Ziad Al-Alyan are seen at the company's booth during the 'Safe Surgery' conference at Arraya Ballroom yesterday. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

## Health minister hails efforts of Kuwaiti surgeons

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: Health Minister Sheikh Dr Basel Al-Sabah yesterday said a conference organized by the Kuwait Association of Surgeons sheds light on the excellent work of Kuwaiti surgeons participating in the continu-

ous development of the health system in Kuwait. KAS is holding its second conference titled 'Safe Surgery' at Arraya Ballroom from Nov 21 to 23, in cooperation with the Kuwait chapter of the American College of Surgeons and the Arab Association of Surgeons for the first time.

"This conference coincides with launching and executing various development projects as part of the development plan of Kuwait and government's work program. This targets the systematic improvement of healthcare quality to meet the global goals of sustainable development according to the World Health Organization," he said during the opening ceremony yesterday.

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## Trump thanks Saudi Arabia for lower oil prices

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump yesterday ignored criticism that he gave Saudi Arabia a free pass on the murder of a dissident journalist, instead praising the kingdom for keeping oil prices low. Trump, on holiday at his Florida Mar-a-Lago Club, doubled down on an unusually worded statement from Tuesday that he was essentially ignoring the killing of Jamal Khashoggi because of what he said were more important US strategic and commercial interests.

"Oil prices getting lower. Great! Like a big Tax Cut for America and the World. Enjoy! \$54, was just \$82," he tweeted. "Thank you to Saudi

Arabia, but let's go lower!" The fulsome praise for Saudi Arabia's help in maintaining cheap oil built on comments he made Tuesday at the White House, saying that "if we broke with them, I think your oil prices would go through the roof". "They've helped me keep them down," he said.

The focus on oil prices is one strand of Trump's argument against punishing the US ally for Khashoggi's death, despite a CIA analysis. Khashoggi, a US resident who wrote for The Washington Post and had been critical of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, was lured to the Saudi consulate in Istanbul on Oct 2, killed and reportedly dismembered. After lengthy denials, Saudi authorities admitted responsibility and said 21 people had been taken into custody.

In a formal statement Tuesday - released just as nearly the entire White House press corps left to cover the lighthearted annual ritual of the president sparing a turkey from the

Thanksgiving table - Trump said the prince "could very well be" in on the crime. But he then went on to flatly reject any intention of punishing the Saudi leader, saying Washington "intends to remain a steadfast partner". Trump's reasoning was that Saudi Arabia and the United States are partners in opposing Iran and the Saudis have committed to \$450 billion in weapons contracts and other investments, as well as being a major oil producer. "Very simply it is called America first!" Trump concluded.

Trump's posture has provoked rare dissension among the ranks of senior Republicans. "It's not too much to ask an ally not to butcher a guy in a consulate," Senator Lindsey Graham said. And Senator Bob Corker, the Republican leader of the foreign relations committee, tweeted scathingly: "I never thought I'd see the day a White House would moonlight as a public relations firm for the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia."

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WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump pardons the turkey "Peas" during the annual ceremony at the White House on Tuesday as First Lady Melania Trump looks on. — AFP



## Local



Health Minister Sheikh Dr Basel Al-Sabah and Dr Ziad Al-Alyan, CEO of Central Circle Company pose for a group photo with Central Circle Co staff. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



Sheikh Basel Al-Sabah delivers a speech at the conference.



(From left) Dr Mohammad Ashoor, Deputy CEO of Central Circle Company, Dr Ziad Al-Alyan, Dr Aws Al-Ozairy, Sheikh Basel Al-Sabah and KAS Chairman Dr Salman Al-Sabah.



Dr Mostafa Rida, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Health (center), visits the Central Circle Company's booth.



Sheikh Basel Al-Sabah (left) and Dr Ziad Al-Alyan.



Sheikh Basel Al-Sabah is honored.

## Health minister hails efforts of Kuwaiti surgeons

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The health ministry is cooperating with KAS and other NGOs related to the health field. "This collabo-

ration strengthens the abilities of the health system to face challenges to ensure a healthy lifestyle for everybody. The ministry is keen to benefit from your research and experiences in different projects and programs. The scientific discussions and experiences of the participating experts along with the recommendations of this conference will significantly improve medical and technical performance in this important field," Sheikh Basel added.

The conference is attended by over 30 international surgeons, in addition to all local surgeons. The main topic of the conference is safe surgery in order to

achieve best results. The conference will also include three workshops and discussion panels. The event is accompanied by an exhibition of various local and international medical companies displaying medical equipment, support, services and others. Central Circle Co is one of the main participants in this event. At its large and modern booth, it is displaying medical healing equipment used by postsurgical patients.

Furthermore, an operations room is also available, where early checkup of patients will be done. Some booths are displaying surgical robots and other modern tools. During the conference, a surgical excel-

lence prize will be given for the best research, in addition to other eight other prizes for research and six prizes for trainees in surgical programs.

KAS Chairman Dr Salman Al-Sabah said that during the three-day-long conference, over 100 scientific researches will be discussed in the discussion panels and workshops. "These researches cover the latest development and experiences in all fields of surgery. We are focusing on safe surgery to decrease death cases caused by surgeries. Also, a safe surgery is one of the main rights of patients, and to reach complete health coverage," he pointed out.

## Kuwait demands Arab representation in UNSC seats

**NEW YORK:** The Arab League's position on the Security Council reform process is to demand permanent Arab representation with full terms of reference in the event of any future expansion of the council, Kuwait said. This came in a speech delivered by the Permanent Representative of Kuwait to the United Nations Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi on behalf of the Arab Group in the United Nations General Assembly during discussion on the item of equitable representation and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters on Tuesday. Otaibi pointed out that representation justice also requires proportional Arab representation in the number of non-permanent seats in the enlarged Security Council. "At a time when the United Nations is undergoing multiple reform processes to strengthen its role and enable it to face the growing challenges of the international community, the issue of Security Council reform and equitable representation is one of the cornerstones of the overall reform process of the United Nations," he said.

"This makes us more resolute and determined to intensify efforts to achieve real and comprehensive reform of the Security Council, which is mandated to take care of international peace and security under the Charter of the Organization to become more capable and effective to meet these challenges and overcome them in a more representative, transparent, impartial and credible manner." He explained that more than two decades after the discussions aimed at

expanding the membership of the Security Council and improving its methods of work, which are permeated by many initiatives and positions by a number of countries and groups of countries, including the Arab Group, "it is important to push the process of reform of the Security Council."

Separately, Kuwait has expressed its appreciation to the peacekeepers in Africa and around the world who have given their lives to preserve peace, renewing support for the efforts of African countries in the Security Council, including their intention to present a draft resolution on peace support operations. This came during a speech by Kuwait at the Security Council meeting on the strengthening of peacekeeping operations in Africa, which Otaibi delivered.

"The Charter of the United Nations provided us with an umbrella for regional cooperation and 73 years later, the majority of the member states of the Organization agreed to adopt the Declaration of Common Commitments, which dealt with topics such as partnership, as stated in the Secretary-General's initiative for peacekeeping," he said. "We will never find an example of this cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union, so it is up to our Council to advance its cooperation with the Peace and Security Council, guided by its resolutions 2320 (2016) and 2378 (2018), which highlight the commitment to strengthen collective security and take steps towards greater cooperation, including funding of missions", he noted.

"The 2017 common framework for improving



**NEW YORK:** The Permanent Representative of Kuwait to the United Nations Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi delivers a speech on behalf of the Arab Group in the United Nations General Assembly. — KUNA

the partnership in peace and security, in addition to the annual meetings between the Security Council and the Peace and Security Council, as well as membership of the United Nations on the Board of Trustees of the African Union Peace Fund, will provide us with a renewed opportunity to increase and sustain dialogue between the two organizations," he said.

"The noble goal of silencing the guns is currently elusive, but it is still possible and closer to achieving our concerted efforts. Kuwait's accession as an observer to the African Union in 2001 and its hosting of the third Arab-African Summit in 2013 stems from its belief in the importance of cooperation with the African continent and the specificity it represents to countries, Arab security and common security," he pointed out. Otaibi expressed his hope for the Council's continued interest in the issues of regional cooperation, pointing out that it is counting on the unity of the African countries in the Union and in the Security Council. — KUNA

## Kuwaitis third-largest real estate buyers in Turkey in October

**ANKARA:** Kuwaitis came third after Iraqis and Iranians in terms of foreigners buying real estate in Turkey last October, statistical data showed yesterday. According to data released by the Turkish Statistics Agency, Kuwaiti citizens bought 378 properties in October, ranking third after Iraqis who topped the list by buying 1,439 properties, while the Iranians came second with 557 properties, then the Germans with 341 properties and Russians with 336 properties. The total number of sales of property

to foreigners in Turkey last October reached 6,276 registered properties, an increase of 134.4 percent compared to the same month in 2017, according to data. It added that the city of Istanbul was the most Turkish city selling real estate to foreigners in October, where the number of properties sold was 2,283 properties followed by Antalya with 1,160 properties and then Bursa with 448 properties followed by Ankara and Yalova with a total of 392 and 321 properties, respectively. — KUNA





Local

# Amir receives GCC commerce, industry ministers participating in cooperation committee meeting

## Amir sends condolences to Saudi King, Afghan President



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Minister of Commerce and Industry Khaled Al-Roudhan, GCC Secretary General Abdullah Al-Zayani, and GCC commerce and industry ministers. — Amiri Diwan and KUNA photos

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace yesterday Minister of Commerce and Industry Khaled Al-Roudhan, Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Abdullah Al-Zayani, GCC commerce and industry ministers, Chairman of Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ali Al-Ghanem and heads of GCC commerce chambers, on the occasion of the 56th meeting of the commercial and industrial cooperation committee of the GCC's General Secretariat. During the meeting, His Highness the Amir hailed the efforts of GCC commerce and industry ministers and heads of commerce chambers in boosting

cooperation in the field. The meeting was attended by Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah.

Earlier yesterday, His Highness the Amir received His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem and His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince received Ghanem, Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and Deputy Head of the Ruling Family Council Sheikh Dr Ibrahim Al-Duaij Al-Sabah.

In the meantime, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received Roudhan, Zayani and the GCC ministers of commerce and industries on the occasion of the convening of the 56th ministerial meeting in Kuwait. The meeting was attended by head of the Diwan of His Highness the Premier Sheikhha Itimad Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. His Highness the Prime Minister also received journalists Samir Atallah and George Samaan on the occasion of their visit to the country.

Separately, His Highness the Amir sent a cable of condolences to Saudi King Salman Bin Abdulaziz yesterday over the passing away of the mother of Prince

Faisal Bin Mohammad Bin Abdulaziz Bin Saud Bin Faisal Al-Saud. His Highness the Crown Prince and His Highness the Prime Minister also sent similar cables to King Salman.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir sent a cable of condolences to Afghan President Ashraf Ghani on the victims of the suicide blast that targeted a religious gathering inside a large wedding hall in Afghanistan's capital city Kabul. His Highness the Amir prayed for souls of the deceased and wished the injured quick recovery. HH the Crown Prince and HH the Prime Minister addressed cables of similar content to the Afghan president. — KUNA



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with heads of GCC commerce chambers.



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with GCC Ministers of Commerce and Industries.



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



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Deputy Head of the Ruling Family Council Sheikh Dr Ibrahim Al-Duaij Al-Sabah.



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with journalist George Samaan.

## Public, private partnership essential for GCC: Roudhan

KUWAIT: Partnership between public and private sectors is essential in order for Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) economic correlation and unity to be achieved, said Minister of Commerce and Industry Khaled Al-Roudhan yesterday.

Economic correlation is neither an option nor a proposal any more, especially in the age of major global alliances, which requires a qualitative partnership between public and private sectors to solidify economies of the GCC countries against setbacks, noted Minister Roudhan in a speech at the opening of the 4th consultative meeting of ministers of trade and industry and heads of trade unions and chambers of the GCC. Kuwait is hosting the one-day meeting. "We need to be an integral part of the global transformation through providing a sound and ever improving business environment," he said.

Gulf countries had made significant strides in terms of eradicating obstacles on the way of commercial and industrial progress, Roudhan pointed out, adding that GCC countries "are bonded by mutual history and interests. His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, along with his brothers; GCC leaders, are keen to maintain such entity."

There is also a pressing necessity to establish leg-

islative and institutional bodies that would contribute in steering projects and managing businesses, Roudhan stressed. The consultative meeting aims at easing tariff procedures among GCC members, as well as addressing impediments in face of establishing a common GCC market.

### Digital system

Meanwhile, Roudhan called for speedy adoption of the digital system for joint Arab resolutions at the levels of commerce, policies' unification and GCC legislations. Minister Roudhan, in a statement at the 56th meeting of the commercial cooperation commission of the GCC Secretariat General, said the meeting agenda includes adoption of "electronic files" for the commercial committees' meetings, mortgage, commercial matters, bankruptcy and various other trade affairs. He called on his colleagues to rapidly tackle these issues and related laws, in line with instructions by the GCC countries' top leaders.

GCC Secretary General Abdullah Al-Zayani, in his statement, said constructive economic cooperation and previous joint accomplishments among the Council member states have contributed to creating "new and clear horizons in various spheres in the economic and commercial sectors at the level of regional states." He attributed the accomplishments to efforts that had been exerted at committees' level, thus paving the way for growth of inter-GCC trade, soaring in value to \$133 billion in 2017. GCC states ranked among top countries that export commercial commodities, in 2017, value of which reached some \$546 billion. By contrast their imports reached some \$450 billion, and value of trade exchanges between the



KUWAIT: The 4th consultative meeting of ministers of trade and industry and heads of trade unions and chambers of the GCC in progress yesterday. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

member states and the world was at \$985 billion, he added. Turning to a meeting that grouped His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah with GCC ministers and chiefs of chambers of commerce, he said that His Highness had underlined key role of the private sector to boost economic and social development in the GCC countries. Joint GCC action, namely effort by the GCC commercial cooperation committee, has been helpful in overhauling

investment conditions, for local and foreign entrepreneurs in the Gulf countries.

Meanwhile, Kuwait's Commerce Undersecretary Dr Khaled Al-Fadhel affirmed that cooperation among GCC countries had led to diverse major accomplishments, namely enacting a large number of laws and regulations. However, he called for agile enactment of further joint laws, including the bylaw for combating commercial fraud. — KUNA



## Local

# Finance Minister inaugurates Kuwait Investment Authority's office in Shanghai

## Kuwaiti-Sino investment forum carries lofty expectations: Hajraf

SHANGHAI: Kuwait's Minister of Finance and Chairman of the Board of Directors of Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA) Dr Nayef Al-Hajraf inaugurated yesterday KIA's office in Shanghai, China, in the presence of Managing Director Farouk Bastaki, a number of Chinese businessmen, financial and investment figures. In a statement to the press, Hajraf said the opening of this office is a continuation of KIA's efforts that started in 2011 when it opened its representation office in the Chinese capital Beijing. This office is the first foreign investment office opened by the KIA since the establishment of the Kuwait Investment Office in London in 1953, Hajraf said.

The inauguration of this office is a confirmation of the historical relationship between Kuwait and the Republic of China, which has been going on for decades, he stressed. He added that it is a result of the successful visit of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to the Republic of China last July and his meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping to enhance cooperation with China in all fields. The office in Shanghai will aim to train national cadres in various investment fields and to develop human resources, in addition to qualifying Kuwaiti youth properly, he said. KIA selection of China as the headquarters for its foreign investment office was a natural response to the global position of the Chinese economy, he confirmed.

### Investment forum

Meanwhile, Hajraf said that 400 Chinese companies were invited to participate in the first Sino-Kuwaiti investment forum to be held in Shanghai today, calling on all Chinese companies to participate actively in the development plan in Kuwait. The forum is organized jointly by the Kuwaiti Ministry of Finance, KIA and Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA). The one-day forum will discuss investment opportunities available in the State of Kuwait including sectors such as oil construction, housing, infrastructure and information technology. The forum will also discuss the attractiveness of the Kuwaiti market regionally and efforts exerted to improve business environment and the foreign investment environment in light of recent developments on the regulatory environment in the country and the impact of modern economic laws on the Kuwaiti economy.

A Kuwaiti economic delegation led by the Finance Minister Dr Nayef Al-Hajraf arrived in Shanghai Tuesday to sponsor the opening of the first Sino-Kuwaiti invest-

ment forum today. Kuwait and China signed on Monday a memorandum of understanding forming a mechanism for development of cooperation for Silk City and the five Kuwaiti islands.

The forum is likely to open new doors for the Gulf state's burgeoning private sector, Hajraf said. The initiative aims to ratchet up economic cooperation between Kuwait and the world's most populous nation, Hajraf said in a statement a day before the event. He pinpointed His Highness the Kuwaiti Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-



### China chosen for its great assets

Sabah's visit to Beijing last July as the catalyst that helped reinvigorate bilateral ties. The Kuwaiti minister said he had high expectations for the meeting, saying it could propel Kuwait's ties with China to new levels, besides being a chance to examine investment opportunities both nations have to offer. Kuwait has much to offer in terms of investment, with diverse sectors running the gamut from the oil and technology industries to infrastructure, he explained.

Also yesterday, Hajraf held talks with a number of Chinese officials, focusing on investment ties and economic cooperation. The talks revolved around the ample investment opportunities available in Kuwait and China, read a statement by the Kuwaiti Finance Ministry, a day before the inaugural Kuwaiti-Chinese investment forum. The meeting comes just months after His Highness the Kuwaiti Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's visit to Beijing last July, which served as the catalyst that helped reinvigorate bilateral ties. The investment conference carries lofty expectations, amid Kuwait's hopes that the event could open new doors for the Gulf state's burgeoning private sector. The Kuwaiti minister is currently leading a high-level delegation on a visit to China's most populous city.



SHANGHAI: Kuwait's Minister of Finance and Chairman of the Board of Directors of Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA) Dr Nayef Al-Hajraf (center) inaugurates KIA's office in Shanghai, China. — KUNA

### Great assets

Meanwhile, KIA Managing Director Farouk Bastaki said that KIA's selection of China as the second station for opening an external office in comes because of its great assets and potentials. This came in a brief statement to the press on the sidelines of the opening ceremony. The Kuwaiti investment office in Shanghai will be an important station through which Kuwaiti investments will move towards the Asian continent, which is full of promising investment opportunities, Bastaki said.

Head of the Kuwait Investment Office in Shanghai Abdul Razzaq Al-Baeijan said meanwhile that the opening of the office came after KIA met all the requirements of the Chinese authorities, adding that the Investment Office of Kuwait was granted a license to practice investment management on behalf of KIA. He said the license came after two years of negotiations with the Shanghai government for an asset management license through which the bureau could manage all KIA's assets in China and expand in the future in Asia. He stressed that this would not have been possible without the successful visit of His Highness

the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to China last July and his support to the Kuwaiti-Chinese relations to move to new levels of cooperation between the two countries. He said that Kuwait is the first foreign country to be granted this license, saying this reflects depth of the bilateral ties between the two countries, which is usually granted to companies and not to countries.

Baeijan said that the investments available in China are many and varied, including the shares offered in the Chinese stock exchanges, bonds and direct acquisitions in Chinese companies, including the banking sector, and the information technology sector. He pointed out that the Office has launched an initiative for Chinese companies to provide training programs for Kuwaiti national cadres to qualify them to manage assets in bonds, stocks and direct acquisitions. He noted that KIA office's license in Beijing is still in place but will be canceled during the next stage because its role is limited to establishing public relations and not entitled to engage in any investment activity and ended his role by building bridges of cooperation and knowledge with Chinese companies. — KUNA

## South African trade delegation woos Kuwaiti businessmen

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: A delegation of businessmen from South Africa was welcomed yesterday at the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) to promote business opportunities. The delegation, led by Seema Sardha, Director Export Promotion Middle East from the Department of Trade of South Africa, is promoting Africa's vibrant and talented workforce under 35 years old, its state-of-the-art technology, and pioneering and innovative healthcare facilities, as it is recognized as the first country to perform the first heart transplant in the world.

"We have seven designated economic zones to create a vibrant South Africa. We have a favorable business environment for everyone to take advantage of, a well-placed democracy, our legal system is also unparalleled and we are the gateway to a one billion market in the African continent. This is proof of South Africa's innovativeness and what we can bring to your table," she said.

Sardha noted that opportunities in the agriculture sector are also vast, as well as in the area of energy, pharma and tourism. "The opportunities in these areas are really huge and we want you to invest in our country. South Africa is open for business and we are open to all through collaborative work, BOT, PPP and technology transfer. We invite the chamber to visit South Africa and enjoy the hospitality we offer," she emphasized.

South African Ambassador to Kuwait Mzolisa Bona thanked the KCCI for the support accorded to the South African business delegation. "We are promoting mutually beneficial opportunities for both countries. We want you to be part of South Africa's emerging economy and be part of our growth," he said.

The sectors included are: Agro-processing (meat, dairy products and beverages), chemicals used for agriculture, food, industry, water purification, oil and gas, construction and engineering, electro-technical, medical equipment, pharmaceuticals, veterinary medicines, health and beauty, work wear (safety boots) and clothing, textiles and leather. The purpose of the visit is to further strengthen commercial relations between South Africa and Kuwait, to promote South African



KUWAIT: Seema Sardha, Director Export Promotion Middle East from the Department of Trade of South Africa, speaks at the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

products and services as well as to establish business relationships with potential Kuwaiti counterparts.

Sarah Al-Hassan from the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) also presented Kuwait's business opportunities for the visiting South African business delegation. They were welcomed at the chamber by the director of the foreign relations department at the KCCI Salah Eyadah.



Kuwaiti and South African business officials meet at the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

## Ooredoo supported entrepreneurs in 'Murouj'

KUWAIT: Ooredoo Kuwait is proudly partnered with Al-Souq Murouj for the third consecutive year. The second market was held last Saturday, November 17, 2018 in which Ooredoo supported local entrepreneurs and businesses. The market, which was held at Murouj Complex,

included an Ooredoo dedicated booth, local farm produce, artisanal food products and crafts, with a 'street food' section aimed at highlighting the culinary diversity of Kuwait's local food community. The market also offered a section dedicated for children's activities. It will be held once a month on weekends, until March 2019. Ooredoo is always keen on supporting local businesses and entrepreneurs through this engaging project. This sponsorship comes in tandem with the company's social responsibility strategy, which in turn is based on the core values of caring, connecting and challenging. Ooredoo looks forward to meeting those young enthusiastic small business owners as well as its valued customers at the next market."





## Local

# Interior Ministry consults former traffic chief to address road woes

## Engineering office owner defies minister's suspension

By Meshaal Al-Enezi and A Saleh

**KUWAIT:** Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah yesterday issued a ministerial decision appointing retired Lt Gen Abdul Fattah Al-Ali as his advisor for five years, during which he would be responsible for preparing recommendations concerning traffic problems and congestions, the increasing rate of accidents, reckless driving and fatalities. In his first statement after his appointment, Lt Gen Ali stressed that his first plan was to meet the minister and thank him for his confidence, discuss the main issues he would be responsible for. Lt Gen Ali was a former assistant undersecretary for traffic affairs before

he reached the retirement age.

### Firm owner rejects accusations

Former MP Mubarak Al-Duwailah yesterday tweeted in response to a decision by Minister of Housing Jenan Bushehri, in which she suspended giving any new projects to an engineering firm he owns, along with other companies, in the wake of extensive infrastructure damages left by heavy rains. Duwailah defied the decision and dared the minister to prove any mistake his office committed on designing Sabah Al-Ahmad City. "Who is to blame for the disaster - the engineering firm which designed the city according to the housing authority's requirements and got the designs approved by various relevant

ministries, or the officials who failed to have those designs executed despite repeated warnings?" Duwailah asked, adding that the housing authority supervises contractors' work and expressed amazement why none of its officials had so far been held accountable.

### Energy therapy

Kuwait Medical Association (KMA) warned of relying on the so-called 'energy therapy' to treat physiological and respiratory diseases and stressed that no research had been done on such a type of treatment, which has been hereditary in East Asian countries. KMA Chairman Dr Ahmed Thowaini Al-Enezi said such treatment method is based on theories whose effec-

tiveness has not been scientifically proven. "It is mainly dependent on beliefs and limited psychological implications," he said. Enezi also urged patients to avoid such doubtful treatments, warning that their health can only get worse by using them.

### Employees transferred

The Ministry of Interior's (MoI) assistant undersecretary for administrative affairs Maj Gen Talal Maarafi approved a decision transferring around 300 Kuwaiti employees who had been working in mayoral offices to other MoI departments, well-informed sources said. The sources explained that the decision was made on noticing that many of the concerned employees had not been showing up to



Abdul Fattah Al-Ali

work at their offices and that some of them used to travel abroad and be considered to be on duty.

### local spotlight

## Citizenship for non-Muslims



By Muna Al-Fuzal

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The legislative committee at the National Assembly's approved a proposal to amend the nationality law to allow granting Kuwaiti citizenship to non-Muslims. Under the current law issued in 1959, Kuwaiti citizenship can only be granted to Muslims, and the amendment - if approved by the National Assembly and the government - will certainly eliminate the obstacle for naturalizing non-Muslims.

The Kuwaiti nationality law regulates granting, relinquishing and withdrawing of citizenship. According to this law, Kuwaiti nationality is divided into two categories - original nationality and naturalization. Both types have different rights and guarantees. A person who originally settled in Kuwait before 1920 is granted citizenship under article 1 of the nationality law. A naturalized Kuwaiti is a person of another nationality or stateless person who is granted Kuwaiti nationality.

The news was surprising to all and although some received it with reservation and without comment as run by Arab channels and published in local newspapers, I tried to follow the views of some citizens. I found out that they are divided into two main groups. One group rejects the proposed amendment and opposes it, while the other is more reserved about it, and circumspect if the Assembly can pass such a change. A third party has no influence on the matter but welcomes the amendment of the legislative committee - this party is usually human rights groups.

I noticed that the first group believes that non-Muslims do not have the right to Kuwaiti nationality and any agreement to grant citizenship to non-Muslims will open the door to other non-Christian doctrines demanding Kuwaiti nationality. This makes sense, and I think this is worth considering and clarifying. We all know that the Kuwaiti constitution refers to the principle of equality as one of the pillars of society. Article 7 says: "Justice, liberty and equality are the pillars of society; co-operation and mutual help are the firmest bonds between citizens." Also, as stated in article 29 of the constitution: "All people are equal in human dignity, and in public rights and duties before the law, without distinction as to race, origin, language or religion."

I believe that even though the Kuwaiti constitution says freedom of belief is absolute and that the state protects the freedom to perform religious rituals in accordance with established customs, there are some laws and decrees that need to be revised to remove any possible discrimination against non-Muslim believers.

This question will remain if the National Assembly is ready to put this issue at the top of its priorities. And I really wonder who is meant by non-Muslims here? Are they Christians or other sects, and other beliefs such as Hinduism? I have not seen a detailed explanation of the matter according to the published news. This left the door widely open for debate among some people on social media. I hope to see more details on the subject to be more than a news item. If the amendment is intended for Christians only, the number of Christians in Kuwait is estimated at 450,000 from different sects, of which only 150 are Kuwaitis.

I know that there are many expats who are looking at the subject of nationality on the grounds that getting it is easy in foreign countries, and this is normal because foreign countries need more taxpayers and manpower, but in Kuwait, I do not think that the issue of granting citizenship can be done in the same way because the state is small and the societal situation does not allow the same facilities as Western countries on this subject. I think this proposed amendment is a sensitive issue for many, and I do not expect that many MPs are ready to accept to defend it and risk losing a large electoral base of those who reject such an amendment. Only time will tell.



**KUWAIT:** Jahra municipality cleanliness department carried out a campaign resulting in removing 19 mobile groceries, 24 motorcycles and two abandoned cars. Department Director Fahd Al-Quraifa said campaigns will continue until such violations disappear and to stop the sale of food items in unlicensed places. — By Hanan Al-Saadoun

## Investigation in young man's death

**KUWAIT:** Criminal detectives began an investigation to find out the cause of death of a youth who was missing from his family's home and whose body was found in a building under construction in Sabah Al-Salem. A security source said that the body may have been dumped there by unidentified persons or he may have committed suicide. The body was discovered by the building's guard. The dead youth was identified as a 23-year-old Kuwaiti.

### Suitcase thief caught

Airport detectives arrested an Arab national who attempted to steal two 'expensive' suitcases from the baggage carousel and take them back to his country. Airport detectives learned about a man who had a return ticket for the same day, so he was arrested. When questioned, he said he came especially to steal two 'expensive' bags, and took them to the check-in counter to return back to his country.

### Beggars arrested

Residency affairs detectives continued their campaign against beggars and arrested more than nine persons (men, women and children) of various nationalities begging in Mubarakiya. The arrestees were sent to concerned authorities. A security source said the campaigns will continue. — Translated by Kuwait Times from Al-Anbaa

## Kuwait calls for minimizing explosives' hazards

**GENEVA:** Kuwait yesterday emphasized necessity of limiting hazards from abandoned explosives ordnance (AXO), left behind after wars or armed conflicts. Wars' leftovers, prone to blow up, continue to threaten and maim civilians, haphazardly, posing a danger to lives of thousands of innocent people, said Ambassador Jamal Al-Ghunaim, Kuwait's Permanent Representative at the United Nations and International Organizations in Geneva. Ambassador Ghunaim was addressing a meeting grouping signatory states of the UN convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects.

AXO leave catastrophic and annihilating repercussions on the environment, deemed the basic foundation for peace, security and sustainable development, said the Kuwaiti representative at the UN, in his speech at the session. Kuwait, which strongly believed in the convention significance and sought to bolster it as an international treaty, had inked and ratified it, along with its five protocols, on May 24, 2013. The treaty, also officially named the United Nations Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, was concluded in Geneva on October 10, 1980, and entered into force in December 1983.

Ambassador Ghunaim urged non-signatory states of the world to rapidly join the convention due to its utmost importance for barring arms of random damage's capacity in armed conflicts. Unjustified employment of these weapons has increased numbers of victims of armed strife, particularly nowadays, in shadow of complex political circumstances, prevailing across the world.—KUNA

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Gang violence drives caravans northward

De-moo-crazy: Swiss farmer's quest to save cow horns goes to vote

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SANAA: This picture shows a view of the old quarter of the capital Sanaa. —AFP

# 85,000 Yemeni kids 'died of extreme hunger'

## War unleashes world's most urgent humanitarian crisis

**DUBAI:** An estimated 85,000 children under five may have died from extreme hunger in Yemen since a Saudi-led coalition intervened in the civil war in 2015, a humanitarian body said yesterday, as the UN special envoy arrived in Yemen to pursue peace talks. Western countries are pressing for a ceasefire and renewed peace efforts to end the disastrous conflict, which has unleashed the world's most urgent humanitarian crisis with 8.4 million people believed to be on the verge of starvation.

Save the Children said that according to a conservative estimate based on United Nations data, approximately 84,700 children suffering from severe acute malnutrition may have died between April 2015 and October 2018 in the impoverished country, where a Western-backed Arab alliance is battling the Iranian-aligned Houthi movement that holds the capital Sanaa.

"We are horrified that some 85,000 children in Yemen may have died because of the consequences of extreme hunger since the war began. For every child killed by bombs and bullets, dozens are dying from hunger and disease and it's entirely preventable," it said in a statement. The last available figure from the United Nations for the death toll from

the conflict, seen as a proxy war between Saudi Arabia and Iran, was in 2016 and stood at more than 10,000. The world body has not provided figures for the death toll from malnutrition but warned last month that half the population, or some 14 million people, could soon be on the brink of famine and completely relying on humanitarian aid.

The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), a database that tracks violence in Yemen, says around 57,000 people have been reported killed since the beginning of 2016. The Saudi-led coalition intervened in Yemen in March 2015 to restore the internationally recognized government that was ousted from Sanaa in 2014 by the Houthis, who control the most populated areas of the Arabian Peninsula country. But since seizing the southern port city of Aden in 2015, the coalition has faced a military stalemate

and has been focusing on wresting control of the main port city of Hodeidah to weaken the Houthis by cutting off their main supply line.

### No ceasefire yet

The coalition last week ordered a halt to military operations in Hodeidah, a lifeline for millions of Yemenis. A few days later the Houthis announced a halt to missile and drone attacks on coalition leaders Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates along with their Yemeni allies. However, Hodeidah has witnessed intense fighting in the past two days, mostly taking place at night, as each side tried to reinforce its positions during the de-escalation in hostilities. "Loud bangs, shelling and gunfire could be heard all over the city until dawn," a Hodeidah resident said yesterday.

A pro-coalition Yemeni military source told Reuters on Monday that a ceasefire in Hodeidah would start only after the UN Security Council passes a British-drafted resolution on Yemen. Aid groups have warned against an all-out assault on the city, an entry point for more than 80 percent of Yemen's food imports and humanitarian aid. UN envoy Martin Griffiths arrived in Sanaa yesterday to meet with Houthi leaders to discuss convening peace talks in Sweden next month to agree on a framework for peace under a transitional government. The Houthis failed to show up to peace talks in September. Kuwait has offered to provide planes for the parties to ensure the participation of both sides in Stockholm.

Griffiths faces a daunting challenge to overcome deep mistrust between all sides, including among allies, which makes any peace agreement fragile. The draft resolution, seen by Reuters, calls for a halt to fighting in Hodeidah, a stop to attacks on populated areas across Yemen and an end to attacks on countries in the region. It also calls for an unhindered flow of commercial and humanitarian goods across the impoverished country, including a large, fast injection of foreign currency into the economy through the Central Bank of Yemen and more aid funding. —Reuters



### Western countries push for ceasefire

## Starvation leaves Yemeni boy Ghazi 'too weak to cry'

**TAEZ:** Skin and bones, 10-year-old Ghazi Saleh lies on a hospital bed in Yemen's government-held third city Tazebarely breathing. He weighs just eight kilograms (less than 18 pounds). Starving and too weak to move or even cry, Ghazi can only look down at his emaciated body as he struggles to keep his eyes open. Some 14 million Yemenis are at risk of famine, more than four years into the country's war. At Al-Mudhafar Hospital where Ghazi is being treated, medics go from one bed to another to check on malnourished children-including infants.

Eman Ali, a nurse at the hospital, said that Ghazi suffers from acute malnutrition. "He has not eaten properly for a while now, and he ultimately reached this situation," she said. While some doctors and nurses weighed children, others tried to feed the young patients through syringes as they have become too weak to swallow. Cases of malnourished children have become a reflection of the health system in Yemen, where children bear the brunt of the war between the Saudi-backed government and the Iran-aligned Houthi rebels.

### 'Entirely preventable'

Aid organization Save the Children said on Wednesday that as many as 85,000 infants under the age of five may have died from starvation or disease since the Saudi-led military coalition intervened in March 2015. "For every child killed by bombs and bullets, dozens are starving to death and it's entirely preventable," said Save the Children's Yemen director Tamer Kirolos. "Children who die in this way suffer immensely as their vital

organ functions slow down and eventually stop," he said. While the United Nations is hoping for peace talks to take place in Sweden by the end of this year, the situation on the ground remains dire with millions of children starving.

"We receive such cases every day, and some of them are very terrible," said Sona Othman, head of nutrition at Al-Mudhafar Hospital. "Ghazi's case was extremely bad and it mirrors the deteriorating health situation of the country." According to the UN children's agency (UNICEF), more than half of the 14 million people on the edge of famine are children. Fatima Salman, whose infant son is malnourished, said that she feels more hopeless the longer the conflict rages. "My husband had a job before the war, and he earned just enough money to feed us, but now there's nothing," she said. "We want this war to end but we only see it getting worse and worse."

### Children at great risk

More than 22 million people—three quarters of the population—now depend on humanitarian assistance to survive. Yemenis struggling to survive such conditions are also confronted with a collapsed economy, leaving civil servants and teachers without pay for months. UNICEF estimates that some 4.5 million children in Yemen risk losing access to state schools, as teachers have not been paid in nearly two years.

More than 2,500 schools have been damaged or destroyed, and others are now used as shelters for displaced people or as bases run by armed groups. The war has left an estimated 10,000 people dead since 2015 and triggered what the UN calls the world's worst humanitarian crisis. However, human rights groups say the real death toll may be five times higher. Yemen's war has put the country's children at particular risk. More than 40 percent of Yemeni girls are married before the age of 15 and three-quarters wed by 18, according to UNICEF, while boys are at risk of being drawn directly into the conflict to fight as child soldiers. —AFP



TAEZ, Yemen: Skin and bones, 10-year-old Ghazi Saleh lies on a hospital bed in the southwestern Yemeni city of Tazebarely breathing. —AFP



International

# Turkey's long crackdown casts shadow over meeting with EU

## Two years after failed coup, crackdown continues

**ANKARA:** Turkish police came for Yigit Aksakoglu before dawn, waking his young family and detaining him with a dozen other academics and activists accused of fomenting mass protests to overthrow President Tayyip Erdogan's government. Friday's arrests, days before Turkey holds talks with the European Union, caused alarm in the West and reinforced a belief that Ankara's long crackdown has crushed not just Erdogan's opponents but also Turkey's last hopes of joining the EU.

The EU Commission's foreign affairs chief Federica Mogherini and the commissioner for candidate countries, Johannes Hahn, are expected to raise the issue of the activists during talks in Ankara today with Turkey's foreign minister. Ankara still says EU membership is one of its top strategic goals, but Hahn has said several times it would be more honest to end the accession talks and try instead to forge an alternative partnership between Turkey and the union. Opposition in the EU to Turkish membership has been strengthened by Ankara's clampdown on critics of Erdogan since a failed military coup in 2016 and by fears that Turkey is sliding deeper into one-man rule.

Aksakoglu's lawyer said he was one of 13 people detained on Friday, accused of supporting attempts by jailed businessman and rights advocate Osman Kavala to revive mass protests in Istanbul's Gezi Park in 2013 against Erdogan's rule. Police rang on his door at 6 o'clock in the morning. "Two officers dressed in special operations uniform, and half a dozen others in plain clothes entered the house and took Yigit to police headquarters," his lawyer Asli Kazan said. He testified for 10 hours before he was formally arrested and sent

to prison. The 12 others detained on Friday have been freed, but Aksakoglu is now in a solitary cell in Silivri prison near Istanbul, his lawyer said.

On the same day Aksakoglu was detained, Turkish media said that prosecutors ordered the arrest of 188 people, including 100 former air force personnel, over links to a US-based cleric Ankara accuses of orchestrating the 2016 coup attempt. Since the failed putsch more than 77,000 people have been jailed pending trial, and widespread arrests are still routine. Authorities have suspended or sacked 150,000 civil servants and military personnel. Last week Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu told parliament almost a quarter of Turkey's career diplomats had been purged. In the same speech he said full EU membership remains "an inseparable part of our future target for a modern Turkey that supports political and social change".

### Long road ahead

Turkey says the scale of its crackdown is justified by the gravity of events on July 15, 2016, when rogue soldiers commandeered tanks, planes and helicopters, bombing parliament and government buildings in their attempt to seize power. In July this year the government formally lifted a two-year state of emergency imposed after the coup, but critics say Erdogan has retained many of those powers under an executive presidency that came into effect when he won elections in June.

Relations with the EU's leading power Germany particularly suffered in the last two years. Berlin has condemned the crackdown, including arrests of dozens of German nationals. Erdogan compared the German government to Nazis. As Turkey's relations with the United States plunged into crisis earlier this year, helping drive



**ISTANBUL:** Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan (left) and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin attend a ceremony marking the completion of the sea part of the TurkStream gas pipeline in Istanbul. —AFP

the lira into meltdown in August, Erdogan's government sought to rebuild bridges with Europe. He made a state visit to Germany in September, and the Netherlands agreed to normalize ties after a year-long standoff. However an EU diplomat said any real improvement would take time: "You can't just turn a switch. You have to put the train back on track towards better relations".

Turkey has also taken small steps to reverse a damaging rift with the United States caused partly by the

detention of US citizens and consular staff. A Turkish court ruling to free a detained US pastor last month was praised by US President Donald Trump and led both countries to lift symbolic sanctions against US and Turkish government ministers. But sharp differences over Syria, US sanctions on Iran and plans by NATO member Turkey to buy a Russian missile defense system remain an obstacle to rebuilding trust with Washington. —Reuters



### Turkey says EU membership remains top strategic goal

## Victims recount horror of deadly blast as toll rises

**KABUL:** Minutes after he took a seat among hundreds of religious scholars at a ceremony for the Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) birthday in Kabul, a huge explosion shook the room, throwing Ahmad Fareed to the floor. Scattered around him were the bloodied bodies of turbaned men who had taken the full force of the suicide blast and probably saved his life. "It was absolute horror, people dead and wounded, covered in blood and pieces of flesh," Fareed, 40, said yesterday as he lay in a hospital bed with leg and shoulder injuries.

"My friend and his little son were also next to me, covered in blood and not moving." At least 55 people were killed and 94 wounded when the bomber blew himself up in the middle of the banquet hall at the Uranus Wedding Palace on Tuesday evening—one of the deadliest attacks in Afghanistan this year. A video posted on social media purportedly filmed by one of the hundreds of attendees showed a large gathering

of men listening to a recitation of the Koran before an explosion triggered pandemonium.

Yesterday morning, as cleaners prepared the multi-storey venue for more events, bloodied turbans, sandals, overturned chairs and broken glass still littered the cavernous room where the massacre happened. The attack drew widespread condemnation in Afghanistan and abroad, with the United Nations describing it as an "atrocious". US ambassador to Kabul John Bass said he was "sickened and deeply saddened" by the bombing, while the European Union delegation to Afghanistan said the explosion was "an attack on all of us, religious or not, who value freedom".

President Ashraf Ghani declared yesterday a national day of mourning for the victims of the attack, which he described as an "unforgivable crime". Security at the wedding hall included a body search by an armed guard followed by physical checks by several religious students, said Obaidullah, who suffered multiple injuries to his face and body. There was no immediate claim of responsibility, though the Taliban were quick to condemn the blast. The Islamic State group, which has claimed most



**KABUL:** An Afghan wedding hall is pictured a day after a deadly suicide attack in Kabul yesterday. At least 50 people were killed in a suicide attack on a religious celebration in Kabul on November 20. —AFP

suicide attacks in Kabul this year, has not issued a statement.

It is not clear why the religious scholars were targeted on one of the holiest days in the Islamic calendar. While Muslims around the world celebrate the Prophet Mohammad's birthday, some fundamentalists criticize the events as heretical innovations in Islam. Most of the people at

the gathering were Sufis, a mystical branch of Islam, said Mehrab Danish, an adviser to the religious affairs minister. "But it is too early to say they were targeted because they were followers of Sufism," he cautioned. Sectarian militants in Pakistan have long targeted Sufis, but such attacks on the group are rare in Afghanistan. —AFP

## Things to know about Interpol

**LYON:** Interpol, the world's largest international police organization, works with its 194 member countries to coordinate policing across the planet, including on organized crime and counter-terrorism operations. After it named South Korea's Kim Jong-yang as its new president yesterday, beating a Russian official whose candidacy had unnerved Western nations, here is some background on the agency.

### Politically neutral

Founded in 1923, Interpol facilitates cooperation between police authorities across its member countries but does not have a police force of its own. Based in the southeastern French city of Lyon since 1989, it is officially politically neutral and acts only within the national laws of its members. It is prohibited from "any intervention or activities of a political, military, religious or racial character," its website says. There have nonetheless been accusations that some member states, including Russia, have tried to use Interpol channels to have political opponents arrested in other countries. Russia yesterday said "unprecedented pressure" swayed Interpol to choose the US-backed Kim over Russian candidate Alexander Prokopchuk.

### A symbolic presidency

The Interpol president, elected

every four years, serves a largely symbolic role and presides over the annual meeting of the General Assembly, its top governing body. Composed of delegates from each member state, the General Assembly takes all major decisions, including those involving finances. It is the secretary general that directs Interpol's day-to-day work. Germany's Juergen Stock was elected to the post in 2014 for a five-year term.

### Red Notices and other alerts

One of the main roles of Interpol, which does not issue its own arrest warrants or carry out its own investigations, is issuing notices requesting cooperation from its members. Of the eight grades of alert the most important is the Red Notice, which informs members about a criminal wanted in one country and who may be in another. It is based on a national arrest warrant and any arrest is carried out by police in the country concerned, at their discretion and without Interpol influence. A Blue Notice seeks to collect information about a person in relation to a crime, while the Black Notice seeks to identify dead bodies. The Special Notice was created in 2005 for individuals subject to UN Security Council sanctions, such as asset freezes or travel bans. Only about 30 percent of Interpol's notices are made public.

### Vast crime databases

Interpol also provides its member countries with access to various databases that contain millions of criminal and other records. One lists



**DUBAI:** Jurgen Stock, Secretary-General of Interpol, speaks during a press conference in Dubai yesterday, after the organisation elected its new president during its 87th annual general assembly meeting. —AFP

more than 205,000 records of known international criminals, missing persons and dead bodies, according to figures on the agency's site from December 2017. There is a database containing around 172,000 DNA profiles from 83 countries, and another with more than 182,000 sets of fingerprints. A database created in 2015 lists more than 46,000 suspected foreign terrorist fighters. Another on child sexual exploitation has been used to identify 12,000 victims and 5,600 offenders, the site says. There are also databases sharing information on stolen travel documents, vehi-

cles, artworks and firearms.

### International staff

Interpol is mainly financed by its member nations, which contribute on a scale proportional to their means, but it also receives contributions from external donors. In 2017 the United States was the main contributor to Interpol's 124.3 million-euro (\$141 million) budget with 10.6 million euros, followed by Japan, Germany and France. With seven regional bureaus, it employs about 800 staff members from 100 different countries, about a third deployed by their national authorities. —AFP

## Israeli minister says Trump's peace plan is a 'waste of time'

**JERUSALEM:** A senior Israeli minister said yesterday that US President Donald Trump's long-awaited plan for peace with the Palestinians was "a waste of time". "I think that the gap between the Israelis and Palestinians is much too big to be bridged," Justice Minister Ayelet Shaked said at a conference organized by the Jerusalem Post newspaper. "I think personally it's a waste of time," she said when asked what she thought about the peace initiative Trump is expected to unveil in the weeks or months ahead. Shaked is part of the far-right Jewish Home party, a key member of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's coalition. She and other members of her party openly oppose a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The Palestinians have already vowed to block Trump's peace plan and severed ties with his administration after his December decision to move the US embassy in Israel to Jerusalem and declare the city Israel's capital. The Palestinians also see the city as the capital of their future state and international consensus has been that Jerusalem's status must be negotiated between the two sides. Trump has also cut some \$500 million in aid to the Palestinians, who accuse the White House of seeking to blackmail them into accepting a plan they view as blatantly biased in favor of Israel.

Trump aide Jason Greenblatt said recently in an interview with the Times of Israel news site that the plan would "be heavily focused on Israeli security needs" while remaining "fair to the Palestinians". While expressing her pessimism on the chances for making peace with the Palestinians for now, Shaked however said she would keep an open mind on the US plan. "Although I want peace like anyone else, I'm just more realistic, and I know that in the current future it is impossible," she said, speaking in English. "But let's wait and see what they (the US) will offer." —Agencies

## Malaysia arrests four Finns for distributing 'Christian pamphlets'

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Four Finns have been arrested on a holiday island in Muslim-majority Malaysia for allegedly distributing pamphlets about Christianity, police said yesterday, and may face up to five years in jail. Religion is a deeply sensitive issue in Malaysia, where more than 60 percent of the population is Muslim, and critics say rising conservatism has chipped away at a traditionally tolerant brand of Islam in recent years.

Authorities detained the two men and two women on Tuesday after receiving complaints from members of the public that they were handing out Christian materials on the popular resort island of Langkawi, said local police chief Mohamad Iqbal Ibrahim. "Police have arrested four Finnish nationals in Langkawi for allegedly distributing religious material in a public place," he told AFP. "They were distributing pamphlets related to Christianity." The Finns, aged between 27 and 60, were arrested at a hotel and police seized pens, notebooks and a bag. They are accused of breaking laws that forbid people from disturbing religious harmony. If found guilty, they could be jailed for between two and five years. —AFP



## International

# Terror of gang violence drives migrant caravans northward

## Thousands of Hondurans fleeing to the United States

**PUERTO CORTES PRISON:** Former Honduran policeman Ivan says he moved homes so many times to escape the street gangs that terrorize his Central American country that he lost count. Fearful his sons would have to join the gangs or be killed, he eventually joined thousands of Hondurans fleeing to the United States. The 45-year-old, who asked to be identified only by his first name, is journeying through Mexico in a caravan of several thousand mostly Honduran migrants who are fleeing violence and poverty for a better life in the United States. US President Donald Trump has declared the caravans an "invasion," and has sent some 5,800 troops to "harden" the border, including with barbed wire. Ivan, fearful to tell his story, is watchful for gang tattoos or slang that might suggest fellow migrants were associated with his persecutors back home.

The former policemen said the final straw in Honduras came when gang members put a gun to his 15-year-old son Yostin's head. They wanted Yostin and younger brother Julio, 13, to join them, threatening death if they refused, Ivan said during a break in the caravan's northward journey at a temporary camp in a Mexico City stadium. So when a caravan set off on Oct 13 from the crime-racked Honduran city of San Pedro Sula, where the family was hiding with friends, they never hesitated. Reuters was not able to independently verify their story.

However, their motives echo others in the caravan and are a reminder of the influence the gangs called 'maras' wield across El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala despite almost 20 years of efforts to crush them. Homicide rates have fallen in Honduras since 2016, as a consequence of initiatives that include prison reform, the creation of a specialized anti-gang security force, and increased resources for law enforcement. In 2017 there were 42 murders per 100,000 residents in Honduras, compared to 57 per 100,000 in the prior year, according to statistics from the government and the World Bank.

Still, the murder rate in Honduras remains one of the highest in the world. Some international aid organizations such as the Norwegian Refugee Council operate in the country with the same precautions as in war zones, and say inhabitants face the same dangers. At the US border barbed wire laid by soldiers

deployed by Trump awaits the caravan to dissuade the migrants from crossing illegally. New rules curtailing asylum claims also increase the chances they will be deported. A return home terrifies many, including Ivan. Removed from his job of 27 years in a police purge two years ago, he says he fears death in Honduras.

The purge removed more than 4,000 officers, or close to a third of what is currently a 14,000 strong force, according to Commissioner Jair Meza, spokesperson for the Honduran Security Ministry. Ivan says the purge removed good police as well as bad, while leaving the former officers exposed to revenge attacks from gangs they once pursued. "They know us and so they hunt us down," he said. Meza said police who were removed were subject to polygraph tests and background checks before being selected. Age and performance were other considerations.



### US leader declares caravans 'invasion'

#### Random violence

In Honduras, violence can strike at any time. On the cocaine transit corridor to the nearby port of Puerto Cortes, San Pedro Sula was for years one of the world's most dangerous cities. Its morgue was so full of corpses that locals said their smell permeated the streets. On a night in late July, a family sat on the side of a highway in San Pedro Sula, a few feet from a crime scene. Francisca Sislavas waited stone-faced between her son, Rony, 2, and her daughter, Brittany, 4. The girl's ankle was splattered with her father's blood. Minutes earlier, Sislavas had been sitting beside her partner and their children in a taxi. She struggled to explain his death. "I don't know. Why? How? I just don't know," she said.

#### 'Betrayed by life'

For some Hondurans who fail in their pursuit of the American Dream, deportation can mean an entrance into gang life. Henry Fernando, an active member of MS-13, also known as Mara Salvatrucha, said he walked more than 3,000 miles and almost died in the desert crossing from Mexico to find his mother, who had left him for Virginia.

Quickly deported, MS-13 was the only home he found, he



**MEXICALI:** Central American migrants -mostly Hondurans- moving in a caravan towards the United States in hopes of a better life, head to Tijuana in Mexico's Baja California State, after leaving Mexicali. —AFP

said, recalling the girlfriends, or "jainas", that leaders offered, serving as payment for the marijuana and crack cocaine he sold. Reuters was not able to independently verify his story. US Immigration and Customs Enforcement said it was unable to trace Fernando's deportation based on the information Reuters was able to provide. Nine years later, now 28, he has a young son, and dreams of leaving the gang. His home, visited by Reuters, was a rented room barely wider than his mattress, up a rickety ladder in the middle of a pigsty.

He had moved up the MS-13 ranks, but remains mired in poverty. Fifteen people interviewed by Reuters, either active in the gangs or in stages of reforming, described only two ways out: join an Evangelical church or death. All of them said they joined the gangs as boys from broken homes in broken neigh-

borhoods. Ramon Bladimir Funes, 35, a member of Barrio-18 has served nearly three years in Puerto Cortes jail for robbery in jail. The overcrowded, lurid-green facility lies near the northern Honduran port.

Among the jail's older inmates, Funes had joined Barrio-18 at 9 years old, after his mother abandoned him for the United States, he said. He only met his father at 17. Signs of his gang years were tattooed on his arms and across his chest. Down the bridge of his nose were three tears, gang code for lost loved ones. Three of Funes' sons were killed by Barrio 18's arch-rival MS-13. "You aspire to higher ideas and a higher mindset, but you're stuck in the problems of the street," said Funes, who regrets joining Barrio 18. "And weapons, all types, are so easy to find." —Reuters

## Gunmen kidnap Italian woman

**NAIROBI:** An armed gang abducted an Italian woman from a village in southeast Kenya, shooting and wounding five residents in the raid, police said yesterday. "The attackers fired indiscriminately at residents" before kidnapping the 23-year-old, who worked as a volunteer for an Italian charity, during the attack after dark on Tuesday at Chakama, a small village in the coastal Kilifi county, police said in a statement. Three children were among those injured, with one, a 10-year-old boy, shot in the eye, according to police. The wounded have been taken to hospital and police have been "deployed to track down the criminals".

Italy's foreign ministry named the victim as Silvia Romano. Africa Milele Onlus, the small Italian charity for which Romano was volunteering, posted a statement on its website saying: "There are no words to comment on what is happening. Silvia, we are all with you." Ronald Kazungu, a Chakama resident who witnessed Romano's abduction, said the gang had come to the village looking for "the foreigner". "There came six men who came asking for the foreigner. I told them she had gone (out)... They began arguing, saying they had seen her in the house. It was then that I showed them where she was," he said. —AFP

## Man killed by a plane taking off

**MOSCOW:** A man was killed on the runway at Moscow's largest airport when he was hit by a plane that was taking off, Russian investigators said yesterday. Russian news agencies quoted sources as saying the man was on a stopover in Moscow and had earlier picked a fight on board his flight from Spain. The 25-year-old somehow ended up on the runway where "a Boeing 737 plane inflicted deadly injuries on him during takeoff," the Russian Investigative Committee said on Twitter.

The incident occurred in Sheremetyevo airport at around 8pm on Tuesday as the plane was taking off on a flight to Athens. The head of Russia's aviation watchdog Alexander Neradko told Russian agencies that the plane was operated by Russian flagship carrier Aeroflot. Investigators said in a video posted on Twitter that they found down from the man's coat and a shoelace among the fragments scattered on the runway. No official criminal probe has been launched yet.

Sheremetyevo Airport did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Russian news agencies said the man had been escorted by police in Sheremetyevo to the boarding gate for his connecting flight, but then walked away instead of boarding a bus to the plane. Sources quoted by Russian agencies said the man had been due to fly on to Armenia. Interfax news agencies also quoted a source as saying that airport services and police inspected the plane when it landed in Athens and found "holes" in the fuselage. Aeroflot, which flies from Sheremetyevo, said on its website yesterday that a number of flights have been rescheduled as one of the three runways was closed. —AFP

## De-moo-crazy: Swiss farmer's quest to save cow horns

**PERREFITTE:** Concern over the cruelty of removing a cow's horns had not been one of Switzerland's most pressing political issues. So when livestock farmer Armin Capaul-inspired by conversations with his cattle-managed to force a national vote on the question following an upstart campaign that began with few resources and no political support, he became a media celebrity.

But Capaul, whose wild grey hair and unkempt beard accurately identify him as a man of the mountains, insisted that his insurgent bid to limit dehorning in Switzerland is not about him. "It's the cow that's important, not me," the farmer, in his 70s, told AFP at his home in Perrefitte, a municipality in the heart of the Jura mountain range. Capaul credits his cows with giving him the idea to push for Sunday's referendum. "I always talk to my cows in the barn. They asked me if I could do something for them, if I could help them keep their horns," he said. "One way or the other, something had to be done and if the animal welfare organizations weren't going to do anything, then I would do it," he said.

#### 'They laughed at me'

The proposal on Sunday's ballot does not call for a ban on dehorning.

## US judge blocks Trump's asylum claim restrictions

**WASHINGTON:** A US federal judge temporarily blocked Donald Trump's administration from denying asylum to people who enter the country illegally, prompting the president to allege Tuesday that the court was biased against him. Trump issued a proclamation earlier this month saying that only people who enter the US at official checkpoints-as opposed to sneaking across the border-can apply for asylum, as a caravan of thousands of Central American migrants made its way north through Mexico.

But US District Judge Jon Tigar in San Francisco issued a temporary restraining order against the Trump proclamation, thus granting a request from human rights groups that had sued shortly after the order was announced. "It's a disgrace," Trump said, alleging judicial bias and appearing to refer to Tigar—who was appointed by US president Barack Obama—as an "Obama judge." "We will win that case in the Supreme Court of the United States," Trump said. Tigar wrote that

Instead, it seeks a constitutional amendment that would create incentives for farmers to let horns grow. The poll is part of Switzerland's famous direct democracy system, but in many ways it stands apart from other initiatives put to a vote in a recent years. Often a proposal has the backing of established political parties, which use their networks to secure the 100,000 signatures needed to force a vote. The parties then typically set up lobby groups to campaign for their policies.

This was not Capaul's method. In 2010, he wrote a letter to the federal agriculture office asking it to make horn preservation part of its animal welfare strategy. "They laughed at me," Capaul said. He then petitioned Swiss lawmakers in both the upper and lower house. When that strategy failed, he launched a popular initiative, securing 119,626 signatures within the 18-month deadline in a campaign that ultimately attracted support from environmental and animal rights groups. "If my wife had known what this would cause, she would not have supported me," he joked, in reference to the intense Swiss media focus heaped on the previously anonymous farmer in recent weeks.

#### 'National animal'

Beyond animal cruelty, debate over the initiative has touched on the realities of the livestock business. Some argue that dehorning cows is crucial because it allows farmers to house more animals in close proximity with less risk of injury. Capaul and some of his backers counter that preserving horns is the right thing to do both for animals and for Switzerland—the country has used the image of the



**PERREFITTE, Switzerland:** Swiss farmer Armin Capaul poses with one of his cows ahead of the nationwide vote on his initiative on cow horns, near Perrefitte, northern Switzerland. —AFP

horned cow to promote everything from its chocolate to its mountainous landscape. "The horns are part of the cow... there is a lot of blood inside, more than in the tail of a dog, which it is forbidden to cut," he said. "In Switzerland, there are still 10 percent of cows that still have horns and these are the ones that I want to save," he added. "The cow is, in a sense, the national animal. Its (image is) everywhere."

#### Pointed issue

The Federal Council, Switzerland's executive branch, is opposed to granting subsidies for horn preservation. "There is no study that says cows or goats without

horns are disproportionately harmed," it said in a statement. It argued that farmers must remain free to dehorn their livestock for "entrepreneurial" reasons, if they so choose. The Swiss Farmers' Union, the country's main agricultural organization, has stayed neutral. Polling conducted this month suggests the result is too close to call. A survey by the Tamedia company had 52 percent of respondents against, versus 45 percent in support. The GFS Bern polling and research firm has 49 percent voting yes, and 46 percent voting no. For a popular initiative to pass, it needs the backing of both a majority of voters and support in more than half of Switzerland's 26 cantons. —AFP



**US President Donald Trump**

cise of its authority to address the crisis at our southern border."

When the new policy was announced by the Department of Homeland Security on November 8, a senior administration official said it would address what he called the "historically unparalleled abuse of our immigration system" along the border with

Mexico. Administration officials say anyone who manages to get across can request asylum and subsequently often vanish while their case languishes in the court system. "The vast majority of these applications eventually turn out to be non-meritorious," a senior administration official said, asking not to be identified. —AFP

#### 'Broken' asylum system

The final version of the order was upheld by the US Supreme Court on June 26 after a protracted legal battle. "Our asylum system is broken, and it is being abused by tens of thousands of meritless claims every year," a joint statement from the Justice Department and the Department of Homeland Security said after the asylum ruling. "We look forward to continuing to defend the executive branch's legitimate and well-reasoned exer-



International

# Interpol picks South Korea's Kim as president over Russian rival

## Russian candidacy unnerves Western nations

DUBAI: Interpol announced yesterday that Kim Jong-yang of South Korea had been chosen as its new president, beating a Russian official whose candidacy had unnerved Western nations. The US-backed Kim, acting president of the global police body, was picked at a meeting of delegates from member nations in Dubai to replace Meng Hongwei, who went missing in his native China in September. Beijing later said Meng resigned after being charged with accepting bribes. There had been growing Western calls for Interpol to reject Russian candidate Alexander Prokopchuk—a Russian interior ministry official and current Interpol vice president—over fears Moscow could abuse the role to target political opponents.

On Tuesday, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo threw his weight behind Kim, who will serve out Meng's term until 2020. "We encourage all nations and organizations that are part of Interpol and that respect the rule of law to choose a leader with integrity. We believe Mr Kim will be just that," Pompeo told reporters. Critics have raised concerns over Russia's previous applications for Interpol "Red Notices", or international arrest warrants, to target those who have fallen foul of the Kremlin. Prokopchuk will continue in his role as Interpol vice president, a spokeswoman for the interior ministry in Moscow, Irina Volk, told Russian news agencies.

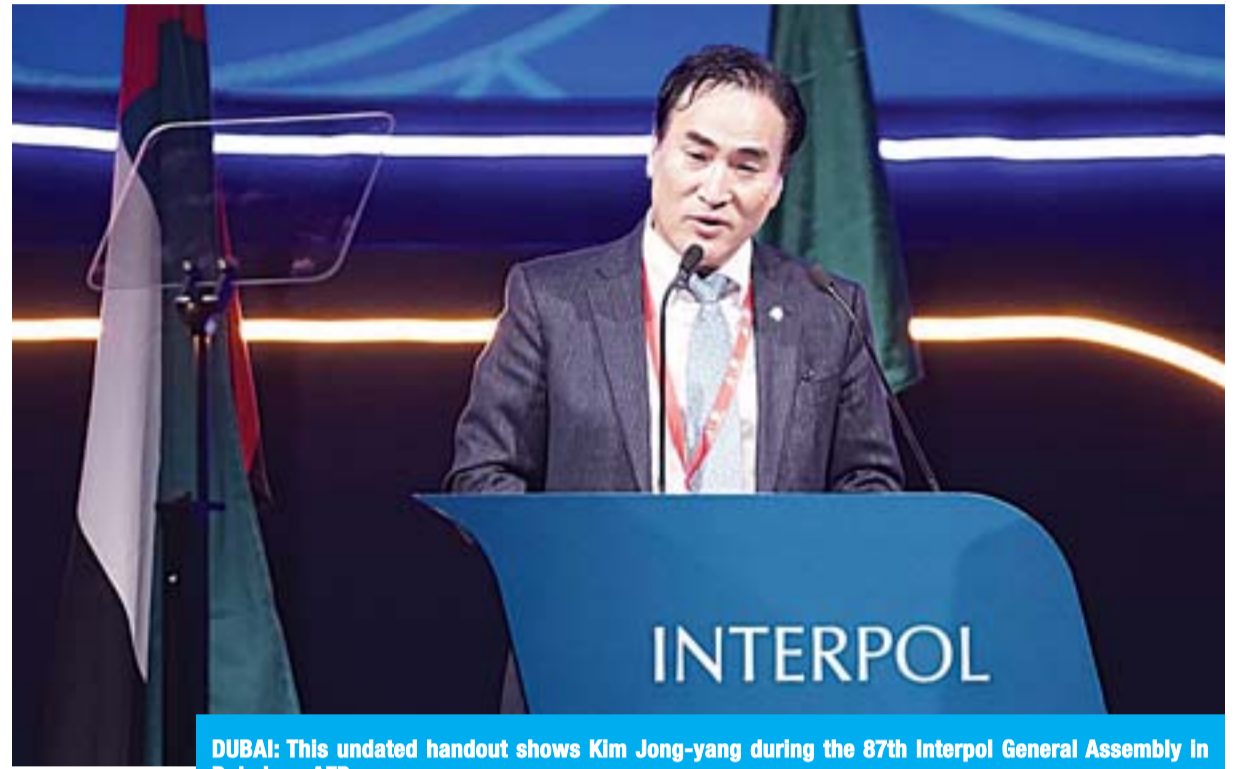
"As before, his work will focus on strengthening the positions of Interpol in the international police community and increasing the efficiency of the organization's work," Volk was quoted as saying. Interpol's president chairs its General Assembly while day-to-day operations are handled by the organization's secretary general Juergen Stock. In remarks posted on Interpol's official Twitter account, Kim said after his election: "Our world is now facing unprecedented changes which present huge challenges to public security and safety. To overcome them, we need a clear vision: we need to build a bridge to the future."

### 'Political persecution'

In an open letter this week, a bipartisan group of US senators said choosing Prokopchuk would be like "putting a fox in charge of a henhouse". "Russia routinely abuses Interpol for the purpose of settling scores and harassing political opponents, dissidents and journalists," they wrote. Harriett Baldwin, a minister of state at the British foreign office, told parliament on Tuesday that London would support Kim's bid. Anti-Kremlin figures had also raised concerns, including Alexei Navalny, the Russian opposition leader who has been repeatedly jailed by authorities.

"Our team has suffered from abuse of Interpol for political persecution by Russia," Navalny wrote on Twitter. "I don't think that a president from Russia will help to reduce such violations." US National Security Council spokesman Garrett Marquis echoed the endorsement for Kim. "As recent events show, the Russian government abuses INTERPOL's processes to harass its political opponents," he said on Twitter. The controversy also comes amid security concerns over accusations of Russian agents attempting to poison an ex-spy in Britain and trying to hack the network of the global chemical weapons watchdog.

Ukraine, deeply at odds with Moscow over its annexation of Crimea and support for separatists, threatened to pull out of Interpol if Prokopchuk prevailed. Lithuania also said it would consider withdrawing from the network. Russian presidential spokesman Dmitry Peskov dismissed the US senators' letter as a "vivid example" of an attempt to interfere in the vote. Moscow's interior ministry denounced a "foreign media campaign aimed at discrediting Russia's candidate". But two foes of Russian President Vladimir Putin, who have been targeted by international arrest warrants sought by Moscow, also said Tuesday they were launching a bid to get Russia suspended from Interpol for



DUBAI: This undated handout shows Kim Jong-yang during the 87th Interpol General Assembly in Dubai. —AFP

abusing the agency.

The legal challenge was announced by financier Bill Browder, named in multiple Interpol warrants, and Mikhail Khodorkovsky—a former oil baron who spent 10 years in a Russian jail and now lives in exile in London. "The Interpol constitution has very specific rules which forbid countries who are serial abusers from using the system," Browder told

reporters. Briefly arrested in Spain this year under a Moscow-issued Red Notice, Browder said the Russian candidacy was an attempt by Putin to "expand his criminal tentacles to every corner of the globe". Multilingual Prokopchuk worked in tax enforcement before starting as a Russian representative at Interpol in 2006, according to the interior ministry. —AFP

## Groom ties knot after being shot on wedding day

NEW DELHI: An Indian groom shot by two gunmen as he rode a chariot to his wedding in New Delhi managed to return just hours later after surgery and take his vows, police said yesterday. The unidentified assailants mingled with wedding guests dancing in an extravagant street procession as the 25-year-old groom made his way to the ceremony. Police said the pair climbed onto the horse-drawn carriage and opened fire before fleeing amid the panic. The groom was struck in the shoulder and rushed to hospital, where doctors stemmed the bleeding but could not remove the bullet easily without major surgery. The groom, bandaged up, returned to his bride-to-be just three hours later and performed his wedding rituals. "The bullet is stuck between the shoulder bones," Vijay Kumar, a deputy commissioner of police in Delhi said.

Police are searching for the two suspects, who have not been found. They have not established a motive for the brazen attack but said it did not appear to be a random act of violence. Many Indian cities are in grip of wedding fever with the traditional marriage season kicking off last week. The shooting is not the first of its kind at an Indian wedding. A groom was shot dead in northern Uttar Pradesh state in April as during his wedding rituals. The murder was captured on film, with the groom clutching his chest with both hands before slumping forward. In 2016, a groom was accidentally shot dead by a reveller as he rode a horse for his wedding ceremony in Uttar Pradesh. —AFP

## Australian 'Bali Nine' drug mule released

BANGLI: Australian heroin courier Renae Lawrence was released from an Indonesian prison yesterday, the first of the so-called Bali Nine drug smuggling ring to gain freedom after the execution of the two ring leaders strained ties between the countries. Lawrence, 41, left Bali's Bangli prison through a doorway where prison officers had laid Hindu offerings. A large media scrum surrounded Lawrence as she was ushered into a black SUV. A police convoy escorted the vehicle as it headed to Denpasar airport, where Lawrence was to be held in a temporary detention centre while waiting for an overnight flight to Sydney.

She will not be allowed to return to Indonesia, said Maryoto Sumadi, the chief of Bali's Justice Office. Lawrence was arrested at Denpasar airport in 2005 with 2.7 kilos of heroin strapped to her body. She was initially sentenced to life in prison. With the support of prosecutors, the sentence was reduced to 20 years on appeal, largely because Lawrence co-operated with investigators and disclosed the roles of other Bali Nine

members. Remissions cut her prison time by a further seven years.

Indonesia has harsh laws against drugs and the other eight members of the Bali Nine received the death penalty or life sentences. The two ringleaders, Andrew Chan and Myuran Sukumaran, were executed by firing squad in 2015, causing a diplomatic rupture between Australia and Indonesia. Australia recalled its ambassador in protest. Chan and Sukumaran, who apologized for their crimes, helped scores of Indonesian prisoners through language and training programs they set up inside Bali's Kerobokan prison.

Another member of the Bali Nine, Tan Duc Thanh Nguyen, died of kidney cancer in May. The other five are all serving life jail terms. They have failed in repeated attempts to get their sentences reduced. In Australia, Lawrence faces two outstanding warrants, reportedly relating to a high speed chase with police in a stolen car before her fateful trip to the Indonesian holiday island. She has been asked to report to police in Gosford, north of Sydney, when she returns, her father Bob Lawrence told Australian broadcaster Nine News. A spokeswoman for police in the Australian state of New South Wales told Reuters the two warrants related to traffic offences, but declined to elaborate. —Reuters

## Outcry, arrests over abattoir pumping cattle with water

BEIJING: Police in eastern China have detained 29 suspects linked to an abattoir that pumped up to 120 liters of water over a 12-hour period into cattle to inflate their slaughter weight before being carved up and sold, state media reported yesterday. The reports did not specify what crime the suspects were being held for, but the case has provoked outrage on social media over the cruelty inflicted on the animals as images of their ghastly ordeal emerged.

From 7:00 pm till dawn, workers at the slaughterhouse would slowly pump water into cattle through tubes inserted into their nostrils before they were slaughtered for the market in nearby Nanjing, a provincial state-controlled TV broadcaster reported. Stills from a video clip shot by an undercover reporter from the broadcaster showed a swollen cattle on its knees with tears in its eyes. Workers whom the reporter spoke with said the process was cruel, though the foreman of the abattoir said the process was "painless". A number of social media users said the abattoir foreman should be pumped full of water instead.

"Cattle deserve to be treated with dignity too. Think about it, we should be grateful for their selflessness, which has helped fill our bellies," one social media user wrote. Beef from the slaughterhouse had been popular due to its prices, which averaged 30 yuan (\$4.32) a kg, about 10 percent cheaper than its competitors, according to the broadcaster. Consumption of beef in China is growing faster than for other meats. But with limited land to produce big herds to meet rising beef demand, China has been stepping up imports. Last year, China shipped in almost 700,000 tons of the red meat worth about \$3.3 billion. —Reuters

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## Analysis

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E MAIL: info@kuwaittimes.net  
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boost South Africa  
'white right state'

When US President Donald Trump pledged to investigate large scale killings of white farmers in South Africa and violent takeovers of land, Pretoria said he was misinformed. Elsewhere, there was quiet satisfaction. For a little-known South African activist group, Trump's intervention, following a Fox News show criticizing the land reform plans of President Cyril Ramaphosa's ruling African National Congress, signaled a job well done. "The best possible outcome that we hoped for was for a statement by the president of the USA, which we got," Ernst Roets, deputy CEO of Afriforum, told Reuters in his office in a quiet suburb of the capital.

The office walls display photographs of street protests by Afriforum, stepped up this year against land distribution plans and what it calls the targeted killing of white farmers. In South Africa, no land has been seized and while violent crime is a huge problem, the vast majority of victims are poor and black. Of 20,000 murders in the last recorded year, 46 were white people killed on farms, according to police data.

Afriforum is an interest group representing Afrikaners - the 5 percent of the population descended mainly from Dutch, German and French settlers. It belongs to a wider movement called Solidarity, which has grown from a 100-year-old trade union into a sprawling and well-resourced organization offering education and training and a range of other services in Afrikaans. Ramaphosa's vague pledge this year to pursue land expropriation without compensation to right the wrongs of apartheid has given new impetus to both groups, who have brushed aside his insistence he will protect property rights.

Critics, including some prominent Afrikaners, accuse them of stirring racial fears at a time when Ramaphosa is trying to defuse threats of unrest from a far-left party. Solidarity says it reflects fears rather than stirring them. "On expropriation, they can't threaten that sort of thing and not expect a reaction," Flip Buys, chairman of the umbrella movement, said by telephone. "Some battles you must fight. We must save the country from what happened in Zimbabwe," he said, referring to the widespread violent takeover of white-owned farms in the early 2000s.

More fringe white groups, including the survivalist Suidlanders, have been warning for decades that Afrikaners are under threat. But Solidarity and Afriforum are working at a different level, holding prominent protests, lobbying foreign governments and preparing to approach the United Nations to request land expropriation be recognized as a breach of human rights. Afriforum and COPE, a party formed by dissident ANC members with three seats in parliament, said they met senior U.S. embassy officials on Monday to ask Washington to put pressure on South Africa to protect property rights. The US embassy said COPE and Afriforum delivered a petition to one of its officials.

## Hijacked

Conversations with a dozen members of Afriforum at its rallies and elsewhere, reviews of its social media accounts and private text messages sent by its members reveal an increasingly influential movement with an agenda that divides South Africa. Roets had appeared on Tucker Carlson's Fox News show in May where they spoke about what they called targeted killings of white farmers and plans to take land along racial lines.

The government, academics and a wide range of commentators say neither is happening, but right-wing journalists from Canada, Britain and Australia have made programs on the issue. "Afriforum has understood this emergence of white chauvinist identities around the world and is manipulating it for its own ends," said Adam Habib, vice-chancellor at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg. "The problem with that is it will fracture our communities."

Max du Preez, an Afrikaans-speaking author and commentator, said Afriforum did not represent the community and did it a disservice by making it seem racist. "If black people want to insult an Afrikaner they call him Afriforum," he said. Roets denies Afriforum preys on white people's fears and said it was employing the same tactics as the ANC used in the 1980s to build pressure on the apartheid government. "We learnt from the best. We have found the South African government is very sensitive to international criticism."

Trump's intervention stole the limelight during Ramaphosa's high-profile visit to the U.N. general assembly in September. Ramaphosa made light of Trump's comments but an ANC source said he was very angry. Every president since Nelson Mandela led South Africa out of white-minority rule in 1994 has tried, and largely failed, to redress an imbalance whereby whites - nine percent of 56 million South Africans - own more than 70 percent of agricultural land.

Ramaphosa is competing in next year's election with a far-left party exploiting anger at persistent rural destitution among blacks alongside wealthy, white-owned commercial farms. That party, the Economic Freedom Fighters, has threatened to nationalize all land and urged people to occupy it - calls which have so far gone unheeded beyond a few groups erecting shacks on unused plots. Ramaphosa, who replaced scandal-plagued Jacob Zuma in February, has said reforms will not harm the economy, investment or food security and that unused land in towns and cities would be a high priority. — Reuters



## US border town worries about Trump fence

Pete Saenz, the mayor of the southwestern Texan city of Laredo, looks at the military fencing that now hems his bustling border town and is uneasy with what he sees. "It's a surprise to some of us, a shock frankly. We're not used to concertina wire," the mayor tells AFP. Laredo, whose population of about 260,000 is more than 95 percent Latino, is one of the areas being "hardened" by the US military under orders from President Donald Trump. As part of the contentious mission that has seen about 5,900 active-duty troops sent to the border, the Army has strung a shiny metal fence made of barbed and concertina wire along Laredo's grassy riverbanks.

Locals are starting to worry of economic consequences for a city that relies heavily on cross-border trade. In an interview at his City Hall office this week, where the Mexican tricolor stands alongside the Texas flag, the black-mustached Saenz says he understands the federal government's desire to protect the border. But he is concerned the military presence might cause a drop in legal foot traffic between Laredo and its sister city of Nuevo Laredo, across the Rio Grande River in Mexico.

"Aesthetically, it doesn't look good. Obviously, if we could have our way as a city, I think we would object to the concertina wire," Saenz says, noting the city has had some initial discussions about challenging the federal government's fence. Mexican shoppers account for about 40-50 percent of Laredo's retail trade, much of which is centered on a vast "outlet mall" that provides better prices and selections than anything in Nuevo Laredo. Mexican residents of Nuevo Laredo are allowed into Laredo to shop and work, provided they have special permits, and some 17,000 people shuffle daily back and forth across a busy bridge.

## Joined at the hip

Even a small drop in foot traffic could have a big impact on the local economy, and similar concerns are being echoed up and down the border. In Nogales, Arizona, for instance, foot traffic from Mexico has slowed dramatically and retailers are feeling the pinch with several stores at risk. "I don't see it (as) good that (Trump is) putting in the fences. The people from Mexico, they go in and shop around, they leave their money over there," says Sandra Chavez, an American woman speaking in Nuevo Laredo. "They are not doing nothing wrong."

Worries are especially acute at this time of year, during the usually frenetic Thanksgiving and Christmas retail seasons. Saenz says it is too soon to know if legal border crossings are slowing, but anecdotally at least some observers have noticed changes. Compared to two years ago, "there seems to be more shops that have closed, it seems to be more of a ghost town," Laura Pole, a British tourist who has visited Laredo three times in recent years, says in the picturesque town center.

But away from the historic square, which is flanked by an ornate Catholic cathedral and hacienda-style buildings, workers in larger shops say they have not seen any changes so far. Laredo is inextricably linked to Mexico, and Spanish is by far the dominant language. The city changed hands multiple times during the 19th century and was once part of Mexico. "I usually say we're tied (at) the hip," Saenz says.

Foot traffic goes both ways, with US citizens heading into Mexico, often to search for cheaper pharmaceuticals and property. Sometimes, families are split between the two sides of the border. "The Army being deployed here is

ridiculous," huffs Angela Torres, an American whose husband was deported and now lives in Nuevo Laredo, while she also keeps a home on the US side and crosses daily.

## Biggest land port

Critics have decried Trump's order to toughen the border as a costly political stunt, coming as it did just before the Nov 6 midterm elections. A Customs and Border Patrol agent not authorized to give his name welcomed the military assistance as each day, hundreds of migrants attempt to cross the approximately 50-km stretch of border he patrols. The entire border operation will cost an estimated \$72 million, according to the Pentagon. The mission is supposed to run through Dec 15.

Retail dollars aside, Saenz says Laredo is the biggest land port for goods coming into the United States, rivaled in size only by the maritime port of Long Beach in California. Some \$214 billion of trade crosses annually through the port of Laredo, according to Saenz, and just outside the city center a non-stop stream of massive trucks hauls cargo both ways across a bridge. "This is what drives our city - trade, logistics, warehousing, distribution - and so this is why our relationship with Mexico is so sensitive," Saenz says.

The mayor adds that, going forward, he hopes the federal and state governments pay greater attention to the needs of border communities. "You know it's easy to govern from Washington or from (state capital) Austin sometimes without knowing the impact on the border itself," he says. "We live it, we sense it, we feel it, we take it in. And economically we depend on it." — AFP

Syria's Druze  
reject Assad's  
call to serve

Nearly eight years into the Syrian war, Selim still refuses to perform his military service, just like many fellow Druze from Sweida province rejecting the regime's conscription call. "I don't want to get involved in the Syrian bloodbath," said the 27-year-old, who gave a pseudonym for fear of reprisals. The Sweida region south of Damascus is the Syrian heartland of the country's Druze minority which follows a secretive offshoot of Islam.

After the anti-government protests that sparked Syria's war in 2011, the Druze obtained a de facto exemption from military service in exchange for their tacit support of the regime. Last week however, President Bashar Al-Assad urged the minority, which accounted for around three percent of Syria's pre-war population, to send its young men to the army. After rotating out some very long-serving conscripts, the regime is looking for fresh blood to beef up its ranks and exercise real control over the swathes of land it reconquered from insurgents and jihadists.

Assad's appeal came after the government helped release, earlier this month, a large group of Druze civilians who had been taken hostage by the Islamic State group in Sweida. His call appeared to terminate a deal whereby the Druze were allowed to organize their own militia rather than serve in the army, but its implementation could prove tricky.

## 'Daesh or the army'

"I don't want to have to kill the people of Hama, the people of Homs or any

other province, for the sake of keeping one man in power," Selim told AFP by phone from Sweida. "The army is your grave," said the young man, explaining that the lack of a time limit on conscription during war means recruits will not be able to know when they can return home. To be on the safe side, Selim never leaves Sweida, a province in southern Syria that borders Jordan and where the Syrian security services have a limited presence.

Young Druze men have in recent years enlisted in local militia to protect their region from militants and the regime's interests. In July, Selim was among hundreds of other residents who took up arms to pin back IS after a series of attacks that left at least 260 people dead. During the assault, the deadliest to have hit the Druze community since the start of the war, the jihadists kidnapped about 30 people, mainly women and children.

The last of the surviving hostages were released on Nov 8, leading to Assad's demand that the Druze contribute to the national war effort. "The regime is trying to tell us: It's Daesh or the military service," said Selim, using an acronym for the Islamic State group. Khattar Abu Diab, a Paris-based professor of political science and a specialist in Druze affairs, said Assad was attempting to intimidate the minority. "He wants to use the residents of Sweida as cannon fodder for future battles," he said.

Sweida was mostly spared by the deadly Syrian conflict and only faced sporadic militant attacks they managed to repel. Residents on several occasions in 2014 besieged detention centers to obtain the release of men who had been rounded up to join the army. At the time the central government was at its weakest, stretched very thin on many fronts and had humored the Druze not to risk opening up another. That level of autonomy now comes at a cost for Sweida, where security is all but guaranteed by the presence of the Syrian police. — AFP

Factories face  
squeeze if safety  
push blocked

A group set up to improve safety in Bangladesh's garment industry after the Rana Plaza disaster in 2013 is warning global fashion firms that they will have to stop sourcing from some factories if the watchdog is forced to close next week. The threat to the apparel sector, which accounts for the bulk of Bangladesh's exports, comes at a precarious time for the country ahead of a bitterly contested election in December, when Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is seeking another term. "The consequences of a closure of the Accord liaison office in Bangladesh will be significant, immediate, and damaging," said Joris Oldenziel, the deputy director of the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh.

More than 200 firms - including the world's top fashion retailers like Zara-owner Inditex and H&M - signed the legally-binding, five-year Accord after at least 1,100 people were killed when the Rana Plaza complex collapsed. Bangladesh's government had agreed to allow the body an extension to complete remaining safety fixes and help build up a national regulatory body to take over the Accord's work. However, the High Court ordered it to close on Nov 30 "The premature shut down of the Accord, leaving workers in unsafe circumstances, would jeopardize the brands' ability to source from a safe industry," Oldenziel told Reuters.

Low wages have helped Bangladesh build the world's second-largest garment industry after China, with 4,000 factories employing about 4 million workers. The sector exports more than \$30 billion worth of clothes a year, mainly to the United States and Europe. Fashion group Esprit, which produces about a third of its garments in Bangladesh, has written to its factories in the country to say that the closure

of the Accord's office in Dhaka will undermine the reputation of the textile industry. "Activism in key market countries could make the Bangladesh brand toxic to consumers in spite of the tremendous improvements that we have achieved in recent years," Luis Gonzaga, Esprit's head of global supply, said in the letter to suppliers.

## Factories at risk

The Accord has inspected more than 2,000 factories in Bangladesh and helped draw up plans to fix 150,000 structural and fire hazards. Some 90 percent of those issues have since been addressed, although many that remain are major problems. The Bangladesh High Court has ordered the Accord's Dhaka office to close due to a complaint from a factory owner who was prevented from working with Accord brands after he was accused of falsifying test results on concrete strength in his building.

The Accord will keep operating from the Netherlands and remains legally binding on its member companies, but it has warned signatories they may have to stop sourcing from about 500 factories with safety problems if it can no longer inspect them. The Accord and its signatory firms, along with European politicians and campaign groups, have been lobbying the Bangladesh government for help to lift the court order, but with little effect so far. "We don't need them anymore," said Bangladesh's Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed, adding that the government is capable of monitoring factories itself and noting that there is no such international oversight in countries like China or India.

However, many experts and campaigners say the Bangladesh regulatory body is not yet ready to take over. Some question whether it will ever be effective given endemic corruption in a country where many politicians also own garment factories. "If they go, Bangladesh's garment industry will go back to square one. Workers' rights and safety will not be protected," said Babul Akhter, president of the Bangladesh Garment and Industrial Workers Federation. — Reuters



## Business

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 2018

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DOHA: Workers are pictured on scaffolding at the Khalifa International Stadium. — AFP

## No World Cup joy for Qatar workers

‘I don’t think it is possible for any workers to see matches’

DOHA: Stonemasons Ojor and Raju take their lunch break sitting on a pavement near the smart central Doha complex they have helped build as Qatar prepares to host the 2022 World Cup in exactly four years' time. "I made a mistake coming here," says Ojor, 22, from Nepal. "I took so much money from the bank (to pay recruitment fees), I don't have anything in my hand."

Both men have been working on the project for the past three years and earn the monthly minimum wage of 750 Qatari riyals (\$205). Raju, a 39-year-old Bangladeshi dressed in the blue overalls that have become ubiquitous in the gas-rich emirate, smiles gently as he talks about his contract finishing in a few months. "I will never come back again," he says. Ever since 2010 when then-Fifa boss Sepp Blatter revealed Qatar

would host the 2022 football World Cup — to almost global shock — the country has faced unprecedented scrutiny.

**Criticism and reform**

Much of that has focused on the plight of huge numbers of migrant laborers, many from Asia, who have swollen Qatar's population from 1.63 million at the time of Blatter's announcement to today's record 2.74 million. Trade unions, human rights groups, and recently the United Nations' International Labor Organization (ILO) have joined forces to challenge Qatar over its derided "Kafala", or sponsorship, system.

An international row has rumbled over the number of people killed on construction projects, more than 1,200 according to one union's estimate. That claim has been vigor-

ously denied by the Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy, Qatar's World Cup organizing body. But Doha has been forced into reforms including a minimum wage, salary protection and the partial abolition of the exit visa, under which workers needed a boss's permission to leave the country. The ILO has called the move a "significant step".

More than 12,000 workers employed directly on World Cup projects are expected to share reimbursements of 52 million riyals (\$14 million) for being forced to pay illegal recruitment fees to come to Qatar, says the Supreme Committee. Evidence of Qatar's transformation, fuelled by vast gas revenues, is everywhere: stadiums, roads, railways, hotels, malls, bridges and the office and residential complex where Ojor and Raju work.

**'Workers won't see Cup'**

However, the World Cup, which kicks off on November 21, 2022, still feels a long way away for the stonemasons and their colleagues, some of whom wear the shirts of teams such as Chelsea under their overalls. "The expectation was that a World Cup would give me good job security," says Mukesh, a 23-year-old laborer from Nepal. "But we have been told that by 2021 they will remove all the laborers from here."

He works 10 hours every day, earning three riyals (82 cents) extra per hour for overtime, and says he has no regrets about being in the Gulf. "We were doing nothing at home and we are earning here," he says. A football fan, he wants to watch his hero Cristiano Ronaldo in 2022 and support Portugal. "But I don't think it is possible for

any workers to see matches," he says smiling. Workers complain about low wages, delays in being paid, and the high cost of living.

Almost all the workers asked by AFP say they had not heard about the international lobbying on their behalf. But Prince, a safety officer from Nigeria, found out about the safety campaigns via YouTube. "I want to save to go to the US," says the 31-year-old. "I don't like the life I am living here, I do the same thing every day, it is hard work, there are no parties or anything. We are not allowed to do anything here." Those who have been in Qatar for longer periods say their conditions have hardly changed. Arnold, from the Philippines, says he has been in Qatar since 2009 and the country has given him "peace of mind". "Nine years is enough though," he says. — AFP

## Angola still waiting for their promised 'economic miracle'

LUANDA: "Things are going badly," said Delta, sitting on a stool and glancing at a bag stuffed with Chinese mobile phones. As one of scores of traders trying to legally sell her wares in one of Luanda's most famous markets, known as "The Congolese", the 32-year-old Angolan's complaint is not unusual. Despite the din and bustle of vendors pitching for cash in Angola's sweltering capital, she is struggling to provide for her two children. "I see some customers at the end of the month once they've been paid — but the rest of the time they don't come," she said.

One year after the election of President Joao Lourenco, the oil-rich nation is still waiting for the economic "miracle" that he promised on the campaign trail. In a country scarred by prolonged war — and where the economic benefits of an oil-fuelled boom have not always trickled down to the mass population —

entrenched poverty remains the norm for nearly half the population.

"I've sold pork here for more than 20 years," said butcher Teresa Pereira, grimacing on her stall's counter as her colleague tried to swat away flies. "For a long time, business was good, but since the financial crisis (of 2014) it's been very difficult because of the grey (unofficial) market," she said. "Now people are selling on the street... customers are rare." After the end of Angola's bloody civil war in 2002, the country enjoyed a decade of rapid growth fuelled by its booming oil sector. But in 2014, a global slump in the price of crude, which accounts for 70 percent of government revenues, and the failure of the authorities to diversify the economy, plunged Angola into a serious financial crisis.

Faced with mass unemployment, the mostly poor population turned to the grey and black markets for survival, denying already weakened state coffers of much-needed taxes. In the depressed economic climate, many tax-paying market vendors pin the blame on the growth of unofficial street sellers and illegal shops often run by foreign nationals, many of them from Nigeria and elsewhere in West Africa. According to observers, the parallel economy accounts for up to 90 percent

of Angola's fiscal activity.

**'Anarchy and disorder reign supreme'**

"If all the informal traders come here to the market to conduct their business (legally), customers would return in force," said Elisabeth Lumbunga, 43, her hands in a bowl of water as she washed her vegetables before sale. In pursuit of new tax revenues, the government launched a nationwide crackdown at the beginning of November on "zungas" — the term used to describe illegal traders, who are often undocumented migrants.

"In our society and in our urban centers, anarchy and disorder reign supreme," said police chief Paulo de Almeida as he launched the operation. "Our goal is to re-establish public order and the state's authority." His officers were deployed en masse across Luanda, closing illegal shops. In a heavily air conditioned office decorated with a picture of President Lourenco, the managing director of the market welcomed the police operation.

"The operation against street sellers has already led to a busier market," said Carla Lubata. "The government has done all it can for us, we hope that the economy will recover quickly." The prognosis is not optimistic. While global oil prices have roughly doubled since 2016, Angola's economy is



LUANDA: Vendors and customers are seen at the Congolese market in the city of Luanda on November 13, 2018, the capital of Angola. — AFP

barely growing. Lourenco's package of reforms to attract foreign investment, notably structural adjustment efforts, have so far been slow to bear fruit. The International Monetary Fund predicts the economy will slip into recession in 2018 with a contraction of 0.1 percent.

**'Making a big mistake?'**

For those caught up in the police crackdown, it has made tough conditions even

harder. Emmanuel Chizundu, 33, left Nigeria five years ago to build a life in Luanda and had started a profitable, but illegal, small car parts business. It was closed down by the authorities at the start of the month. "They closed my business. Now my five Angolan workers cannot work anymore... they have families to feed. Now they are crying," Chizundu said. "I understand they want to put their country back into order, but they are making a big mistake." — AFP



## Business

# Asia stocks slip as growth worries grip global markets

## Oil bounces modestly after big slide, but market still shaky

**TOKYO:** Asian stocks slipped yesterday as intensifying concerns about global economic growth gripped financial markets, sending Wall Street shares tumbling and driving the safe haven dollar up from a two-week low. Spreadbetters expected European stocks to open slightly higher on bargain hunting after several days of losses, with Britain's FTSE edging up 0.15 percent, Germany's DAX gaining 0.3 percent and France's CAC rising 0.25 percent.

MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan fell 0.45 percent. The Shanghai Composite Index swerved in and out of the red and was last down 0.05 percent. Australian stocks lost 0.5 percent, South Korea's KOSPI retreated 0.4 percent and Japan's Nikkei fell 0.35 percent. US stocks sold off for a second day on Tuesday as energy shares dropped with oil prices, while retailers including Target and Kohl's sank after weak earnings and forecasts, fuelling worries about economic growth.

The Nasdaq closed at its lowest in more than seven months on Tuesday while the S&P 500 and Dow ended at their weakest since late October. "It is difficult to pinpoint a single factor driving the global risk aversion. Apple and trade tensions seem to be touted as factors every other day, but it is difficult to blame them for all the woes," said Soichiro Monji, senior economist at Daiwa SB Investments. "The markets appear to be starting to prepare for a loss of momentum in the global economy, although it is doing quite well at the moment."

The recent downturn in global equities has been led in part by a decline in US technology shares, a group which had helped propel Wall Street's long bull market. "We are anticipating more weakness in China, and a sharp slowdown in the United States next year. Given the highly-cyclical nature of the information technology (IT) sector, we have been arguing for a while that growth in its earn-

ings would be hit especially hard in these circumstances," wrote economists at Capital Economics. The dollar index against a basket of six major currencies was little changed at 96.776 after rallying 0.7 percent overnight, when it pulled away from a two-week trough of 96.042.

### Dollar knocked

Earlier in the week, cautious comments by Federal Reserve officials about the global economic outlook knocked the dollar to two-week troughs as they suggested the central bank could slow the pace of or even end its monetary policy tightening cycle. The euro was a shade higher at \$1.1378 after sinking 0.75 percent the previous day. The dollar rose 0.1 percent to 112.87 yen. The Australian dollar, sensitive to shifts in risk sentiment, crawled up 0.25 percent to \$0.7231 following a 1 percent slide the previous day. Commodity currencies such as the Canadian dollar struggled in the wake of tumbling crude prices. The Canadian dollar was stuck near a five-month low of C\$1.3318 per dollar plumed on Tuesday, when it shed more than 1 percent.

Oil prices managed to stabilise after Tuesday's slump. But the market remained shaky, with the International Energy Agency (IEA) warning of unprecedented uncertainty in oil markets due to the economic environment and political risk. US crude futures were up 1.45 percent at \$54.21 per barrel after retreating roughly 6 percent to \$52.77 on Tuesday, its lowest since late October 2017, caught in a broader Wall Street selloff fed by mounting concerns about a slowdown in global economic growth. Brent crude bounced 1.3 percent to \$63.35 per barrel after sliding more than 6 percent on Tuesday, when it plumed a near one-year low of \$61.71. The contracts had reached a four-year high above \$86.00 at the start of October. — Reuters



**NEW YORK:** A trader works at his desk during the closing bell on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE). — AFP

## Italian economy to grow 1.3% in 2019

**ROME:** The Italian economy is forecast to grow 1.3 percent next year, the national statistics agency said Wednesday, below the government's estimate of 1.5 percent included in a big-spending budget rejected by Brussels. ISTAT said growth this year will come in at a slower 1.1 percent but added that unemployment could improve slightly in both years.

"These projections take into account the less favorable international framework and the expansionary fiscal policies" of the budget, ISTAT cautioned in a statement. With the financial markets in turmoil, there has been increasing concern that the global economy is slowing. Italy's populist government has argued that after

years of failed austerity policies, it is time to stimulate the economy to offer Italians some respite and hope for the future.

Rome has submitted to the European Union a 2019 budget based on a public deficit of 2.4 percent of gross domestic product in 2019 — three times the target of the government's centre-left predecessor — and one of 2.1 percent in 2020. But Brussels says this will only increase Italy's overall debt, with the deficit hitting 2.9 percent of GDP in 2019 and 3.1 percent in 2020 — breaching the EU's 3.0 percent limit.

The EU says the government must do the sums again, but Rome insists it will not change and that the EU should instead adopt its expansionary stance. Italy could face EU sanctions and fines if it does not change course, with the European Commission due to release a report on the country's overall debt position later Wednesday. Italy's debt amounts to more than 130 percent of GDP, second only to Greece's in the bloc and way above the EU's limit of 60 percent. — AFP

## India to probe antitrust behavior by DP World at Mumbai port-sources

**NEW DELHI:** India's antitrust regulator has ordered a probe into alleged anti-competitive practices by Denmark's AP Moller-Maersk and Dubai's DP World at the terminals they operate at the country's largest container port in Mumbai, five sources familiar with the matter told Reuters. The decision by the Competition Commission of India (CCI) to investigate follows a complaint by Singapore's PSA International Pte Ltd, which alleged that Maersk and DP World created entry barriers to hinder the growth of PSA's terminal by colluding on certain charges they levy at the state-owned Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT).

Handling 66 million tons of cargo in the last fiscal year to March, JNPT is critical to India's international trade. The port handles more than half of India's traffic of shipping containers each year. Units of Maersk, DP World and PSA operate four of the port's five terminals, with the fifth owned by the government. The PSA terminal, inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in February, is planned to be the largest, expected to nearly double JNPT's capacity and help fulfill the government's vision of boosting India's economic growth by modernizing its ports. The dispute centers around so-called inter-terminal transfers.

Under the system, which aims to make the most efficient use of common infrastructure, freight trains arriving at JNPT typically carry containers destined for several terminals, but stop at just one that handles all the cargo on a given day. Other operators then collect their containers by truck for loading at their own terminals. A similar procedure is followed, in reverse, when imported containers are unloaded.

In June, PSA, which is owned by Singapore government-owned investment fund Temasek Holdings, lodged a complaint with the CCI alleging it was facing discrimination because Maersk and DP World were imposing a higher fee on shipping companies for handling containers that arrived at the PSA terminal, the sources said.

In an order passed on Nov 9, the CCI said its preliminary probe found that Maersk and DP World had coordinated their efforts to prevent PSA from operating effectively at the Mumbai port, said two of the sources who have direct knowledge of the case. AP Moller-Maersk, the world's biggest container shipping group, told Reuters that CCI was hearing a case brought forward by PSA, but said it would not comment as the matter was sub judice.

DP World said it had not received any formal communication from the CCI, but added it has "always been committed to ensuring our business meets the highest standards, complying with all laws and regulations". PSA International did not respond to a request for comment. JNPT and the CCI did not respond to Reuters' questions.

### Coordinated conduct

The CCI's decision to order a probe and details of PSA's allegations have not been previously reported. "This co-ordinated conduct on the part of the opposite parties (Maersk and DP World units) prima facie hints at creating entry barriers for the informant (PSA)," the CCI said, according to one of the sources privy to the order.

The regulator asked its investigations unit to further probe the allegations and submit a report by January. The probe would also look at the role of individual company executives, the sources said. Such investigations, however, typically extend beyond a year. JNPT, which began its operations in 1989, is ranked among the world's top 50 container ports. It plays a key role in Modi's plan to develop India's coastline and maritime sector.

In its complaint, parts of which were reviewed by Reuters, PSA alleged that Maersk and DP World had issued advisories to deter use of the PSA terminal, telling port users they would need to make their own arrangements to transfer their cargo if it was dropped at the PSA dock. One of the sources who is privy to the Indian watchdog's order said the CCI found the coordinated conduct by Maersk and DP World had the potential to bring about an anti-competitive effect.

Another source privy to the proceedings, though, disagreed, saying the dispute was only a commercial one and not a competition law matter as alleged by PSA. The complaint was filed by PSA's Indian unit Bharat Mumbai Container Terminals. The opposing parties in the case are Maersk's unit Gateway Terminals India, and DP World's Nhava Sheva International Container Terminal and Nhava Sheva (India) Gateway Terminal. — Reuters

## OECD warns of a global slowdown

**PARIS:** The global economy has peaked and faces a slowdown driven by international trade tensions and tighter monetary conditions, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development warned yesterday. The OECD, which groups the top developed economies, said it had trimmed its growth forecast for 2019 to 3.5 percent from the previous 3.7 percent. The 2018 estimate was left unchanged at 3.7 percent.

For 2020, the global economy should grow 3.5 percent, it said in its latest Economic Outlook report. "The shakier outlook in 2019 reflects deteriorating prospects, principally in emerging markets such as Turkey, Argentina and Brazil," it said. "The further slowdown in 2020 is more a reflection of developments in advanced economies as slower trade and lower fiscal and monetary support take their toll."

OECD chief Angel Gurría highlighted problems caused by trade conflicts and political uncertainty — an apparent reference to US President Donald Trump's stand-off with China which has roiled the markets. "We urge policy-makers to help restore confidence in the international rules-based trading system," Gurría said in a statement. Trade tensions have already shaved 0.1-0.2 percentage points off global GDP this year, the Economic Outlook report said.

If Washington were to hike tariffs to 25 percent on all Chinese imports — as Trump has threatened to do — world economic growth could fall to close to three percent in 2020. Growth rates would drop by an estimated 0.8 percent in the US and by 0.6 percent in China, it added. For the moment, the OECD puts US economic growth at 2.9 percent this year and 2.7 percent in 2019, unchanged from previous estimates, but trimmed China by 0.1 percentage point each to 6.6 percent and 6.3 percent. It warned that "a much sharper slowdown in Chinese growth would damage global growth significantly, particularly if it were to hit financial market confidence." — AFP



**PARIS:** Secretary-General of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Jose Angel Gurría (L) and New Chief Economist of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Laurence Boone addresses a press conference to present the latest economic outlook at the OECD headquarters. — AFP



**ITALY:** The tower hosting the offices of Italian insurance company Generali, known as the Hadid Tower. — AFP

## Russia's Rostec doing brisk arms trades despite sanctions

**MOSCOW:** Arms giant Rostec is seeing strong demand for its advanced anti-missile systems despite international sanctions against the Russian defence sector, chief executive Sergei Chemezov told AFP in an interview. Chemezov, an ally of President Vladimir Putin, is nonetheless also charting a course to increase sales of Rostec's non-military products.

Since Russia's intervention in Ukraine in 2014, the world's second-largest arms exporter after the United States has been hit by several rounds of sanctions by Washington and the European Union (EU). Rostec and Chemezov himself have been specifically targeted. "The sanctions are beneficial to US companies competing with us," the chief executive noted in an interview conducted via e-mail. "At the same time, we are well aware of the negative attitude of many foreign companies, of our traditional foreign partners, to the sanctions."

An economist by training, Chemezov built a career in the import-export trade and met Putin when both were in Dresden,

Eastern Germany, in the 1980s. Chemezov worked for an industrial group, Putin for the KGB. Now the head of the country's state-owned arms giant, Chemezov points to the S-400 air defense systems as an example of foreign demand for Rostec products despite the sanctions. In late October, India agreed to a deal for multiple batteries worth more than \$5 billion despite warnings from Washington.

"Currently, S-400 contracts are being implemented with Turkey and China," Chemezov added. "We cannot yet tell about future plans, however, despite the active propaganda of the United States against Russian armaments, there is demand for the S-400, and it is big." According to Bloomberg, an S-400 battery costs between \$475-\$625 million, compared with \$550-\$700 million for a US-made Patriot system, and boasts greater range and interception capabilities, and a faster set-up time. The Rostec chief said the group was doing all it could to minimize the sanction's impact and argued that they were also detrimental to the US and EU. Rosoboronexport, the Rostec unit charged with selling arms abroad, has outstanding orders worth more than \$50 billion, he said. Rostec was created in 2007 to transform the arms industry inherited from the Soviet Union. It comprised more than 400 businesses, many of which were in ruins, and was saddled with 630 billion rubles in debt, roughly equivalent to \$9.6 billion today. — AFP

## EXCHANGE RATES

### BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL	America					
British Pound	0.382404	0.396304	Canadian Dollar	0.223517	0.232517	Thai Baht	0.008901	0.009451
Czech Korune	0.005289	0.014589	US Dollars	0.300550	0.305850	Vietnamese Dong	0.00013	0.00013
Danish Krone	0.042344	0.047344	US Dollars Mint	0.301050	0.305850			
Euro	0.338834	0.352534				<b>Arab</b>		
Georgian Lari	0.112993	0.112993	Bangladesh Taka	0.003010	0.003811	Bahraini Dinar	0.793520	0.810020
Hungarian	0.000986	0.001176	Chinese Yuan	0.042360	0.045880	Egyptian Pound	0.014779	0.020497
Norwegian Krone	0.031452	0.036652	Hong Kong Dollar	0.036815	0.039565	Iranian Rial	0.000084	0.000086
Romanian Leu	0.057298	0.074148	Indian Rupee	0.003572	0.004344	Iraqi Dinar	0.000213	0.000273
Russian ruble	0.004612	0.004612	Indonesian Rupiah	0.000016	0.000022	Jordanian Dinar	0.425393	0.43493
Slovakia	0.009111	0.019111	Japanese Yen	0.002612	0.002792	Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Swedish Krona	0.029451	0.034451	Korean Won	0.000259	0.000274	Lebanese Pound	0.000151	0.000251
Swiss Franc	0.299631	0.310631	Malaysian Ringgit	0.069065	0.075065	Moroccan Dirhams	0.050457	0.061957
			Nepalese Rupee	0.002582	0.002922	Omani Rial	0.784981	0.790661
			Pakistan Rupee	0.001646	0.002416	Qatar Rial	0.079390	0.084330
			Philippine Peso	0.005560	0.005860	Saudi Riyal	0.080153	0.081453
			Singapore Dollar	0.216038	0.226038	Syrian Pound	0.001291	0.001512
			Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001448	0.002028	Turkish Lira	0.050457	0.108722
			Taiwan	0.009728	0.009908	UAE Dirhams	0.081520	0.083220
						Yemeni Riyal	0.000990	0.001070
Australian Dollar	0.211877	0.223877						
New Zealand Dollar	0.201066	0.210566						



## Business

# Japan extends Ghosn custody as Nissan financial crisis deepens

## 64-year-old Brazil-born businessman held for a further 10 days

**TOKYO:** Japanese authorities yesterday extended Nissan Chairman Carlos Ghosn's detention by 10 days, as it emerged the car giant itself could face charges over the alleged financial misconduct that laid low its once-loved leader. The arrest of the millionaire auto tycoon, who is credited with turning around the Nissan-Renault-Mitsubishi Motors alliance, sent shockwaves through the global car sector, corporate Japan and beyond.

Yesterday, several media reported that the Tokyo district court had ordered the 64-year-old Brazil-born businessman held for a further 10 days. Prosecutors are stepping up their investigation over allegations that Ghosn under-reported his pay by about five billion yen (\$44.5 million).

Prosecutors had 48 hours after his arrest to either press formal charges, release him or request this 10-day custody extension to continue the probe.

Ghosn is being held in a detention centre in northern Tokyo in conditions far removed from his flashy lifestyle. "In principle, he will be all alone in a cell," lawyer Ayano Kanazuka said. "There is everything you need, heating, a bed but conditions are spartan," said Kanazuka's colleague Lionel Vincent. The crisis appeared to be going from bad to worse for Nissan, as the Asahi Shimbun newspaper reported that prosecutors believe the firm also had a case to answer. Both Nissan and the authorities declined to comment.

### 'Too much authority'

Nissan's board will decide today whether to remove him as chairman. That would be a staggering reversal of fortune for the once-revered manager, creator of the three-way alliance which together sells more cars worldwide than any other automaker. Ghosn's fate appears all but sealed after his hand-picked replacement as CEO, Hiroto Saikawa, launched an astonishing broadside at his mentor. He said "too much authority" had been placed in his hands and lamented the "dark side of the Ghosn era."

Renault said it was sticking with the fallen manager as chief executive but named chief operating officer

Thierry Bollore as deputy CEO. "This leadership guarantees the correct functioning of the Renault company," French Economy Minister Bruno Le Maire told reporters yesterday. "The leadership of Renault is solid, but it is provisional," he added. He said he would meet his Japanese counterpart today to discuss "prolonging" the alliance.

After an emergency board meeting earlier, Renault urged its sister company Nissan to share evidence against Ghosn from a months-long internal investigation. It said it was unable to comment on the charges without this information. Paris and Tokyo have been scrambling to contain the fall-out from the arrest. The scandal — the latest in a string to affect Japan Inc. — wiped millions off the stock value of all three companies. Nissan bounced back marginally on the Tokyo stocks exchange, after plunging following Ghosn's arrest. Ghosn appeared to have some support on the streets of Tokyo. "I think this is someone who was able to do what we Japanese, stuck in our ways, were not able to do," passer-by Yoshiaki Watanabe told AFP.

### Merger plan report

Ghosn was once the darling of corporate and popular Japan — even having a manga comic inspired by him. He has been the glue holding the auto tie-up together since 1999. He had a reputation as a workaholic and won the nickname "Le Cost Killer" in France for his slash-and-burn approach to corporate restructuring.

Under his stewardship, Nissan and Renault became deeply entwined. Renault owns 43 percent of Nissan while in turn the Japanese firm has a 15-percent stake in Renault. Nissan has become the alliance's key player however, posting sales of 12 trillion yen (\$106 billion) last year compared with Renault's 59 billion euros (\$67 billion).

According to the Financial Times, Ghosn was working on a merger of the two carmakers that Nissan opposed because it feared the Japanese company could be relegated to a secondary role. Jeff Kingston, director of Asian Studies at Temple University Japan, told AFP that Ghosn was "a victim of his own hubris and success." "He tram-



**TOKYO:** In this file photo taken on October 21, 2009, Japan's Nissan Motor President and CEO Carlos Ghosn displays the new concept vehicle, the "Land Glider", a tandem-ride ultra light-weight electric vehicle with a narrow body, at the press preview of the Tokyo Motor Show. —AFP

pled on Japanese cultural norms with his flamboyant glory-hogging ways, and his massive compensation incited jealousies and invited retaliation," he told AFP.

Local media reported that Nissan's representative director Greg Kelly, who was arrested along with Ghosn, ordered other executives to "hide salaries." Some compensation due to other executives reportedly ended up going to Ghosn, although it is not clear how the scheme

worked. Public broadcaster NHK reported that Nissan had paid "huge sums" to provide Ghosn with luxury homes in Rio de Janeiro, Beirut, Paris and Amsterdam "without any legitimate business reason." Even when his reputation was sky-high, he attracted criticism for a flashy lifestyle at odds with traditional Japanese corporate culture and his salary — an estimated 13 million euros in total last year. —AFP

## Between The Rock and a Hard Brexit: New hurdle for EU

**BRUSSELS:** It has long been Northern Ireland that has bedevilled efforts to negotiate an orderly Brexit, but now another British territory has emerged to haunt the talks: Gibraltar. With the hours counting down to Sunday's summit to sign an accord on overseeing Britain's departure from the European Union, Spain has threatened to bring matters to a halt.

"As a country, we can't conceive that what will happen with the future of Gibraltar will depend on a negotiation between Britain and the European Union," Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez said. "As a consequence, today, I regret to say that a pro-European government like Spain's would vote no to Brexit unless there are changes," he told business leaders in Madrid on Tuesday. In Brussels, EU officials and diplomats from member states are racing to finalise two texts: the Brexit divorce agreement and a parallel political declaration about future EU-UK ties.

The former has been approved by British premier Theresa May's cabinet and by the European Commission. It is seen here as all but ready and preparations continue apace for Sunday's signing. But Spain has a problem with the text and wants it fixed. Briefly put, the withdrawal deal does not explicitly state that Madrid has a veto on future relations between the EU and Gibraltar after Brexit.

## Australia formalizes ban on HK bid for gas pipeline

**SYDNEY:** Australia has officially rejected a bid of more than US\$9 billion from Hong Kong giant CK Group for the country's biggest gas pipeline company, saying it would be against its "national interest". The decision by Treasurer Josh Frydenberg is the latest in a series of steps by Canberra

## South Korean workers in nationwide strike over labor policies

**SEOUL:** Tens of thousands of workers launched a half-day strike across South Korea Wednesday, accusing the government of rolling back pro-labor policies in the face of deepening economic woes. Some 40,000 of those who put down tools — including some in the auto industry — rallied in Seoul and 13 other cities, the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU), a major labor umbrella group, said.

An AFP journalist in the capital said a crowd of around 10,000 workers gathered outside the country's parliament wearing red headbands, chanting slo-

### 'Best endeavors'

In April 2017, when Brussels and London began the marathon task of negotiating the terms of Britain's departure under Article 50 of the EU treaty, the guidelines were clear. "After the United Kingdom leaves the Union, no agreement between the EU and the United Kingdom may apply to the territory of Gibraltar without the agreement between the Kingdom of Spain and the United Kingdom," the EU said. Now, however, the formal withdrawal agreement on the table appears to suggest that, after the 21-month transition period post-March 29, relations will be decided simply by London and Brussels.

Article 184 of the deal binds the European Union and the United Kingdom to "use their best endeavors, in good faith and in full respect of their respective legal orders" to meet the agreed goals. This seems to be enough for British negotiators, who insist that the Withdrawal Agreement covers Gibraltar. "The PM has been clear that we will not exclude Gibraltar... from our negotiations on the future relationship. We want to get a deal that works for the whole UK family," a spokesperson said. Spain is not convinced.

Foreign minister Josep Borrell has been in Brussels this week pressing EU negotiator Michel Barnier to remove the alleged "ambiguity" of Article 184 and confirm Spain's de facto veto. European officials are loathe to reopen the withdrawal text, which could stiffen resistance from British anti-Europeans or allow other states to pile in with last-minute special requests. Instead, Borrell has suggested that lan-

curbing Chinese involvement in key infrastructure projects amid concerns over Beijing's growing influence across the Pacific region.

"The consortium led by CK Asset Holdings Limited (CK Group) has been advised of my final decision that its current proposed acquisition of APA Group would be contrary to the national interest," Frydenberg said in a statement issued late Tuesday. "I have formed this view on the basis that it would result in a single foreign company group having sole ownership and control over Australia's most significant gas transmission business," he said.

The announcement formalized a preliminary decision two weeks ago to block the deal, which would have seen CK

gans and waving banners, as hundreds of riot police took positions nearby. The KCTU estimated 160,000 affiliated workers would join the walkout nationwide. A government move to introduce greater flexibility to the country's maximum 52-hour work week — to adjust to fluctuations in demand — has particularly angered workers.

They are also calling for liberal president Moon Jae-in's government to deliver on election promises to raise the minimum wage from 7,530 won (US\$6.66) to 10,000 won (US\$8.85) by 2020. Earlier this month, Moon sacked his top two economic officials, as the world's 11th-largest economy struggles with slowing growth, rising unemployment and persistent income gaps. These difficulties have hit the president's approval ratings, now at 52 percent — a drop of 13 percentage points over five weeks, according to Gallup Korea. —AFP



**LONDON:** A demonstrator, dressed as a dinosaur, waves a European Union (EU) flag as they protest outside the Houses of Parliament in central London on November 19, 2018. —AFP

guage on Gibraltar be included in the 20-page political declaration on future ties that will be approved alongside the legal withdrawal treaty.

### EU 'working on it'

On Tuesday, Sanchez had a phone conversation with EU Commission president Jean-Claude Juncker — who sees May on Wednesday — and plans to talk to EU Council president Donald Tusk. "We are aware of the Spanish government's problems and we are working on it," Commission spokesperson Margaritis Schinas said. A strategic port on Spain's southern shore at the mouth of the

Mediterranean, Gibraltar — known by locals as The Rock — has been governed by Britain since the 1713 Treaty of Utrecht.

Many Spaniards living in the poor surrounding Andalusia region commute into Gibraltar to work. Since the Brexit referendum in June 2016, Spain's position on Gibraltar has been through a series of evolutions. Initially it said it would seek co-sovereignty over it. Later it played down the issue, but now — with Brexit day looming — it appears to be trying to squeeze out concessions. "It's no surprise that we are seeing the Spanish government raise issues at the last minute," complained Gibraltar's chief minister Fabian Picardo. —AFP

Group pay Aus\$13 billion (US\$9.4 billion) for APA — owner of 15,000 kilometers of pipelines representing 56 percent of Australia's total gas transmission system. Frydenberg sought to soften the blow by insisting his decision was "not an adverse reflection on CK Group or the individual companies".

"The Australian government welcomes CK Group's investments in Australia and its broader contribution to the Australian economy," he added. But the decision is likely to further increase tensions between Canberra and Beijing, which already reacted angrily when Australia in August barred Chinese telecom giants Huawei and ZTE from participating in the rollout of the country's 5G network, citing security concerns. —AFP



**SEOUL:** Members of the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions attend a rally calling for pro-labor reform near the National Assembly. —AFP

## Libya sees currency stabilizing next year

**TRIPOLI:** Libya expects to end a long-running liquidity crisis by early 2019 as a foreign currency tax helps the official and black market exchange rates converge at less than 3 dinars to the dollar, the Tripoli-based deputy prime minister said. The chasm between the two rates has enabled armed groups and their allies to reap vast profits to fund the conflict that has engulfed Libya since 2011, when a NATO-backed uprising overthrew Muammar Gaddafi after more than four decades in power.

Meanwhile ordinary Libyans, reliant on imports of everything from milk to cars, have seen living standards crumble. Since 2014, Libya has had competing governments aligned with rival armed factions based in the capital Tripoli and the east. The internationally recognized Tripoli government hopes its currency reforms will help restore confidence in the economy and chart a way out of the turmoil by putting the armed groups out of business, a main goal of UN efforts to stabilize Libya.

Asked when the liquidity situation in the banks would be normalized, Ahmed Maiteeg told Reuters: "By the beginning of February, beginning of next year, it will be part of the past." Once the rates converge and the supply of dinars and dollars is freed up, Libya will begin reducing fuel subsidies that cost the state up to \$5 billion last year and have led to rampant smuggling to neighboring countries, Maiteeg said. He also said state oil firm NOC, which has struggled to maintain oil fields amid funding shortages and blockages by armed groups, would get a development budget of \$1.8 billion in 2019, as the wheels of the economy start turning with the flow of dollars. Other development projects would also be restarted.

Between 2014 and 2017, the dinar fell by as much as 600 percent on the parallel black market, which has become the widely used benchmark, as oil production saw-sawed and trust in the banking system collapsed. The official rate, used only by some state companies, has remained at 1.4 dinars. To bridge the gap, the internationally recognized government in Tripoli slapped a 183 percent tax on commercial and private hard currency deals in September, bringing the effective official rate for such transactions to 3.9 dinars. Together with a new allowance that allows Libyans to withdraw up to \$10,000 annually using a credit card, this has helped bring down the parallel rate to 5.30 from between 6 and 7 two months ago, according to dealers' rates seen by Reuters.

### Break even

The government expects the black market rate to continue to fall as dollars continue to pour in from the card allowance and as more import letters of credit are opened. Spelling out details of the reforms for the first time, Maiteeg said Libya would nudge the effective official rate lower as the black market rate dropped. "It will go down gradually until it reaches the break even or the right exchange rate," he said. Libya used a similar mechanism to devalue its currency in the 1990s. —Reuters



## Business

# KFH to serve customers electronically through airport branch during holiday



**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Finance House (KFH) announced that it is ready to fulfill its commitments towards its customers during the holiday. The bank will continue to offer a plethora of services for its customers in Kuwait and overseas through its website that offers over 150 services, in addition to the alternative channels, XTM and the 24/7 branch at the Kuwait International Airport. XTM service allows customers to conduct their

transactions and perform many banking services in minutes in a very modern way using advanced tools through visual and audio communication options; conference call with KFH staff who are always available and ready to answer all customers' questions.

This service is available 24/7 at Avenues mall and Alldahia Branch. Moreover, the Call Center will be ready to receive calls from clients throughout the day,

and will work relentlessly to overcome any problems that might face clients in Kuwait and overseas.

In addition, KFH continues to offer its IVR service on 1803333 that is available throughout the day. Clients can call to make account transactions, ask for financial transaction, pay bills, purchase cards to recharge cell phone, and other services.

Further, clients can take advantage of KFH's ATM

machines (Shamel) that are available at most of the branches in vital locations. KFH offers Mobi Baitok vehicles that serve as mobile branches that allow people to deposit and withdraw cash in addition to other banking transactions. KFH has additional technical privileges, such as allowing customers to conduct several banking transactions through smart phones on kfhon-line application.

## US housing starts rise, but underlying trend weak

**WASHINGTON:** US homebuilding rose in October amid a rebound in multi-family housing projects, but construction of single-family homes fell for a second straight month, suggesting the housing market remained mired in weakness as mortgage rates march higher. Other details of the report published by the Commerce Department on Tuesday were also soft. Building permits declined last month and homebuilding completions were the fewest in a year. Housing starts increased 1.5 percent to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 1.228 million units last month.

"Rising interest rates and rising home prices are creating affordability challenges that are causing buyers to take pause and re-assess their situation," said Scott Volling, principal at PwC in Atlanta. Building permits fell 0.6 percent to a rate of 1.263 million units in October. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast housing starts rising to a 1.225 million-unit pace last month.

The struggling housing market is in stark contrast with the broader economy, which has enjoyed two straight quarters of robust growth and an unemployment rate at a near 49-year low of 3.7 percent. Prolonged housing weakness, together with a relentless sell-off on the stock market could stoke fears over the durability of the economy's strength. In addition to rising borrowing costs, the housing market is also being squeezed by land and labor shortages, which have led to tight inventories and more expensive homes. Many workers are being priced out of the market as wage growth has lagged.

The 30-year fixed mortgage rate is hovering at a seven-year high of 4.94 percent, according to data from mortgage finance agency Freddie Mac. Wages rose 3.1 percent in October from a year ago, trailing house price inflation of about 5.5 percent. Stocks on Wall Street were trading lower on Tuesday, with the Standard & Poor's 500 index hitting a three-week low following weak results and forecasts from retailers including Target and Kohl's Corp, and home improvement chain Lowe's Cos.

The dollar rebounded from two-week lows against a basket of currencies, while longer-dated U.S. Treasury yields fell. Residential investment contracted in the first nine months of the year and housing is likely to remain a drag on economic growth in the fourth quarter. Economists expect housing activity to remain weak through the first half of 2019.

### Single-family homebuilding falls

Single-family homebuilding, which accounts for the largest share of the housing market, dropped 1.8 percent to a rate of 865,000 units in October after declining in September. Single-family homebuilding has lost momentum since hitting a pace of 948,000 units last November, which was the strongest in more than 10 years.

A survey on Monday showed confidence among single-family homebuilders dropped to a more than two-year low in November, with builders reporting that "customers are taking a pause due to concerns over rising interest rates and home prices." Single-family starts in the South, which accounts for the bulk of homebuilding, fell 4.0 percent last month. Single-family homebuilding jumped 14.8 percent in the Northeast and fell 2.0 percent in the West. Groundbreaking activity on single-family homes dropped 1.6 percent in the Midwest.

Permits to build single-family homes fell 0.6 percent in October to a pace of 849,000 units. These permits remain below the level of single-family starts, suggesting limited scope for a strong pickup in homebuilding. The declining affordability is boosting the rental housing market. Starts for the volatile multi-family housing segment surged 10.3 percent to a rate of 363,000 units in October. Permits for the construction of multi-family homes fell 0.5 percent to a pace of 414,000 units.

"Many renters have opted to renew their existing leases because they feel they are priced out of the housing market," said Mark Vitner, a senior economist at Wells Fargo Securities in Charlotte, North Carolina. "We could see a bit more strength in apartment starts in coming months." Tuesday's data also suggested that housing supply is likely to remain tight in the near term. Homebuilding completions in October fell 3.3 percent to a rate of 1.111 million units, the lowest level since September 2017. — Reuters

## Shipa Freight named 'Logistics Technology Platform of the Year'

**DUBAI:** Shipa Freight, the leading online freight platform, was named Logistics Technology Platform of the Year at the first-ever Transport and Logistics Middle East Awards in Dubai. The award, presented by Transport & Logistics Middle East, recognized the platform that offers the best solutions through use of cutting-edge technologies such as automation, smart freight forwarding and data analytics to increase speed, efficiency and safety while lowering costs in operations and systems.

Shipa Freight, launched in April, is the first fully integrated online freight platform that allows users to get rate quotes and book, pay and track ocean and air shipments around the world online. Shipa Freight allows users, especially small and medium-sized businesses, to manage international shipments with a simple, easy-to-use tool accessible by computer, tablet and mobile app.

Toby Edwards, CEO, Shipa Freight, said: "This award has huge significance, especially considering that we've only been serving customers for a short time. It shows the impact we've already made with our technology and the value we are bringing to our customers, particularly to SMEs competing with bigger rivals and trying to grow through cross-border trade."

The award was presented on November 12 at the Roda Al Bustan Hotel in Dubai. The ceremony brought together the most prominent players from the Middle East logistics and supply chain sector. The awards honored companies implementing state-of-the-art operations and processes

## NBK announces winners of Al Jawhara weekly draw

**KUWAIT:** The National Bank of Kuwait continues to reward its customers with Al Jawhara Account through weekly, monthly and quarterly draws. The bank recently announced the winners of the weekly draw for the month of November, naming, Ahmad Samhan Al Samhan, Hossam Eldin Mohamed Elsaied and Husain Naser Husain Alwhaib as the winners of the KD 5,000 prize each.

Automatically entering customers into the draws, Al Jawhara Account gives customers a chance to win KD 5,000 weekly, KD 125,000 monthly and a KD 250,000 grand prize quarterly for every KD 50 deposited into their account. If no withdrawal or transfers occur on the account during the required period, customers will receive an additional chance to enter the draw for every KD 50 held in the account, doubling their chance to win.

Since 2012, the National Bank of Kuwait has rewarded loyal customers with a total worth of prizes up to KD 2,200,000 in the weekly, monthly, and quarterly Al Jawhara draws. All the draws are conducted in the presence of a representative from the Ministry of Commerce & Industry and the name of all the winners are announced. Customers can open an Al Jawhara Account by simply visiting any NBK branch. Also, NBK Customers can conveniently open an Al Jawhara Account through the NBK Online Banking and NBK Mobile Banking. Focused on sustaining its relationship with customers, NBK commits to offer diversified and innovative products and solutions, in addition to valuable rewards to customers. For more information about the latest banking solutions offered by NBK, please visit: nbk.com



Ramzi Al Zerouni (left), General Manager - Administration, Government & Business Affairs, and Paul Rehmet, Chief Product Officer (right) accepts the Logistics Technology Platform of the Year award from Jude Fernandes, Head of Cargo Business Planning, Dubai Airports (center).

that are changing the logistics sector in the region. Shipa Freight is backed by Agility's global network of more than 22,000 experienced employees in over 100 countries. It gives customers the support of a trusted global network

and allows small and medium-size companies to access the world's growing markets. Shipa Freight is one of several technology-led innovations that Agility is using to make logistics more efficient and effective for customers.

## IMF delays Sri Lanka's loan discussion over political crisis

**COLOMBO:** The International Monetary Fund (IMF) said on Tuesday it had delayed discussions on Sri Lanka's next loan tranche due to the country's political crisis. The IMF has disbursed over \$1 billion out of a \$1.5 billion three-year extended fund facility (EFF) loan it agreed in 2016. The aim was to avert a financial crisis and support the economic reform agenda of the government then in power.

That government was sacked on Oct. 26 by President Maithripala Sirisena due to differences with former prime minister Ranil Wickremesinghe, who was backing social market economic policies. Since the removal of Wickremesinghe, Sirisena has dissolved the parliament and called for a fresh election, but the Supreme Court last week ordered a suspension of that

decree until it had heard petitions challenging the move as unconstitutional.

In September, the IMF said its mission had made significant progress toward "reaching a staff-level agreement with the government on completing the fifth review of the EFF and discussions will continue during the annual meetings of the IMF and World Bank in October". On Tuesday an IMF spokesman told Reuters via email: "We are monitoring the situation and remain in close contact with our technical counterparts in Sri Lanka. Program discussions on the 5th review of the IMF's Extended Fund Facility are currently on hold, pending clarity on the political situation."

After completion of the fifth review Sri Lanka would expect to receive a sixth tranche of about \$250 million. The total loan was expected to have been disbursed with a seventh tranche by mid 2019. The political crisis has hit the economy. Already the rupee currency has fallen about 1.8 percent since the crisis unfolded last month. On Monday, the rupee fell to a record low of 177.20 per dollar. Foreign investors have pulled out more than 30 billion rupees (\$169.5 million) since the crisis unfolded on Oct. 26. Moody's also downgraded Sri Lanka on Tuesday for the first time since it started rating the country in 2010, blaming a political crisis for exacerbating already problematic finances. — Reuters



COLOMBO: A Supporter of ousted Sri Lanka's prime minister Ranil Wickremesinghe shouts slogans as Sri Lanka Police Special Task Force (STF) soldiers stand guard near the Sri Lankan Supreme Court. — AFP



## Technology

# Facebook CEO sounds defiant, says he has no plans to resign

## Facebook says services tripped up by server problem

WASHINGTON: Embattled Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg said Tuesday he has no plans to resign, sounding defiant after a rough year for the social platform. "That's not the plan," Zuckerberg told CNN Business when asked if he would consider stepping down as chairman. He also defended Facebook chief operating officer Sheryl Sandberg, who has drawn criticism over her handling of the social media giant's recent crises.

"Sheryl is a really important part of this company and is leading a lot of the efforts for a lot of the biggest issues we have," said Zuckerberg. "She's been an important partner to me for 10 years. I'm really proud of the work we've done together and I hope that we work together for decades more to come." Facebook has stumbled from one mess to another this year as it grappled with continuing fallout from Russia's use of the platform to interfere in the 2016 US presidential election, the Cambridge Analytica scandal in which user data was harvested in a bid to help candidate Donald Trump, and a huge security breach involving millions of accounts.

Most recently, an investigative piece published last week by The New York Times said Facebook misled the public about what it knew about Russia's election meddling and

used a PR firm to spread negative stories about other Silicon Valley companies and thus deflect anger away from itself. "It is not clear to me at all that the report is right," Zuckerberg said of the Times article. "A lot of the things that were in that report, we talked to the reporters ahead of time and told them that from everything that we'd seen, that wasn't true and they chose to print it anyway."

Zuckerberg also defended his company against the broader wave of flak it has taken this year. "A lot of the criticism around the biggest issues has been fair, but I do think that if we are going to be real, there is this bigger picture as well, which is that we have a different world view than some of the folks who are covering us," he said. "There are big issues, and I'm not trying to say that there aren't... But I do think that sometimes, you can get the flavor from some of the coverage that that's all there is, and I don't think that that's right either."

### Server problem

Facebook said yesterday users had trouble accessing the social network and its other applications such as Instagram for a chunk of the day due to a server software problem. It was the second instance in the past two

weeks in which technical issues appeared to affect access to Facebook. "Earlier today, a server configuration caused intermittent problems across all apps globally, creating a degraded experience for users," a Facebook spokesperson said. "The issue has since been resolved, we are back to 100 percent for everyone, and we're sorry for any inconvenience." The independent monitoring site Downdetector showed a map indicating that outages affected most parts of the world, especially in North America, Europe and Asia. Outages seemed to stretch from the early morning into the afternoon in California, where the leading social network has its headquarters.

The hashtag #FacebookDown trended on Twitter. Tweeted banter included jokes about people actually getting work done, meeting one another in real life, or flocking to Twitter while not being able to get to Facebook. Facebook, which operates the Instagram photo-sharing platform and the WhatsApp and Messenger applications, has been under pressure in recent weeks over its handling of misinformation campaigns, and its hiring of a consultancy that sought to do damage control for the company. Facebook has more than 2.2 billion active users worldwide. — Agencies



WASHINGTON: One hundred cardboard cutouts of Facebook founder and CEO Mark Zuckerberg stand outside the US Capitol in Washington, DC. Embattled Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg said he has no plans to resign, sounding defiant after a rough year for the social platform. — AFP

## In Quebec, Canada's newest hydroelectric dams nearly ready

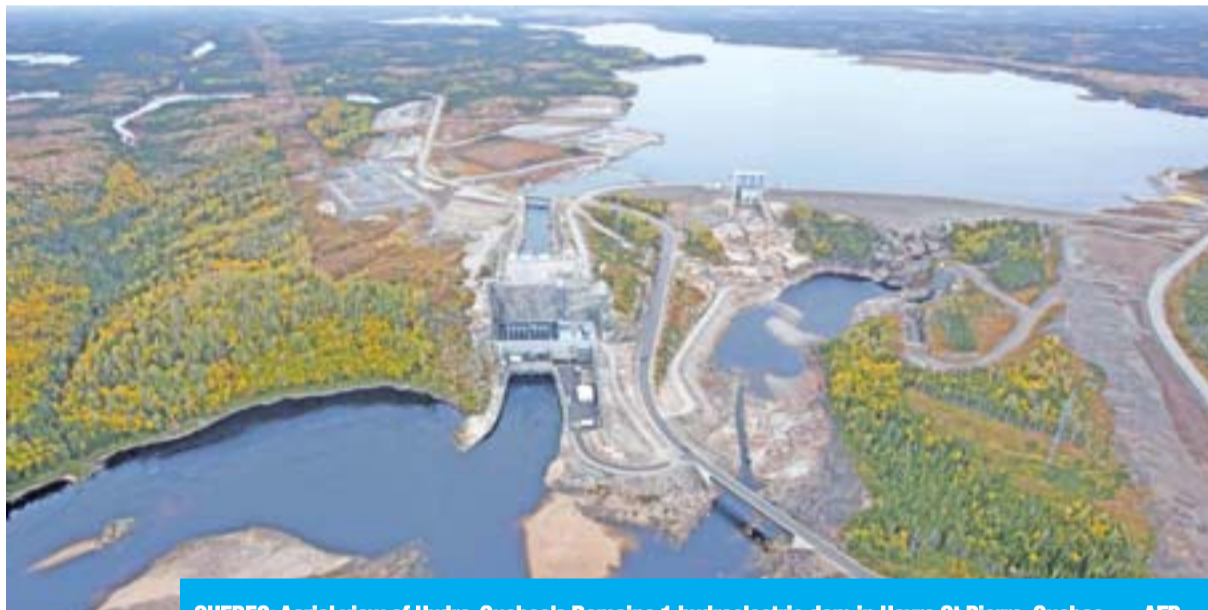
HAVRE-SAINT-PIERRE: On a frigid night, the roar of heavy machinery chipping away at rock echoes through Canada's boreal forest: in the far north of Quebec province, four massive hydroelectric dams that will produce "clean energy" for the northeastern United States are nearing completion. Flowing more than 500 kilometers through the wilderness, the Romaine River in the Cote-Nord region of Quebec is about to hit a literal wall at 51 degrees north latitude with the erection of the fourth and last power station. Once completed, the construction project—which started in 2009 — will see the cold, clear waters of one of Canada's longest untamed rivers flood surrounding lands claimed by indigenous tribes.

From a distance, the bright lights at the site where more than 800 heavy dump trucks, drills and giant backhoe loaders are in use look like reflections of stars in the night sky. The teams from Hydro-Quebec are working on two fronts. They are razing a mountain to make room for the power station. They are also erecting a dike 500 meters long and 90 meters high that will hold back the water to be used to generate electricity. Quebec has a power surplus, so the government is hoping to sell the power produced here to its American neighbors to the south—and in turn do its bit to help alleviate global warming.

### Dangers of dam building

The construction site extends over several kilometers: there is a full cement factory, an infirmary for workers, offices, a quarry and a dynamite depot. "This is a major project—there are many different stakeholders, many simultaneous activities, and many dangers to manage daily," including inquisitive wolves and bears, says Christian Guimond, who is in charge of the dam's construction.

Already four workers have died, which forced the public utility Hydro-Quebec to suspend construction in 2017 while it reviewed its workplace safety practices. There's now a greater awareness of the risks for workers, said Guimond. From atop a nearby mountain peak, he points to a kilometer-long tunnel and a ditch built to divert the raging river in order to start construction of the dam itself on the dry riverbed. The dam is to be completed in 2019.



QUEBEC: Aerial view of Hydro-Quebec's Romaine 1 hydroelectric dam in Havre St Pierre, Quebec. — AFP

Costing more than Can\$6.5 billion (US\$4.9 billion), it is among the top 10 largest infrastructure projects currently underway in Canada, ranking behind two nuclear plant refurbishments, three other hydroelectric projects and a new Toronto subway line. For residents of the region, the hydroelectric project has been a mixed blessing, creating jobs in a remote and economically-depressed region but flooding the local indigenous people's traditional hunting grounds. "I didn't want it at first, but I needed work... when I got my first paycheck, I changed my mind about it," said Gilbert Pietacho, a foreman and member of the Innu of Mingan.

His father, who is also chief of the small tribe that lives on a reserve on the north shore of the Saint Lawrence River, is a fierce opponent of the project. The chief has the backing of environmental groups, such as Greenpeace, which have decried huge hydroelectric dams as "ecologically devastating." "It pains me, makes me sad what we're doing to nature," said Patricia Bacon, a 24-year-old Innu who came here to work at the cafeteria in order to pay for her university studies. "But times have changed - every house must have electricity now."

### Export to US

Once fully operational in 2021, the four power plants on the river will cumulatively generate 1,550 megawatts of

electricity, enough to power a city or an estimated 1.5 million homes. Since the 1970s, hydroelectricity has supplied 90 percent of Quebec's power needs. The new Quebec provincial government of Francois Legault, with the backing of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, has pledged to build even more dams once the Romaine project is completed.

The aim is to export as much power as possible to the United States, saying it would be "the biggest contribution that Quebec could make to the planet." Other provinces also have big hydroelectric projects on the go, such as Newfoundland's Muskrat Falls, Manitoba's Keeyask and British Columbia's Site C. Neighboring Ontario, meanwhile, is spending Can\$25 billion to refurbish two aging nuclear power plants.

Pierre-Olivier Pineau, an energy specialist at HEC university in Montreal, expressed doubt after visiting the Romaine project about the need for more power plants, pointing to Quebec's current surplus energy. "In the northeastern United States, there is a great desire to decarbonize electricity production in New England or New York state, so there is a real opportunity for Quebec," he said. "La Romaine could provide this renewable energy." However, more transmission lines connecting the power stations to US buyers still need to be approved and built. — AFP

## Minister defends cybersecurity bill

BANGKOK: A Thai government official yesterday defended a sweeping cybersecurity bill which experts have decried for allowing the wholesale seizure of private computers and property, saying that "every country has a need" to protect itself. The proposed bill has drawn widespread criticism for authorizing a newly created committee to access and seize computers and hard drives of individuals and private companies without a court order in cases of "reasonable suspicion" and "emergency". The bill would need to be sent to the National Assembly by the end of the year in order to fly through its rubber-stamp parliament before the term expires ahead of Thailand's long-anticipated elections early next year. If passed under his watch, junta leader Prayuth Chan-O-Cha would lead the committee.

The bill is currently being "finalised", said Pichet Durongkaveroj, minister of digital economy and society, also on the committee, who defended it yesterday. "Every country has a need to set a legal system whereby we can protect our society... because every sector is now using some kind of computer," Pichet said. "There is a certain risk each sector will face when there is a cyber attack." He attempted to assuage fears of overreach by saying a court order would be needed to seize a private computer except in cases of emergency, adding that nonprofits, academics and foreign businesses have also been invited to voice their concerns.

In rare comments hitting out at the government, a senior judge at the Thai Appeals Court condemned the bill, calling it redundant. "This law ignores the people's rights and freedom," said Sriamporn Saligupta. "If the next government is not good and uses this as a tool, we will no longer have privacy rights." International companies would also balk at the measures since their financial transactions and business data could be monitored by authorities, the judge added. Since it came into power, the junta has stifled dissent online using the Computer Crimes Act while banning political activities. — Reuters

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- o Referee reviewer of International Journal of Dermatology.

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- ◆ VAAFT Procedure (Treatment of Fistula through Fistuloscope)
- ◆ Treatment of Irritable Bowel Symptoms
- ◆ Colonoscopy & Gastroscopy
- ◆ Stomach Balloon Insertion & removal
- ◆ Bariatric Surgery - Lap Sleeve Gastrectomy
- ◆ Gallstones & Abdominal Hernias Surgery
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- ◆ Fellow of American College of Surgery
- ◆ Canadian Board of General Surgery
- ◆ Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians & Surgeons of Canada
- ◆ American Board of Colo - Rectal Surgery
- ◆ American Board of Surgical Critical Care

**Dr. Abdullah Al Haddad**  
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**DR. FAHAD AL-MUKHAIZEEM**  
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Consultant Pediatrician-Canadian & American Board in Pediatrics-Canadian Board in Pediatric Emergency

**Tel.: 22269369 - Fax: 22269368**  
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**DR. WALEED S BUHAIMED**  
Consultant of General Surgery  
Laposcopic and Bariatric Surgery

**Academic Certificates - Training**

- ◆ Kuwait Board of General Surgery.
- ◆ (IFSO) member .
- ◆ Faculty member of (BEST).
- ◆ Member of Kuwait Surgical Association.

**Scope of clinical Practice.**

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- ◆ Gallbladder stones surgeries.
- ◆ Abdominal wall and hernia surgeries.
- ◆ G.I. surgeries.
- ◆ Thyroid and para - thyroid surgeries.
- ◆ Anal surgeries.

email: wbuhaimed@gmail.com Tel.: 965 22269411/ Mob.: 965 99212228 Jabriya, 4th Ring Road, Block 1A Floor 9 - Clover Center Mazaya Building



What's On

# Symphony Style Hotel Kuwait joins the Radisson Collection

## A Remarkable night for an Exceptional Brand



The inauguration of the Symphony Style Hotel becoming first hotel to join the Radisson Collection hotel in the state of Kuwait was celebrated at a prestigious event last night. The event was attended by an illustrious guest list including: Government and Diplomatic officials, owning company Al-Tijaria Real Estates represented by its Chairman Abdulfatah Marafie and the board members of the company, VIP guests, and prominent members of the media. Guests were given a red carpet welcome where the air was scented with oud. The celebratory evening continued with warm speeches from Radisson Hotel Group Executives and a wide array of dining and cul-

tural entertainment. Tim Cordon, Senior Area Vice President Middle East, Turkey and Africa said "We are delighted for the Symphony Style Hotel, Kuwait to join the exclusive Radisson Collection. The Symphony Style Hotel is an iconic hotel in Kuwait and embodies the essence of the Radisson Collection brand. The Radisson Collection hotels are designed to extraordinary and exceptional experiences for guests at all time and to feel authentic to its location while offering the ultimate model for contemporary living." Peter Schuler, General Manager of the Symphony Style Hotel said: "I would like to personally express my

gratitude to our owner, Abdulfatah Marafie, Chairman of Al-Tijaria Real Estate. Your commitment and vision have been a key element to how far we've come and we're always grateful for your continuous support. We are delighted to see this hotel join the Radisson Collection and continue to always deliver outstanding service and unique experience to our guests. We look forward to this exciting era for the hotel and to welcoming guests to experience the exceptional." The hotel had further exciting news as it was announced that it had won "The Luxury City Hotel in Kuwait" at the Luxury Hotel Awards 2018. During the event, seven different outstanding and

sophisticated dishes and cocktails were served each reflected the character of its destination. The diverse food and drinks menu offered attendees an opportunity to sample the meticulous tastes of Copenhagen, Muscat, Edinburgh, Rome, Belgrade, Stockholm, and Kuwait. Symphony Style Hotel, A Radisson Collection Hotel offers 175 modern and luxurious sea view rooms and suites, 18 meetings rooms and 2 ballrooms which are second to none. Symphony Style Hotel Kuwait is designed to and offer ultimate model for contemporary lifestyle - united by modern design and exceptional experiences across dining, fitness, wellness, and hand-crafted individualistic services.



Abduroul Salman



Ali Al-Masoudi

### Abduroul Salman hosted at book fair

Head of Formative Arts Society Abduroul Salman will be hosted at Dar Suad Al-Sabah for Publication and Distribution, at Kuwait International Book Fair at 7:30 pm on Friday to sign the encyclopedia he published recently, in

which he documented the history of Kuwait's formative arts since its beginning. Director of Dar Suad Al-Sabah for Publication and Distribution Ali Al-Masoudi said this cooperation is a culmination of the distinguished dualism the Dar achieved with the society in several works that serve the cultural and art action in Kuwait, including Arab calligraphy that will be held next week under the patronage of Sheikha Suad Al-Sabah, during which Arab calligraphers will be recognized.

### Drink Organic in Kuwait!

Europe is known for its large market for fruit juices around the world, where it continues to provide the market with innovative fresh flavors of juices. An informative event titled "European Organic Juices" for the promotion of Organic juices took place on the 28th of October 2018, at Four Points by Sheraton Kuwait, through the EU campaign. The event included a presentation of organic fruit juices: cherry, apple, and pomegranate juices, to the markets of Middle East: UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait. Each product is represented by one partner. The organic pomegranate juice is represented by ASOP, a producer's organization, while the organic cherry juice is represented by BNHU, a non-profit trade organization, and the organic apple juice is represented by BIOROMANIA, an association of entities that are activated in the organic farming sector. The companies' representatives and journalists had the opportunity for quiet conversations where they had to ask questions about how to cultivate fruit, but also how juice is produced, preserved and transported. Attendees, watched the presentation of the different organizations, tasted the varied flavors of the organic juices and discussed the import perspective product in Kuwait.



### Jumeirah Hotel supports local arts and culture

Sending powerful art messages, Kuwait's idyllic resort celebrated a week of artistic excellence by Kuwait's emerging talents. Art lovers and hotel guests enjoyed signature cocktails and desserts, while the luxurious Tea Lounge was transformed into a living art space surrounded by

unique paintings created by young aspiring artists. "Sponsoring such exhibitions is vital to guaranty that arts and culture in Kuwait stay successful. At Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel and Spa, we make all efforts to provide imaginative and innovative ideas to support this sector while delivering quality arts and cultural experiences to our guests visiting us from Kuwait and around the world", said General Manager, Savino Leone, as he showed his support for the talented artists. This corporate initiative by Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel and Spa aims to educate, engage and inspire the local community by promoting creativity, culture and artistry through Fann Way's local and international artists.



### KNES celebrated Remembrance Day

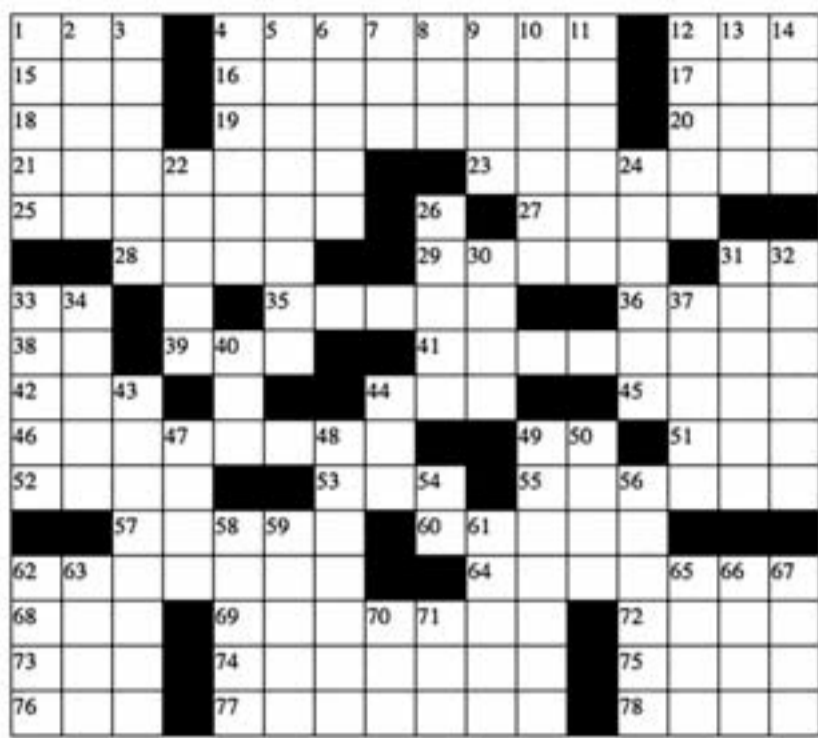
Remembrance Day is observed on the 11th November every year and at Kuwait National English School. This annual event is highlighted in many ways like a Remembrance assembly, observing 2 minutes of silence on the 11th day of the 11th month, and by the sale of poppies as well. Our students also visit the British Embassy every year. This year the student team was headed by the student council members. The student delegation met with Rich Vesey, The Assistant Defense Attache at the British Embassy. Students viewed a video of the history behind Remembrance Day and the importance of the Poppy symbol. The students were able to answer many questions that were thrown at them during the course of the presentation and they were rewarded too. This important day is remembered with gratitude and at Kuwait National English School we take pride in honoring everyone who were victims of war and who were affected by the war.





Stars

CROSSWORD 2066



ACROSS

1. A syndrome that occurs in many women from 2 to 14 days before the onset of menstruation.
4. Political propaganda (especially Communist propaganda) communicated via art and literature and cinema.
12. A federally chartered savings bank.
15. A broad flat muscle on either side of the back.
16. A river in northeastern Brazil that flows generally northward to the Atlantic Ocean.
17. (informal) Of the highest quality.
18. Fiddler crabs.
19. Someone who speaks in a childish way.
20. An anxiety disorder characterized by chronic free-floating anxiety and such symptoms as tension or sweating or trembling of light-headedness or irritability etc that has lasted for more than six months.
21. French architect who introduced the mansard roof (1598-1666).
23. (of exocrine glands) Producing a clear aqueous secretion without releasing part of the secreting cell.
25. Buffalo grass.
27. German chemist who was co-discoverer with Lise Meitner of nuclear fission (1879-1968).
28. Disabled in the feet or legs.
29. A farewell remark.
33. A chronic progressive nervous disorder involving loss of myelin sheath around certain nerve fibers.
35. Deduce (a principle) or construe (a meaning).
36. God of death.
38. The local time at the 0 meridian passing through Greenwich, England.
39. The sense organ for hearing and equilibrium.
41. Involving intelligence rather than emotions or instinct.
42. The upper side of the thighs of a seated person.
45. Largest known toad species.
46. Of or relating to or characteristic of Croatia or its people or language.
51. South American wood sorrel cultivated for its edible tubers.
52. (of persons) Neat and smart in appearance.
53. Noisy talk.
55. United States painter noted for brilliant colors and bold brushwork (1859-1935).
57. Type genus of the Vespidae.
60. (Hindu) A manner of sitting (as in the practice of Yoga).
62. The act of tapping a telephone or telegraph line to get information.
64. An alloy of mercury with another metal (usually silver) used by dentists to fill cavities in teeth.
68. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
69. The great hall in ancient Persian palaces.
72. The United Nations agency concerned with atomic energy.
73. Either of two folds of skin that can be moved to cover or open the eye.
74. Nearly cosmopolitan family.
75. Any of a family of bowed stringed instruments that preceded the violin family.
76. The compass point midway between east and southeast.

77. A festival featuring African-American culture.
78. A former copper coin of Pakistan.

DOWN

1. Exactly vertical.
2. A Portuguese province on the south coast of China and two islands in the South China Sea.
3. As of the flow of a liquid flowing, such as blood from a wound.
4. Strike with disgust or revulsion.
5. Someone who kills by strangling.
6. Feeling or showing extreme anger.
7. Explosive consisting of a yellow crystalline compound that is a flammable toxic derivative of toluene.
8. Having only superficial plausibility.
9. Cause annoyance in.
10. Large west African tree having large palmately lobed leaves and axillary cymose panicles of small white flowers and one-winged seeds.
11. The 3 goddesses of fate or destiny.
12. A villainous Jew in Charles Dickens' novel "Oliver Twist".
13. The act of scanning.
14. English monk and scholar (672-735).
22. Building material used as siding or roofing.
24. Syncopated music in duple time for dancing the rumba.
26. An indehiscent fruit derived from a single ovary having one or many seeds within a fleshy wall or pericarp.
30. Distinguished from Bovidae by the male's having solid deciduous antlers.
31. A river that rises in northern Colombia and flows generally eastward to the Orinoco in central Venezuela.
32. A deep bow.
34. Rock star and drummer for the Beatles (born in 1940).
37. An ancient city in southeastern Greece.
40. A legal document codifying the result of deliberations of a committee or society or legislative body.
43. For venison.
44. (Irish) Mother of the ancient Irish gods.
47. American novelist (1909-1955).
48. Low spreading tropical American shrub with long slender leaves used to make a mildly stimulating drink resembling tea.
49. A genus of Paridae.
50. (Irish) Mother of the Tuatha De Danann.
54. Unknown god.
56. A clear liquid secreted into the mouth by the salivary glands and mucous glands of the mouth.
58. Devoid of any qualifications or disguise or adornment.
59. Small tree native to the eastern United States having oblong leaves and fleshy fruit.
61. The capital and largest city of Yemen.
63. Wading birds of warm regions having long slender down-curved bills.
65. A quantity that is added.
66. (in Gnosticism) A divine power or nature emanating from the Supreme Being and playing various roles in the operation of the universe.
67. The arch of bone beneath the eye that forms the prominence of the cheek.
70. A loud harsh or strident noise.
71. An edge tool used to cut and shape wood.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You may find during this time in your life that romance and social interaction become a major focus. You yearn for close and meaningful relationships with others. You feel as though you wish everything in your life to exude a type of elegance and refinement. You want to have the relationship everyone sees as ideal. You experience a level of excitement at the mere thought of having others look at you in envy of your life. You desire not only the perfect relationship, but also the want others to admire you for your high standards of truth and beauty. Being the center of attention excites you.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You always tend to place great importance on the needs of those close to you. You are entering a cycle where relationships seem to mean even more to you than usual. Your focus is not only on your family but also on your social relationships. Friendships become priority now. You seem to be taking a more open-minded approach to life. Focusing on seeing situations and solving problems from the perspective of others will help you grow as a person. You may



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You are optimistic and faith that all things good will come your way. The sky is the limit as far as you are concerned today. You may feel as if there is nothing you can not accomplish. Bring it on! In your personal life you may be ready to take a huge risk. Today may find you down on one knee, considering a move, or opening up and expressing your deepest feelings to someone. You are in a sort of daredevil mode and high on life. Your confidence level is at an all-time high and you are just the person who can make your desires become reality.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Your friendships take on great meaning for you at this time. The love and support you can feel from a close friendship is truly a gift. You may feel led to nurture these relationships and bond on a deeper level with someone close to you. Today is a great day for new projects or tasks that require great focus. You are feeling both focused and determined and this should make for a very productive day in the work place for you. You may also find pleasure working on group projects of some sort, whether in the office or perhaps a puzzle with friends. You will find great satisfaction in being able to work with others to accomplish a common goal. Cancer. You may find that being a little less independent can be rewarding today.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

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



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You are full of wit. A very eccentric side of you shines through. You may have insights and breakthroughs. This is a very enlightening time in your life. New beginnings are on the horizon. You may experience a breakthrough concerning your living situation. This is a great time to follow your gut feeling and take action. Your independence and unique qualities seem to draw others in. You may find yourself surrounded by those who admire you today.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Today finds you in a very positive mood. You have learned to value adversity, as your positive approach keeps you focused on learning from your mistakes and experiences. This quality makes you very appealing to others. You may find others tend to seek and value your opinions and advice. You almost have a mystical quality about yourself today. You place great value on love and forgiveness of those closest to you. Libra, you may find much peace surrounding you today. Enjoy and relax!



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

A need for power and control is a driving force in your life now. You long to be in control of everyone and every aspect of your world. You may find that others see you as being more assertive than usual and are caught off guard by the change in you. You find you are curious and seeking answers to subjects and mysteries you find intriguing. Today could find you doing a bit of soul-searching trying to find answers to all that fascinate you about who you are, who you have become, and where life finds you today. This is a day solutions to old problems seem to fall into your lap.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

You may find yourself tense and anxious about a situation you have found yourself in. You may feel under pressure and feel somewhat anxious. This may lead to you mentally checking out. You may use this as a coping mechanism for the stress you are under. An out of body feeling in a dreamy state may be the way your mind chooses to handle this conflict. Others may not be fond of this side of you and this could result in conflict with someone close to you. You will find your way and through your ability to get to the root of your problems, this too will be solved. Sagittarius. You may find a negative result from the escape you take from reality as it may cause an opportunity you have been hoping for to pass you by.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You've made a breakthrough in a relationship. Your patience has paid off. Don't take anything for granted though. This one will require continuing cultivation. A small conflict could undo all of your work. You can be assertive without being aggressive. You can make suggestions and not demands. The reward is worth the effort.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

You are a practical person with an abundance of common sense. You are able to use both of these qualities as assets to make your way to the top in the career world. You may be feeling a need to change your focus and tighten your circle a bit. You feel as if you need to spend more of your time and attention on you and yours. At this point you may have accomplished your goal in the workplace but feel you need to continue to work on your goal at home. This will be a balancing act to continue to make sure you thrive in every area of your life. Your communication skills are at all time high and you are able to relate and interact with ease to all who surround you.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You may find yourself wanting to broaden your horizons. You know this is a big world and your life is contained in a tiny square of it. It may be time to take a step out of that box and find what the world has to offer you. You could find it difficult to communicate with others today because you find your mind is a million miles away. Curiosity has taken a hold on you and you can't seem to stay focused on the here and now. You may find this evening that a good book may be just what you need to find this escape you have been searching for. A good time for rest and relaxation is in order for you.

Wordsearch Puzzle

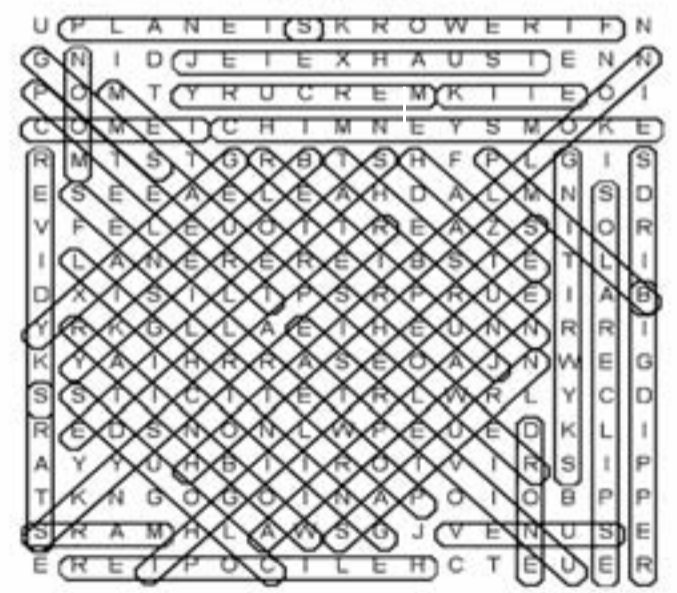
Marine Life

Find and circle all of the listed words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell the name of a sea animal.



- |           |           |            |
|-----------|-----------|------------|
| ANCHOVY   | MANATEE   | SEA TURTLE |
| BARRACUDA | MARLIN    | SEALS      |
| CLAM      | OCTOPUS   | SHELLFISH  |
| CLOWNFISH | OYSTER    | SHRIMP     |
| COD       | PENGUIN   | SPONGE     |
| CRAB      | PORPOISE  | SQUID      |
| DOLPHIN   | PRAWN     | STARFISH   |
| HALIBUT   | SARDINE   | STINGRAY   |
| JELLYFISH | SCALLOP   | TUNA       |
| LAMPREY   | SEA LION  | WALRUS     |
| LOBSTER   | SEA OTTER | WHALE      |

Look Up!



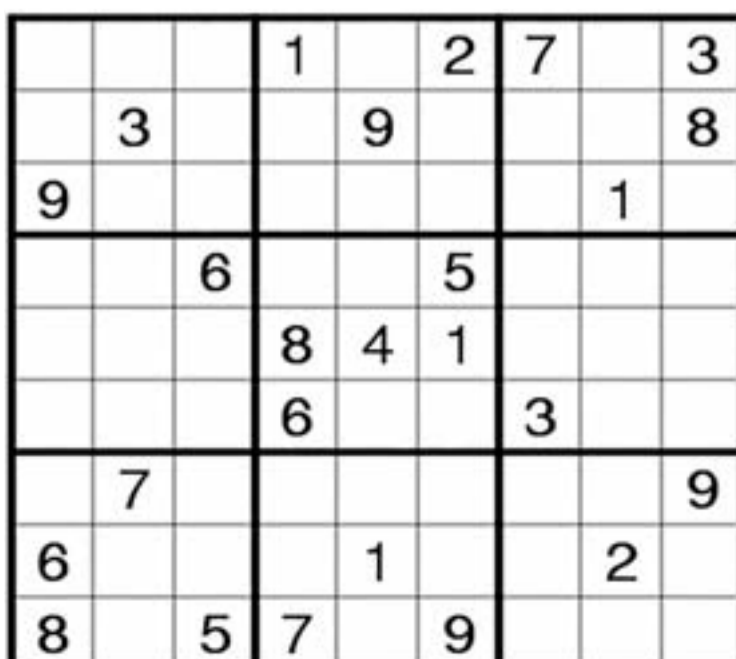
- |               |                 |               |               |
|---------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------|
| AIRPLANE      | GALAXY          | METEOR SHOWER | SMOG          |
| BIG DIPPER    | HAZE            | MOON          | SOLAR ECLIPSE |
| BIRDS         | HELICOPTER      | PLANETS       | STARS         |
| BLIMP         | HOT AIR BALLOON | POWER LINES   | STREET LIGHT  |
| BLUE SKY      | JET EXHAUST     | RAINBOW       | THE SUN       |
| CHIMNEY SMOKE | JUPITER         | SATELLITE     | TREETOP       |
| CLOUDS        | KITE            | SATURN        | UNIVERSE      |
| COMET         | LIGHTNING       | SKYDIVER      | VENUS         |
| DRONE         | MARS            | SKYSCRAPER    |               |
| FIREWORKS     | MERCURY         | SKYWRITING    |               |

The hidden message is: UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECT

Yesterday's Solution



Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution





# Lifestyle

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 2018



A visitor stands by British street artist Banksy's 2005 silkscreens 'Kate Moss' (left) and US artist Andy Warhol's 1968 silkscreen 'Marilyn Monroe' (right) during a press preview of an exhibition of Banksy 'The Art of Banksy' at the MUDEC, the Museum of Cultures in Milan. The exhibition runs through November 21, 2018 - April 14, 2019. — AFP

## After years of silence, music fills streets of Iraq's Mosul



For centuries, it was a magnet for artists across the region and churned out Iraq's best musicians—but recent years saw Mosul suffer a devastating musical purge. For three years until last summer, the sprawling northern city was under the brutal rule of the Islamic State group. In imposing a city-wide ban on playing or even listening to music, the jihadists smashed and torched instruments. "It was impossible to bring my instrument with me whenever I left the house," said city resident Fadel Al-Badri, who hid his precious violin from the rampaging fighters. Foreshadowing IS' repression, the 2000s saw Al-Qaeda and other groups impose an ultra-conservative interpretation of Islam in several districts of the city.

But with Mosul freed from the grip of IS in July 2017, Iraq's second city is embarking on a musical comeback. "After the liberation, songs are back where they truly belong in Mosul," said Badri, welcoming the return of evening celebrations and festivals. The 45-year old violinist now has the pleasure of playing in public once more to an audience that claps hands and sings along to traditional local tunes.

### After IS, 'we sing'

Mosul has a rich musical history. It is the home city of Ziryab, a musician who introduced the oud—the oriental lute popular across the Arab world—to Europe in the 9th century. One of its more recent musical prodigies is Kazem Al-Saher, the Iraqi crooner-turned-talent judge known around the region. The city even has its own special genre of Arabic ballads, recognized across Iraq and beyond. From folkloric shows and philharmonic concerts to weddings and other national holidays, song and dance



Iraqis listen to live music at a cafe in Iraq's second city of Mosul.

have traditionally filled the streets and surrounding air.

But that meant nothing to IS, which ravaged Mosul's heritage-musical and otherwise—when it took the city as part of a lightning offensive across Iraq in 2014. The jihadists began by destroying the statue of celebrated balad virtuoso Mulla Uthman Al-Mosuli, and then turned their attention to destroying instruments across the city. IS also forced musicians in Mosul to sign a pledge that they would never play or sing again, which was then posted in public places like mosques. Singer Ahmed Al-Saher, 33, said it was humiliating.

"I couldn't leave Mosul after they made me sign because of my sick mother. I had to stay here under all that pressure and fear of the unknown," he recalled.

Ordinary residents, as well as musicians, are keen to celebrate the return of artistic freedom. "Terrorism failed in killing Mosulites' love for art in all forms. It's been born again, despite the destruction," said Amneh Al-Hayyali. The 38-year-old brought her husband, son, and daughter to watch a late-night concert in a cultural center in east Mosul. "Today, after the dark era of beheadings, lashings, beards and veils being imposed on us... we sing," she said.

### Global artists welcome

But bringing Mosul's artistic scene back to its former heyday will not be easy. Tahsin Haddad, who heads the local artists' syndicate, said he is keen to support public arts across the province. "But we are in huge need of support from the central government in Baghdad, especially because Mosul currently has no stages, movie theatres, or art spaces," he told AFP. Without these venues, artists play in local cafes and public squares.

Celebrated Iraqi musician Karim Wasfi recently performed in a Mosul park where IS once infamously trained its child soldiers. Earlier this month, Iraqi artists from around the country swarmed to the city for a cultural festival at Mosul University. Performers stomped the dabkeh—a traditional Arabic line dance—and painters brought their works to display on the campus. Glamorous Iraqi artist Adiba travelled from Baghdad with an entourage of peers. "I am so happy to be in Mosul, singing here after it was freed from the grip" of IS, she said, moments before stepping on stage. "Artists-Iraqi, Arab, foreign—should all come play festivals here." — AFP



Iraqi Musicians perform live music at a book fair in Mosul.



Renowned Iraqi maestro and cello player Karim Wasfi performs in Mosul's war-ravaged Old City. — AFP photos



## Lifestyle | Features

## Indian police file rape case against Bollywood actor

Indian police said yesterday they had registered a rape case against Bollywood actor Alok Nath, a rare development in India's burgeoning #MeToo movement, with very few accusations under investigation by the authorities. Vinta Nanda, a writer and producer, has accused the veteran actor of raping her 19 years ago. "Yesterday (Tuesday), Vinta Nanda visited Oshiwara police station (in Mumbai) and filed a complaint against Alok Nath. "Investigations are on and an FIR (first information report) has been filed under section 376 of the IPC (Indian Penal Code)," deputy commissioner Paramjit Singh Dahiya told AFP. In a Facebook post published last month Nanda said she had been "brutalized and violated endlessly" by the popular star.

She did not name him directly but dropped enough hints which led others in the Hindi film industry to quickly identify him on Twitter. Nath, 62, denies the allegations and has sued Nanda for defamation. He has also asked for a written apology and token compensation of one rupee. India's belated #MeToo movement started gaining traction in late September. It has seen women share accounts of alleged harassment by several powerful men in the worlds of Bollywood, business, journalism, politics, comedy and even cricket.

The trigger appears to have been actress Tanushree Dutta, who accused well-known Bollywood actor Nana Patekar of inappropriate behavior on a film set 10 years ago. Since then, a slew of powerful Bollywood figures have been accused of

sexual misconduct, including Vikas Bahl and Sajid Khan. All have denied the claims. Very few cases are being probed by the police, however officers at the same station where Nanda filed her complaint are also investigating Dutta's allegation. Last month, M.J. Akbar resigned as India's junior foreign minister after at least 20 women accused him of sexual harassment during his time as a newspaper editor. Akbar—who denies the allegations—is suing one of the complainants, Priya Ramani, for defamation. — AFP



In this file photo Indian Bollywood actor Alok Nath attends a memorial prayer event in Mumbai.—AFP

## Bollywood's Bachchan becomes farmers' star after clearing loans

Bollywood veteran Amitabh Bachchan was hailed yesterday as a star of India's farmers after clearing loans worth more than 40 million rupees (\$560,000) as an agricultural crisis forces many rural workers into extreme poverty. India's farmers have been hit hard by a drop in commodity prices, stagnant wages, record fuel prices and high fertilizer costs, sparking rallies across the country this year calling for better prices for produce and loan waivers.

Farmers and other agriculture workers together make up about half India's 1.3 billion people. "It is a very big problem that has left farmers across the country in dire straits," Rakesh Tikait, spokesperson of the Bhartiya Kisan Union (Indian Farmers' Union) told the Thomson Reuters Foundation in a phone interview. "The government policies are flawed and need an overhaul. We are fighting for that change but are thankful for any help that comes along the way." Tikait said Bachchan's gesture

might have been symbolic but it meant a lot for farmers who were struggling to survive.

More than 12,600 farmers and agricultural workers committed suicide in 2015 alone, accounting for about 10 percent of all suicides in India, with almost 60 percent of suicides caused by bankruptcy and indebtedness, according to official data. Bachchan, one of Indian cinema's most revered actors, wrote in his blog this week that he had helped 1,398 farmers from the northern state of Uttar Pradesh and felt a "sense of accomplishment". [http://srbachchan.tumblr.com/ ] "Gratitude leans across to the desire of removing some of the burdens that farmers continue to suffer ... and the inner peace it generates when the desired is completed," he wrote. — Reuters



Amitabh Bachchan

## Vacheron Constantin launches the FIFTYSIX collection in Kuwait

The world's oldest Haute Horlogerie manufacture, Vacheron Constantin, hosted an exceptional evening to celebrate the launch of its FIFTYSIX collection in Kuwait City. The travelling exhibition made its third stop in the Middle East at the prestigious Four Season in Kuwait, showing casing key models from the FIFTYSIX collection: The FIFTYSIX Day-Date, FIFTYSIX Complete Calendar

An exclusive performance by Palestinian singer and composer Omar Kamal provided the musical narrative for a sophisticated evening that drew more than 60 VIP guests and connoisseurs who were introduced to the Maison's new artistically-inclined "One of not many" campaign. The experiential event brought to life the distinct world of FIFTYSIX through a series of distinguished, immersive activities curated to create a memorable arena geared especially for those with exceptionally refined taste.

Guests were given the opportunity to intimately discover the striking collection as well as interact with Alexander Schmiedt, Vacheron Constantin's Brand Director for the Middle East. Commenting on the exclusive gathering, Schmiedt said, "The launch of the FIFTYSIX collection is a momentous occasion in Vacheron Constantin's 263 year history and I am delighted to be able to share this moment with our valued Qatari connoisseurs. FIFTYSIX embodies Vacheron Constantin's spirit of constant innovation - blending tradition with progression to deliver a horological experience which consistently resets precedents."



## The FIFTYSIX Collection

Geneva's oldest watch Manufacture, Vacheron Constantin is heralding a new chapter in its history with its FIFTYSIX collection. It represents an important new step as this original line, inspired by a historical Vacheron Constantin watch dating from 1956, instills a modern momentum capable of opening up the world of Fine Watchmaking to contemporary enthusiasts.

The style of the Fiftysix is a direct tribute to a watch created in 1956: reference 6073. The distinctive design of this iconic model embodies the creativity of the Maison during the 1950s - a period representing the golden age of watchmaking refinement, as well as the heyday of musical creativity. Round, slim and effortlessly elegant, reference 6073 is distinguished by its four lugs each representing a branch of the Maltese cross.

With its classic dial, daring case and avant-garde technical characteristics (it was at the time one of the first watches from the Manufacture to be equipped with a self-winding movement and a water-resistant case), this 1956 watch wove ties between respect for tradition and a taste for innovation. Ties deeply cherished by Vacheron Constantin and now expressed in the Fiftysix collection picking up several features of the original model: lugs respectively forming one portion of the Maltese cross, a box-type crystal, as well as self-winding movements.

For the first time in its storied history, the Maison has decided to offer a classic collection both in gold and in steel, while treating the latter material with the same high aesthetic standards as the precious metal. As an example of this, see the use of white gold hands and appliques on the steel versions of the FIFTYSIX.

## FIFTYSIX Day-Date with Power-Reserve Indicator

The day-date FIFTYSIX with its 40 mm-diameter case in steel or 18 carats 5N pink gold provides additional functions driven by its self-winding movement, Calibre 2475 SC/2. Equipped with a stop-seconds device, the latter powers the



day of the week indication appearing at 9 o'clock, the date at 3 o'clock and the power-reserve display at 6 o'clock. The 22 carats gold open worked oscillating weight visible through the sapphire crystal caseback is fitted with a ceramic ball bearing rotation system requiring no lubrication and guaranteeing the movement's longevity. In keeping with the characteristic face of this collection, this version features a monochrome dial with double opaline-sunburst effect, enhanced by the additional contrast of its two snailed counters. Gold Arabic numerals, hour-markers and hours & minutes hands punctuate the dial of this FIFTYSIX model, teamed with an alligator leather strap secured by a polished half Maltese cross-shaped steel folding clasp or gold pin buckle, depending on the version.

## FIFTYSIX Complete Calendar with Precision Moon Phase

Behind the understated elegance of the FIFTYSIX complete calendar model's monochrome dial with opaline-sunburst effect lies one of the horological complications most appreciated by discerning connoisseurs and collectors. The indications of the day of the week, date, month and moon phase are driven by a self-winding movement, Calibre 2460 QCL/1, equipped with a 22 carats open worked oscillating weight adorned with the Maltese cross emblem. Its construction and its extreme precision mean that the moon phase function requires adjustment only once every 122 years (compared with once every three years or a standard moon phase).

The collection's characteristic dial is graced with two rectangular apertures at 12 o'clock, respectively indicating the month and the day of the week. The date is displayed by a central gold hand, while the moon disc at 6 o'clock features a blue night sky and 18K gold moons. A 40 mm-diameter case in steel or 18 carats 5N pink gold; gold Arabic numerals, hour-markers and hours & minutes hands; alligator leather strap with steel folding clasp or pink gold pin buckle depending on the model; the FIFTYSIX complete calendar embodies a perfect blend of Vacheron Constantin's stylish elegance and the sophistication of its mechanical functions.

## FIFTYSIX Tourbillon

The most prestigious composition in the collection to date, the FIFTYSIX Tourbillon is beautifully slender at less than 6 mm thick and equipped with a 22-carat gold peripheral rotor, the calibre of this model may be observed through a transparent caseback revealing all the beauty of the mechanism with its refined ornamentation. The tourbillon alone called for over a dozen hours of chamfering and other hand-crafted finishing operations. Like a metronome, its 2.5 Hz frequency provides a chance to follow its steady beat, framed by a 41 mm-diameter case. On the two-tone opaline-sunburst dial, decoration plays an equally exceptional tune. The FIFTYSIX Tourbillon will be available exclusively from Vacheron Constantin boutiques as of April 2019.



## Why are cities so unaffordable? A crowd-funded film finds out

For filmmaker Fredrik Gertten, it is fitting that he is crowdfunding part of the money needed for his new documentary that explores why housing in most major cities is becoming unaffordable for residents. In the film "Push", Gertten follows Leilani Farha, UN Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing, as she meets with people from Barcelona to Toronto, who have been evicted or forced to move from their homes and neighborhoods. The Kickstarter crowdfunding campaign for the film, which is scheduled to be released early next year, has garnered about half the \$50,000 Gertten aims to raise, the campaign page showed.

"It's very stressful to crowdfund, but it's also a way to get people from everywhere involved and talking about the issue, which is the global housing crisis," Gertten told the Thomson Reuters Foundation over the phone. "We set out to explore why housing in cities is becoming so unaffordable, and Leilani was our vehicle to highlight the global pattern. Everywhere, residents feel they are being pushed out, and it's not just because of gentrification or inflation."

Globally, at least 150 million people, or about 2 percent of the population, are homeless, according to UN-Habitat, the UN agency for urban development and human settlements. More than a fifth of the population lacks adequate housing. With at least 55 percent of the world's population living in urban centres, homelessness is ever more apparent, from Los Angeles to Auckland.

Governments are under pressure to boost housing affordability and fix the growing problem of urban homelessness, with measures including limits on foreign buyers and more subsidized housing for the poor. Farha, an outspoken advocate for the implementation of the right to housing, said housing has become a financial instrument primarily for the benefit of investors, driving inequality in cities.

"The financialisation of housing is completely contrary to the human rights obligations of governments," she said. "You can't treat housing like any old commodity. Gold is a commodity; housing is not. It's a human right," she said in emailed comments.

Farha said she agreed to be in the documentary because it "has the capacity to reach audiences" that she would not. Gertten's previous film, Bikes vs Cars, also explored how unliveable cities are becoming for many residents. The Swede said the "commodification of housing" is forcing long-time residents to move, while leaving buildings empty in cities from London to Sydney. "Cities no longer work for the benefit of their citizens. Our neighborhoods face a threat from faceless landlords who are financial companies and developers," he said. "We need to understand what is going on to be able to talk about it and push back." — Reuters

## Jamaica seeks world heritage status for reggae

Jamaica is bidding to have reggae music admitted to a list of global cultural treasures worthy of protection, the UN's cultural agency UNESCO announced on Tuesday. Paris-based UNESCO keeps a list of so-called "intangible heritage" found around the globe, which groups together traditional cultural practices such as horse games in central Asia and pizza-making in Naples. Jamaica has asked for reggae to be added this year at a meeting of the UN agency on the island of Mauritius, where 40 proposals are set to be considered from November 26 to December 1.

So far, 399 examples of world heritage including dances, food-making practices, boat-building, games, festivals and even coaxing rituals for camels in Mongolia have been added. A successful application is largely symbolic, but can serve to raise the profile of the country and the practice. Other applications this year have been filed for the Irish game of hurling, the making of perfume in the French town of Grasse, and traditional wrestling in South Korea known as Ssireum. Reggae emerged in the late 1960s in Jamaica and quickly became a global phenomenon thanks to singers such as Bob Marley and Jimmy Cliff and the famed producer Lee "Scratch" Perry. The music, with its heavy bass lines and drums, has influenced countless artists since and spawned new sounds such as dub. — AFP



## Mexico's axolotl, a cartoon hero and genetic marvel, fights for survival

Mexico's axolotl salamander can almost magically heal itself, holding the power to regrow its heart and brain. But there is one feat it may not pull off: survive dire threats to the last wild place it calls home. Plagued by polluted water, predatory fish and the steady encroachment of one of the world's biggest megacities, the tiny amphibian steeped in mythological lore has all but disappeared from its home in the muddy canals of southern Mexico City.

Once a mainstay on the banquet tables of Aztec kings, in 1998 there were about 6,000 axolotls per square kilometer in the salamander's main redoubt, the waterways of the city's Xochimilco district, a scientific census showed. By 2004, the population had dropped to 1,000 per sq/km, and to less than 35 per sq/km a decade later. By 2020, there may be none, according to one model. Undeterred, a group of Mexican biologists have launched a rescue mission.

"Without the axolotl, Mexico would lose part of its culture and identity," said Luis Zambrano, an urban biologist at Mexico's National Autonomous University (UNAM), who leads the team behind the plan. He argues that farmers in Xochimilco known as chinamperos, who grow a wide range of produce along some 180 kilometers of canals, are crucial players in the effort to build new sanctuaries for axolotl (pronounced ah-sho-LO-tul) while promoting traditional chinampa agriculture. Chinampas are floating gardens made from dredged-up black mud slathered on reeds and tree branches once used to produce as many as seven harvests a year for staples like corn and chili peppers.

They flourished for over a thousand years in the lake that once filled the Valley of Mexico, where the Aztec imperial capital and later Mexico City would arise. Today, around 80 percent of the remaining chinampas have been abandoned as farmers seek better wages elsewhere.

Over the next decade, Zambrano aims to enroll about half of Xochimilco's chinamperos into an axolotl-friendly organic certification scheme that would allow them to charge higher prices for their crops. The university-run certification aims to launch in 2019. With a modest budget, his team is creating 20 new sanctuaries with cleaner water using filters that also keep out the non-native tilapia and carp stalking the canals.

## Genetic rock star

Modern research into the axolotl began in 1864, after a shipment of 34 arrived in Paris from Mexico. Thousands more were then bred as scientists across Europe marveled at their strange appearance and ability to breathe with both lungs and gills. Researchers later discovered that axolotls can also absorb oxygen through their skin - making them particularly vulnerable to dirty water - and regenerate amputated limbs and damaged body tissue, creating intense interest in their genes.

Earlier this year, a team of scientists in Germany said they had mapped the complete axolotl genome, revealing it to be 10 times longer than the human genome, which gives researchers more scope to pinpoint the mechanisms for regeneration.

"You can actually take a primordial piece of the tissue that's going to form its eye and transplant it into the space around the gut and the axolotl will regenerate and form a whole eye there," said Randal Voss, a University of Kentucky scientist and director of the world's largest axolotl laboratory. But whether they have a future outside the laboratory will largely depend on whether Xochimilco's booming tilapia and carp populations can be controlled.

The fish were introduced in the 1970s by the government as part of a nutrition program. But their taste for axolotl eggs and juveniles was not considered. Industrial-scale fishing earlier this year removed tons of them from Xochimilco. But the effort has run out of funding. Claudia Sheinbaum, set to take over as Mexico City's next mayor in December and herself a scientist, said in a recent interview that she wants the capital's water infrastructure overhauled, and the raw sewage that pollutes the Xochimilco canals when heavy rains overwhelm the aging pipes to be contained.—Reuters



Lifestyle | Travel



## Burgu Arjaan by Rotana named Turkey's Leading Serviced Apartments by World Travel Awards

Located in the Asian side of Istanbul, Burgu Arjaan by Rotana and Tango Arjaan by Rotana Hotels are just a few steps from the subway and have easy access to Old Town (Sultanahmet), Taksim Square, Kadikoy, Uskudar and many shopping malls in Istanbul. Hotels are also very close to Prince's Islands, Bagdat Avenue and other significant commercial, shopping and entertainment centers of the city. The nearest airport is Sabiha Gokcen Airport and only 20 kms from the property.

Burgu and Tango Arjaan by Rotana have 254 rooms that feature a kitchenette, tea and coffee machines, satel-

lite TV, IP phone, mini bar, washing and drying machine, safe box, iron utilities and free high-speed Wi-Fi internet. Certain units include a seating area for your convenience while some rooms offer sea view or city view. For your comfort, you will find bath robes and slippers. Also there is 24-hour in-room dining service.

The hotel contains 4 food and beverage outlets. Elements All Day Dining Restaurant offers unique tastes from international cuisines. In Burgu and Tango Arjaan by Rotana you can save a rich, international buffets for breakfast, lunch and dinner at Elements All Day Dining

Restaurant. Elements Bar provides a chic ambiance with its modern decor. B&T Cafe-Deli is a modern, European cafe and serving snacks, healthy salads, sandwiches, household type muffins and desserts. The Pool Bar is located by the outdoor pool, serves during the summer season.

Kids can spend time in the Flipper's Kids Club where they can have fun with various games and educational toys with trained supervisors. The hotel brings together high technology for the guests at the four different sized meeting rooms. The meeting rooms containing modern audio, visual and lighting systems provide solutions for the needs.

Bodylines Fitness & Wellness Club provides a tranquil atmosphere where guest can keep fit and rested. The Professional instructors assist the guests in the fitness center with high tech cardio, workout equipment and personal programs. The guests can also enjoy the indoor or outdoor pool, steam room and sauna.

Burgu Arjaan by Rotana has been named Turkey's Leading Serviced Apartments in 2016 and 2017 by World Travel Awards.



## Centro WestSide and WestSide Arjaan by Rotana: You will just feel at home

*The connecting stylish hotels located on Basin Express road feature 305 luxurious rooms, suites and apartments to lift the company's total inventory in Turkey to 578 keys*

Strategically located on the popular Basin Express road in the Gunesli neighbourhood of Istanbul, the economic, cultural and historic capital of Turkey, the contemporary, elegant properties are in close proximity to key landmarks in the city, including Istanbul Ataturk Airport, modern business plazas, major shopping malls and leading exhibition and convention centres.

The triangle shaped building of Centro WestSide and WestSide Arjaan by Rotana has a striking appearance and was designed by the award winning architecture firm Suyabatmaz Demirel. The building itself won the Future Project Award in 2013 at the famous MIPIM Real Estate Exhibition in Cannes, France.

Offering affordable luxury and effortless comfort, the stylish four-star deluxe hotel, Centro WestSide, features 152 rooms and suites, each catering to the needs of modern-day travellers, from individuals visiting Istanbul on business, to budget-conscious families looking to explore the city from a convenient base. Designed to suit the needs of long-stay visitors, WestSide Arjaan by Rotana offers 153 fully-furnished one and two-bedroom serviced hotel apartments for cosy living.

Opening a new world of dining, recreation and entertainment in Istanbul, the two connecting hotels boast three outstanding dining outlets, with each offering attractive outdoor seating areas that make the most of the city's

pleasant Mediterranean climate. All-day dining restaurant c.taste offers an extensive menu featuring the best of local and international cuisine, while grab-and-go casual dining concept c.deli and c.mondo, a cosy bar that is big on style and atmosphere, provide a wide choice of dining options to suit every taste and occasion. A 24-hour in-room dining service is also available.

Guests staying at the hotels can benefit from the access to Bodylines Fitness & Wellness Club which includes a modern gym and large indoor swimming pool with stunning city views. A Jacuzzi, sauna, steam and 3 treatment rooms are also available at Centro WestSide and WestSide Arjaan by Rotana for guests to relax and unwind.



## Gulf Air goes daily to Istanbul

Gulf Air, the Kingdom of Bahrain's national carrier, will introduce a permanent increase to its Istanbul service with daily flights on the route effective early November 2017. The increase is in direct response to passenger demand, increasing the number of convenient flight options offered by the airline and giving passengers greater flexibility and choice when travelling to and from Istanbul.

Last year Gulf Air celebrated the 30th anniversary of its direct, nonstop service to and from the city of Istanbul in the Republic of Turkey. Launched in 1986, Istanbul is one of the airline's main tourist destinations with growing numbers of passengers from Bahrain and the GCC throughout the year. Gulf Air's Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Captain Waleed Abdul Hameed Al Alawi, commented on this growth saying: "Gulf Air's Istanbul route performance to date has been promising with consistently strong passenger demand throughout the year. Offering our valued passengers a daily service to and from Istanbul meets their travel needs, further reinforcing the strong historic ties between Bahrain and Turkey and our airline's key role in encouraging two-way travel, trade, tourism and investment opportunities."

Operating double daily flights or more to 10 regional cities, Gulf Air provides excellent connectivity for passengers travelling to/from Istanbul with connections to various cities in the Middle East, Indian Subcontinent and Asia. The airline's network currently serves 42 cities in 25 countries spanning three continents.

Gulf Air flights can be booked online at gulfair.com, the airline's one-stop-shop website, where customers can find a suite of additional online services offering hotel bookings, car rental and travel insurance. Fare / booking queries can also be directed to the airline's 24 hour Worldwide Contact Centre on (+973) 17373737, or any Gulf Air sales offices and approved travel agencies.





## Lifestyle | Features

# Roots and shoots: China seeks new markets for ancient medicines

A crowd gathers at a Shanghai hospital, queuing for remedies made with plant mixtures and animal parts including scorpions and freeze-dried millipedes—medicines that China hopes will find an audience overseas. With a history going back 2,400 years, traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) is deeply rooted in the country and remains popular despite access to Western pharmaceuticals. Now the authorities are hoping to modernize and export the remedies, but they face major obstacles. A veritable forest of medicinal plants surrounds patients waiting at Yueyang Hospital's pharmacy. Some leave with boxes of pills, others take away plastic sachets filled with herbal extracts.

Lin Hongguo, a 76-year-old pensioner, has bought herbal remedies that he will boil to make a tea to treat his "slow beating heart." "I prefer it to Western medicines. It's not about the cost, it's because it works well," he told AFP. Another patient, pet fish seller Wang Deyun, 51, is also a believer. "Two months ago my skin had an allergic reaction to a modern medicine for high blood pressure," she said from her hospital bed. But after a treatment of face masks

and plant infusions, she said she's almost fully healed.

## Painting vs photography

Traditional medicine is subsidized in China and is cheaper than Western medicine. It consistently makes up one quarter of the country's pharmaceuticals market—even as China increasingly opens up to modern medicine. The World Health Organization will next year include a chapter on traditional medicine in its "International Classification of Diseases"—a tome of reference for medical trends and global health statistics. China hopes the WHO inclusion will spur global recognition of its traditional remedies as it seeks to export them.

But Beijing still faces significant hurdles, not least the fact that TCM focuses on tailoring treatment to each individual, which means different people with the same condition can be prescribed different medicines and dosages. "It's like a painting—it's composed differently each time, while Western medicine is more similar to photography" with its standardized products, said Wang Zhenyi, a proctologist at Yueyang Hospital.



A woman mixing medicine in the pharmacy of the Yueyang Hospital.



A woman mixing medicine in the pharmacy of the Yueyang Hospital, part of the Shanghai University of Traditional Chinese Medicine, in Shanghai. — AFP photos



A woman sorting medicine in the pharmacy of the Yueyang Hospital.

That is the crux of China's challenge in gaining overseas acceptance: its traditional medicine is largely incompatible with modern clinical trials which require an identical product to be tested on a large number of patients. As these medicines typically contain dozens of ingredients, understanding how they work together and proving their effectiveness is a complex task. Even within China there have been public skirmishes over the efficacy of TCM, pitting its proponents against doctors who advocate evidence-based, peer-reviewed medicine.

Conservationists also say growing demand for products like rhino horn and pangolin scales—which are used by some practitioners even though they have no proven medical properties—have decimated vulnerable species. China partially lifted a ban on trading tiger bones and rhino horns last month despite warnings from conservationists, though state media later quoted an official saying the change had been "postponed".

Chinese experts say endangered animal parts are increasingly being replaced by synthetic versions, but TCM may still prove a tough sell abroad. "I think the best potential is in the consumer market, such as nutritional supplements," said Tony Ren, a pharma analyst with Kim Eng Securities in Hong Kong.

## AI to the rescue

Few Western pharmaceutical companies are keen to try to untangle these difficulties. But French biotech

company Pharnext has taken on the challenge, partnering last year with Tasly, one of China's biggest producers of traditional medicines. Together, they are looking to transform the industry by streamlining "the procedures to have a more stable production of plants which have identical properties and understand why the mixture works", said Daniel Cohen, founder and CEO of Pharnext.

The two companies are using artificial intelligence to understand how the medicines work as they look to standardize them, he added. They face an uphill battle. In the United States, Tasly has been trying for more than 20 years to get approval for Dantonic, an angina medicine based on sage and ginseng that was legalized in China in 1993. Though the firm has completed medical trials, it has come up hard against US law, which does not allow treatments composed of different plants. But Chinese medical professionals still feel the quest for acceptance abroad is worth the effort. "Medicine is still a very young science, with many unknowns. You increase your ability to heal if you know both Western and Chinese medicine," said proctologist Wang of Yueyang hospital. "It's the result that counts." — AFP

## Glamour embraces digital, drops regular print edition

Glamour, the fashion and beauty magazine popular with young women, is ditching its monthly print editions and embracing the online revolution, its chief editor and publishers Conde Nast announced Tuesday. As Conde Nast navigates choppy waters for print media, Glamour's 37-year-old editor-in-chief Samantha Barry announced the change in an email to staff, saying that special print editions would still be released. "We're going to move off of a monthly print schedule, but please know this does not mean we are ceasing print entirely," she wrote. "We're going to use print the way our audiences do—to celebrate big moments, like Women of the Year, with special issues that are ambitious, lush and have longevity," she added.

The focus on digital investment will expand the magazine's video and social story telling. It comes after the Conde Nast empire—which includes glossies Vanity Fair and Vogue, and which reportedly lost \$120 million last year—has already scrapped regular print editions for Teen Vogue and Self. Rival publishing company Hearst also announced recently that its magazine Seventeen would cut down its print editions to special editions only. "In print we reach two million readers, but when you look at our digital footprint, we reach 20 million Glamour fans," wrote Barry.

She said audience traffic was up 12 percent year-on-year at the magazine's website, with social engagement up 27 percent year-on-year and YouTube followers up 111 percent year-on-year. Online access to Glamour will remain free, for now. Barry, an Irish digital journalist, took over at Glamour in January. The magazine, which first launched in the United States as Glamour of Hollywood in 1939, is on the cusp of celebrating its 80th year. "This is my plan, because it makes sense," Barry told The New York Times in an interview.

"It's where the audiences are, and it's where our growth is. That monthly schedule, for a Glamour audience, doesn't make sense anymore."

Barry was previously head of social media at CNN. Bob Sauerberg, chief executive of Conde Nast, gave her his full backing. "Glamour has grown and expanded from a successful print brand that connected with readers once a month to an always-on brand that is in constant conversation with its audience on all platforms," he wrote to staff. "That's today's Glamour—connecting with women wherever they are." — AFP



In this file photo Glamour Editor-in-Chief Samantha Barry attends the 2018 Glamour Women Of The Year Awards: Women Rise in New York City. — AFP

## The modern artists for whom the ancient Dutch bells toll

When a musical legend dies, a tribute can often be heard ringing out from the most unexpected of places: the tallest church tower in the Netherlands. Days after French crooner Charles Aznavour's death last month, the strains of his 1963 hit "For me, formidable" could be heard from the Domtoren (Dom Tower) in the central student city of Utrecht. An alert passer-by recorded the unusual ringing of the bells and posted the clip on Twitter. It soon went viral, shared by countless Aznavour fans around the world.

Behind the unique musical send-off was Malgosia Fiebig, who, high up in the centuries-old tower, perched between the bells of an organ-like instrument called a carillon, was doing what she has done for other popular artists on their death. Whitney Houston, Prince, David Bowie and even Swedish superstar DJ Avicii all received similar musical nods from 43-year-old Fiebig, the Domtoren's first woman carillonneur in more than three centuries. "When a musician dies, I play a sort of tribute," Fiebig told AFP, before demonstrating how she knocks out tunes on the carillon's wooden keyboard, tucked in a room

between the bells, some 80 meters (262 feet) above the ground. "On the radio we also hear more songs of the artist that died. I can react very fast... and am able to play these songs within a few days. I do it often," Polish-born Fiebig said.

## 'Language of music'

Appointed in 2011 as Utrecht's 17th city carillonneur since 1623, Fiebig shot to national fame when she played tribute songs to Dick Bruna, the Utrecht-born creator of Miffy the cartoon rabbit, after Bruna died early last year. The tributes "are a little for me, but also for people walking in the street. I hope that they will hear the music and they will make a connection: 'Oh yes, yeah that's that song'," she said. "A carillon is of course the number one instrument to play during actual events," said Christiaan Winter, chairman of the Dutch national carillonneur center in central Alkmaar. "It's an instrument that can inform an entire city centre—through the language of music—of something that's going on," he told AFP.

Fiebig however is the first to admit that it's not always easy playing modern pop music on an instrument that dates back to 1664 and consists of 50 bells of various sizes. Carillons are often hundreds of years old and originally evolved from the lowlands of Belgium, France and the Netherlands, where the first instrument was installed in 1652.

## 'Very physical activity'

Today, there are more than 600 carillons around the world—including in countries ranging from Brazil to Japan, the United States, New Zealand and South Africa. The instrument has a number of bronze bells—some weighing as much as two tons—bolted to wooden beams and does not move like normal church bells during a performance. Instead, a small iron ball called a "clapper" is connected via a steel cable to a wooden keyboard played by the carillonneur, who strikes the keys with a closed fist, a "very physical activity", said Fiebig. As the keys are played, the clapper hits the inside of the bell and a sound is produced. There are also pedal keys for the heavier bells and a carillonneur can "hit" up to six bells at once to create a unique sound.

## 'A cool instrument'

Not every tune lends itself to be played on a carillon. "A song like Prince's 'Purple Rain' for instance works well, while another of his songs, 'Kiss', absolutely doesn't. It's impossible to create funk on a carillon," Fiebig laughed. The last seven years have been a labor of love for Fiebig—who also plays the carillon in nearby Nijmegen—to make an ancient instrument more accessible to modern audiences. Together with two fellow musicians playing keyboards, she has given concerts featuring music as diverse as 1970s pop supergroup ABBA, to songs by British rock legends Pink Floyd and Radiohead.

"I feel playing pop music reaches a big group of people. We want to make them aware... that a carillon is a cool instrument," she said. But for Fiebig, who grew up in Poland partly before the fall of communism in 1989, Charles Aznavour will always have a special place in her heart. "I love French chanson. I don't speak any French so I don't understand any of the words," she said. "But for years I was listening on the Polish radio to a program playing French songs." When Aznavour died in early October aged 94, "it was a quick decision. Within a few days, I chose three songs and I played them on a Friday afternoon." "Somebody grabbed a phone and recorded it. And it went viral," said Fiebig. —AFP



Polish carillon player Malgosia Fiebig poses next to the wires of the carillon at the Dom Tower.



Polish carillon player Malgosia Fiebig poses next to a bell at the Dom Tower.



Polish carillon player Malgosia Fiebig poses next to the keyboard of the carillon at the Dom Tower in Utrecht. — AFP photos

## Flagging Victoria's Secret announces new lingerie CEO

US lingerie giant Victoria's Secret announced Monday that it had appointed fashion executive John Mehas as new lingerie CEO, hoping to boost its ailing fortunes. Mehas will take over in the New Year, replacing Jan Singer, who resigned with the brand under fire for slumping sales, idealized glamazonian femininity and reluctance to put larger and transgender models on the catwalk. His appointment was announced as Victoria's Secret parent company L Brands reported third-quarter results with a net loss of \$42.8 million compared to net income of \$86 million last year. "Our number one priority is improving performance," said L Brands chairman and chief executive officer Leslie Wexner. "Our new leaders are coming in with a fresh perspective and looking at everything... our marketing, brand positioning, internal talent, real estate portfolio and cost structure," he added.

"I am confident that, under John's leadership, Victoria's Secret Lingerie... will continue to be a powerhouse and will deliver products and experiences that resonate with women around the globe." Mehas comes to Victoria's Secret, the lingerie market leader in the United States, from Tory Burch, where he is currently president. He previously led Club Monaco for 13 years as president and CEO. He has also worked at The Gap and the department store chain Bloomingdale's.



In this file photo President and Chief Executive Officer of Club Monaco, John Mehas attends the opening celebration of Club Monaco's Fifth Avenue Flagship at Club Monaco Fifth Avenue in New York City. — AFP

Victoria's Secret marketing director Ed Razek provoked uproar on social media for telling Vogue that there was no need for transgender or plus-size models in this year's fashion show.

"No, I don't think we should. Well, why not? Because the show is a fantasy. It's a 42-minute entertainment special," he said. Razek subsequently issued a public apology. Victoria's Secret hired some of the world's most famous models and filmed their annual fashion show in New York on November 8. It will be aired globally next month. In the United States, the show provoked ire for its uniform use of slender models at a time when US women feel increasingly empowered by the #MeToo movement and with lingerie brands that promote all shapes and sizes—such as Rihanna's new Savage X Fenty line—making inroads.

Heidi Zak, co-CEO of one such rival brand, ThirdLove, published an open letter in The New York Times saying she was "appalled" by Razek's "demeaning comments." "You market to men, and sell a male fantasy to women," she said. "Women wear bras in real life as they go to work, breastfeed their children, play sports, care for ailing parents and serve their country," she wrote. "Haven't we moved beyond outdated ideas of femininity and gender roles? It's time to stop telling women what makes them sexy—let us decide!" — AFP



# Classifieds

Thursday, November 22, 2018

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 Fax: (+965) 24348714  
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## Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

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

**BY NIGHT:** Cool with light variable wind, with speed of 06 - 20 km/h.

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings		
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 21/11/2018 0000 UTC		
KUWAIT CITY	23 °C	17 °C			
KUWAIT AIRPORT	23 °C	13 °C			
ABDALY	23 °C	12 °C			
BUBYAN	-- °C	-- °C			
JAHRA	23 °C	15 °C			
FAILAKA ISLAND	22 °C	15 °C			
SALMIYAH	22 °C	18 °C			
AHMADI	22 °C	16 °C			
NUWASIB	24 °C	14 °C			
WAFRA	22 °C	13 °C			
SALMY	20 °C	11 °C			

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Thursday	11/22	Clouds will increase gradually with a chance for scattered rain at night	22 °C	13 °C	VRB-SE	08 - 30 km/h
Friday	11/23	Unstable weather with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times	20 °C	16 °C	SE	20 - 55 km/h
Saturday	11/24	Unstable weather with a chance for thunder rain at times	22 °C	17 °C	SE	20 - 50 km/h
Sunday	11/25	Unstable weather with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times	23 °C	17 °C	S-SE	20 - 50 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	04:54
Sunrise	06:16
Zuhr	11:34
Asr	14:31
Sunset	16:51
Isha	18:11

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	22 °C
MIN. Temp.	15 °C
MAX. RH	96 %
MIN. RH	47 %
MAX. Wind	NW 43 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

## Hospitals

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

## Clinics

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

**ACCOMMODATION**  
 lady in Salmiya, Block-10, Street-10 (near Garden).  
 Contact: 51177342 (C 5430)  
 20-11-2018

Sharing accommodation  
 For Filipino ONLY Farwaniya block 1, near gulfmart.  
 Available 25 of November,  
 Contact 94418396 or 69972330

Sharing accommodation  
 available for decent  
 Christian bachelor / single

## EMERGENCY

112

## Airlines

Kuwait Airways	171
Jazeera Airways	177
Wataniya Airways	22 066 536
Turkish Airlines	1884918
American Airlines	22087425
Jet Airways	22087426
FlyDubai	22924455
Qatar Airways	22414400
KLM	22423888
Royal Jordanian	22425747
British Airways	22418064/5/6
Air France	22425635
Emirates	22430224
Air India	22921555
Sri Lanka Airlines	22438184
Egypt Air	22424444
Swiss Air	22421578
Saudia	22421516
Middle East Airlines	22426306
Lufthansa	22423073
PIA	22422493
Bangladesh Airlines	22421044
Indian Airlines	22452977/8
Oman Air	22456700
Turkish Airlines	22958787
Aeroflot	22453820/1
	22404838/9

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

Arrival Flights on Thursday 22/11/2018				Departure Flights on Thursday 22/11/2018			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
JZR	254	Amman	00:05	JZR	103	Bahrain	14:40
JAI	572	Mumbai	00:15	IAW	158A	Al Najaf	14:55
KAC	503	Beirut	00:45	IAW	158B	Al Najaf	14:55
THY	772	Istanbul	00:50	QTR	1079	Doha	15:00
KAC	102	London	00:50	KNE	382	Taif	15:00
JZR	734	Cairo	00:50	KAC	661	Abu Dhabi	15:00
PGT	858	Istanbul	00:55	IRA	666	Esfahan	15:10
DLH	625	Dammam	01:25	FDB	060	Dubai	15:10
RJA	642	Amman	01:35	JZR	125	Dubai	15:15
UAE	853	Dubai	01:45	GFA	222	Bahrain	15:25
THY	764	Istanbul	01:50	FDB	8066	Dubai	15:40
IGO	1757	Kochi	01:55	KAC	673	Dubai	15:40
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	SVA	501	Jeddah	15:45
JZR	722	Alexandria	02:15	KAC	775	Riyadh	15:50
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30	KNE	530	Jeddah	15:55
KLM	446	Bahrain	02:30	KAC	615	Bahrain	16:05
QTR	1086	Doha	02:40	KAC	563	Amman	16:10
OMA	643	Muscat	02:55	KAC	619	Doha	16:10
KKK	1268	Istanbul	02:55	ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:05	OMA	646	Muscat	16:35
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	KAC	785	Jeddah	16:40
QTR	1076	Doha	04:00	JZR	261	Beirut	16:40
LMU	510	Cairo	04:00	ABY	128	Sharjah	16:45
IGO	1751	Chennai	04:10	SAW	706	Dammam	17:00
KAC	418	Manila	04:25	KAC	675	Dubai	17:05
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:30	KAC	503	Beirut	17:15
DHX	170	Bahrain	04:35	KAC	691	Muscat	17:15
FDB	069	Dubai	05:00	FDB	052	Dubai	17:40
KAC	382	Delhi	05:05	UAE	858	Dubai	17:45
KAC	1544	Cairo	05:10	KAC	283	Dhaka	17:45
JZR	404	Hyderabad	05:10	FEG	242	Alexandria	17:55
THY	770	Istanbul	05:10	QTR	1073	Doha	18:00
JZR	112	Doha	05:25	KAC	331	Trivandrum	18:00
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:40	KAC	343	Chennai	18:00
KAC	344	Chennai	05:50	JZR	733	Cairo	18:10
JZR	402	Mumbai	06:05	SVA	511	Riyadh	18:15
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:10	GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
KAC	362	Colombo	06:10	KNE	532	Jeddah	18:20
KAC	302	Mumbai	06:10	KAC	621	Doha	18:25
KAC	678	Dubai	06:55	JZR	127	Dubai	18:35
BAW	157	London	07:05	JZR	403	Hyderabad	18:40
JZR	708	Luxor	07:15	JZR	253	Amman	18:40
QTR	8511	Doha	07:35	KAC	381	Delhi	18:55
KAC	206	Islamabad	07:35	FDB	064	Dubai	19:20
KAC	354	Bengaluru	07:35	JZR	721	Alexandria	19:20
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	UAE	876	Dubai	19:30
KAC	384	Delhi	08:00	MSR	621	Cairo	19:30
KAC	358	Kochi	08:05	QTR	1081	Doha	19:55
UAE	855	Dubai	08:35	RJA	641	Amman	20:00
MSC	411	Asyut	09:00	RBG	556	Alexandria	20:05
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	09:05	ABY	124	Sharjah	20:05
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:05	GFA	218	Bahrain	20:15
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	NIA	162	Doha	20:30
QTR	1070	Doha	09:45	FDB	058	Dubai	20:35
IAW	157	Al Najaf	09:55	KNE	232	Riyadh	20:50
SVA	512	Riyadh	10:00	KAC	301	Mumbai	20:55
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	JZR	401	Mumbai	20:55
IRA	675	Lar	10:50	KAC	357	Kochi	21:00
SYR	341	Damascus	11:00	OMA	648	Muscat	21:20
JZR	116	Doha	11:10	DLH	624	Dammam	21:30
JZR	122	Dubai	11:20	DHX	171	Bahrain	21:50
QTR	1074	Doha	11:35	QTR	1089	Doha	22:00
JZR	216	Jeddah	11:45	ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	22:10
MEA	404	Beirut	11:55	KAC	1543	Cairo	22:15
KAC	614	Bahrain	12:25	KAC	203	Lahore	22:20
JZR	252	Amman	12:30	MEA	403	Beirut	22:25
JZR	714	Sohag	12:35	ALK	230	Colombo	22:25
UAE	871	Dubai	12:50	GFA	220	Bahrain	22:30
KAC	742	Dammam	12:50	KAC	383	Delhi	22:30
ABY	121	Sharjah	12:55	KLM	445	Bahrain	22:50
MSR	610	Cairo	13:10	KAC	783	Jeddah	22:55
AXB	393	Kozhikode	13:15	UAE	860	Dubai	23:00
QTR	1078	Doha	13:35	MSC	406	Sohag	23:00
IAW	157B	Al Najaf	13:55	JAI	573	Mumbai	23:00
IAW	157A	Al Najaf	13:55	ETD	310	Abu Dhabi	23:05
KAC	774	Riyadh	14:00	RBG	214	Sohag	23:10
KAC	792	Madinah	14:05	QTR	1083	Doha	23:20
KNE	231	Riyadh	14:10				



# Ceasefire puts Qatar role in Gaza back in spotlight

GAZA CITY: At the end of a dirt track, an imposing new court complex stands as a symbol of Qatar's investment in the Gaza Strip - back in the spotlight after a controversial ceasefire with Israel. The Palace of Justice's construction in Gaza is only the latest project financed by Qatar, whose involvement in the Palestinian enclave contributed to an Israeli political crisis in recent days that almost brought down the government.

Israeli Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman resigned on Nov 14 over a ceasefire that ended the worst escalation between Israel and Palestinian militants in Gaza since a 2014 war. When announcing his resignation, he called the ceasefire "capitulating to terror," but also criticized recent aid to the blockaded Gaza Strip from Qatar that was approved by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Earlier this month, Qatar delivered \$15 million in suitcases to pay civil servants' salaries in the Hamas-run Gaza Strip, the first of six such planned payments for a total of \$90 million. Qatar has also been providing Gaza with fuel deliveries - again, approved by Netanyahu - to ease a severe electricity shortage. Criticism by the hawkish Lieberman is unlikely to affect Qatar's involvement in Gaza, some experts say. "Qatar's role in Gaza is of strategic importance to Israel as it allows the Jewish state to cooperate with Doha, while strengthening ties with an Arab Gulf state with whom it does not enjoy formal diplomatic relations," said Sigurd Neubauer, a Middle East analyst based in Washington.

## 'Streets are nice'

Engagement in Gaza has been a crucial pillar of Qatari foreign policy for some time. Qatar and Hamas share links with Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood, but its reasons for supporting the Gaza Strip go beyond that. "The Palestinian issue remains important for all countries that want to play a role in the region," said Jamal Al-Fadi, a political science professor in Gaza. Deep-pocketed Qatar, backed by huge gas resources, has provided support amounting to hundreds of millions of dollars to the enclave, where UN officials have repeatedly warned over deteriorating humanitarian conditions.

Projects include roads running along the seafront and from north to south as well as the court complex inaugurated in September. At the entrance to the Al-Thani Hospital in Gaza City, portraits of the amir of Qatar and his father remind visitors who paid for it. Further south in Khan Younis, Qatar has built a neighborhood of 3,000 homes, called Hamad City, named for the former amir. Gardens, schools and a mosque have been constructed amidst the new buildings. "Before, my son's house was 70 metres squared," Aitaf Awda said. Now seven of her family members live in a home 130 sq m. "We have a garden, the streets are nice," she said. "The children aren't stuck in the house anymore." Nearby, a shop across from the mosque is called "Thank You Qatar".

The latest statement from Doha's foreign ministry talks about "its continued support to the brotherly Palestinian people". Hamas leaders have found refuge in Qatar, including former chief Khaled Meshaal, while some 100,000 Palestinians live there. Beyond playing a role in a key regional cause, Doha has sought to position itself as a valuable asset to Western powers seeking progress between Israel and the Palestinians. "Qatar has always



GAZA: Palestinian women and children sit together on a lawn in a courtyard between new Qatari-built residential units in Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip on Nov 20, 2018. —AFP

seen the Palestinian issue, and specifically being a link to Hamas, as a way in which it can be useful to the Americans," said Tobias Borch, an associate fellow with the London-based RUSI think tank.

That useful role continues, Neubauer says, with the close personal relationship between Mohammed al-Emadi, who runs Qatar's humanitarian support for Gaza, and Jared Kushner, the White House adviser and President Donald Trump's son-in-law. "Qatar has coordinated its work in Gaza with Israel and the United States and is seen as a trusted partner," says Kristian Ulrichsen, a fellow at Rice University's Baker Institute.

The policy brings risks though. In June 2017, when Qatar found itself at the center of a diplomatic confrontation with its neighbors, its relationship with Hamas, designated a terrorist organization by the European Union and the United States, came under intense scrutiny. "When Trump came to office, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia saw it as an opportunity to bring down the government of Qatar," said Neubauer. "The message they brought to Trump officials was that Qatar was supporting Hamas, in other words, it was supporting terrorism." Although the White House appeared to back the extremist-supporting claims against Qatar in the fevered days of June last year, Doha now seems to have convinced Washington its role is crucial in restraining Hamas. —AFP

his third since his arrest. Hedges's wife Daniela Tejada, who had campaigned vigorously for his release, said the court ruling showed that the UAE was not a genuine ally. "They say that the UAE is an ally, but the overwhelmingly arbitrary handling of Matt's case indicates a scarily different reality, for which Matt and I are being made to pay a devastatingly high price."

Tejada was in court for the sentencing. "This has been the worst six months of my life, let alone for Matt who was shaking when he heard the verdict," she said. "The UAE authorities should feel ashamed for such an obvious injustice. I am very scared for Matt. I don't know where they are taking him or what will happen now. Our nightmare has gotten even worse." She had previously expressed concern for his safety, saying he was being held in solitary confinement at an undisclosed location with limited access to the British consulate and his family.

Tejada was deeply critical of the British government over the failure of its discreet, behind-the-scenes diplomacy in the case. "Matthew is innocent. The Foreign Office know this and have made it clear to the UAE authorities that Matthew is not a spy for them. This whole case has been handled appallingly from the very beginning with no one taking Matthew's case seriously," she said. "The British government must take a stand now for Matthew, one of their citizens."

Durham University in northern England, where Hedges was studying for his PhD, said it was "devastated" to learn of his sentence. Vice-Chancellor Stuart Corbridge said the judgment had been "delivered in the absence of anything resembling due process or a fair trial". "There has been no information given on what basis Matt was handed this sentence and no reason to believe that Matt was conducting anything other than legitimate academic research," Corbridge said in a statement. UAE attorney general Hamad Al-Shamsi said earlier this month that Hedges was accused of "spying for a foreign country, jeopardizing the military, political and economic security of the state". —AFP

Since early November the desert state of Kuwait has received about 300 mm of rain - almost three times its annual average rainfall - which has caused widespread damage to residential zones. The flooding of desert areas has come at the start of the camping season, when hundreds of thousands of Kuwaitis set up modern camps for around four months.

After waiting to enjoy the beautiful and usually uninhabited desert areas, some campers are refusing to heed the warnings. "A majority of my relatives and neighbors are camping," Yousef Abdullah told AFP. "No one is backing down because of fear from mines... We impatiently wait for the camping season," he added. Shutaily however said that over the past two days, authorities have removed 36 camps and warned 60 others. — Agencies

## Isolated Indian island tribe kill American intruder

PORT BLAIR, India: Members of one of the world's last tribes untouched by modern civilization have killed an American who ventured illegally onto their remote island, Indian police said yesterday. John Allen Chau, 27, was hit by a hail of arrows as he set foot on North Sentinel Island, part of the Indian Andaman Islands, last Saturday, official sources told AFP. "He was attacked by arrows but he continued walking. The fishermen saw the tribals tying a rope around his neck and dragging his body," the source said. "They were scared and fled but returned next morning to find his body on the seashore."

North Sentinel is home to the Sentinelese people, believed to number only around 150. To protect their way of life, foreigners and Indians are banned from going within five kilometres. Chau had offered local fishermen money to take him to the island, the source said. They took him some of the way and he paddled the rest in a canoe. Some Indian media suggested that Chau was a missionary seeking to convert the islanders to Christianity but a local policeman told the News Minute website this was inaccurate. "He was on a misplaced adventure in (a) prohibited area to meet uncontacted persons," Dependra Pathak told the website.

Media reports also said the fishermen told a preacher in the main town of the Andamans, Port Blair, about the incident and the preacher contacted Chau's family in the United States. A spokesperson for the US consulate in the southern Indian city of Chennai told AFP only that they were aware of "reports concerning a US citizen in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands".

The Andamans are also home to the 400-strong

Jarawa tribe who activists say are threatened by contact from outsiders. Tourists have previously bribed local officials in a bid to spend time with them. But the Sentinelese still shun all contact with the outside world and have a record of hostility to anyone who tries to get close. In 2006, two Indian fishermen who moored their boat to sleep were killed when the vessel broke loose and drifted onto North Sentinel, according to Survival International, a group protecting tribal people's rights.

The Sentinelese hunt and gather in the forest, and fish in the coastal waters. The island was hit by the devastating 2004 tsunami that swept across the Indian Ocean but not much is known about the impact it had on the reclusive inhabitants. After the tsunami one member of the tribe was photographed attempting to fire an arrow at an Indian Coast Guard helicopter. Indian authorities make periodic checks on the tribe from boats anchored at a safe distance from shore.

Survival International, based in London, said that the "tragedy" of the American's death "should never have been allowed to happen". "The Indian authorities should have been enforcing the protection of the Sentinelese and their island for the safety of both the tribe and outsiders," it said. "Instead, a few months ago the authorities lifted one of the restrictions that had been protecting the Sentinelese tribe's island from foreign tourists, which sent exactly the wrong message, and may have contributed to this terrible event."

Since the Indian authorities keep away from the island, it was unclear whether Chau's killing will have legal repercussions. Indian police said a murder case had been registered against "unknown" tribespeople and that six fishermen and one other person were arrested. "The investigation in this matter is on," senior police officer Deepak Yadav said in a press release. Police official Pathak said the authorities were consulting "anthropologists and tribal welfare experts" to work out how best to retrieve the victim's body. — AFP

## UAE sentences British student...

Continued from Page 1

Hedges was researching the UAE's foreign and internal security policies after the Arab Spring revolutions of 2011, studies that Britain insisted were entirely innocuous but which the UAE said threatened its political and economic security. British Prime Minister Theresa May said she was "deeply disappointed and concerned" at the verdict. "We will continue to press this matter at the highest level with the Emiratis," she told parliament.

British Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt said he was "deeply shocked" by the UAE court's decision and warned of repercussions. "Today's verdict is not what we expect from a friend and trusted partner of the United Kingdom and runs contrary to earlier assurances," he said. "The handling of this case... will have repercussions for the relationship between our two countries, which has to be built on trust. "I regret the fact that we have reached this position and I urge the UAE to reconsider," he added.

Hunt said he had personally raised the case at the highest levels of the UAE government, including during a visit to Abu Dhabi on Nov 12. The case comes with relations already tested by the UAE's heavy involvement alongside Saudi Arabia in a military coalition battling Yemeni rebels since March 2015. The deployment of Emirati ground troops, trainers and advisers alongside government forces advancing on the lifeline rebel-held port of Hodeida has prompted calls for Britain to halt or place conditions on its huge arms sales to the UAE.

Hedges' temporary release on bail on Oct 29 had raised a glimmer of hope in his case but he was constantly monitored until yesterday's court hearing, only

## Rain victims can file claims from Sunday...

Continued from Page 1

Iraqi troops, under former president Saddam Hussein, invaded and occupied Kuwait on Aug 2, 1990 before they were evicted seven months later by a US-led international coalition. But before that, Kuwaiti authorities say Iraqis planted some two million mines mostly in the desert. Through multibillion-dollar contracts, Kuwait removed some 1.65 million mines, leaving behind 350,000 others.

## Trump thanks Saudi Arabia...

Continued from Page 1

Corker and the senior Democrat on the committee, Bob Menendez, demanded that the Trump administra-

## Indian man raped, killed...

Continued from Page 1

money, and abduct them. Boken quoted him as having told police. The man, who was arrested in Jhansi in Uttar Pradesh state, committed his last crime in Gurugram while visiting his sister in the same slum area

## MP warns govt over granting citizenship...

Continued from Page 1

In another development, head of the Assembly's priorities committee MP Salah Khorshid said yesterday the panel will withdraw the draft law for the mega project for the Silk Road and islands' development, adding the bill will be replaced by Kuwait's 2035 vision. Khorshid said the committee will add a number of new draft laws to its agenda like bills on bankruptcy, tenders, privatization and others.

tion issue a clear statement on whether Prince Mohammed was involved. Another prominent Republican, Senator Rand Paul, added: "Let's put America first, not Saudi Arabia." Secretary of State Mike Pompeo pushed back in a radio interview yesterday, saying: "We are going to make sure that America always stands for human rights. We've watched the Saudis actually move in that direction during our time in office as well. It's not an unblemished record, but there certainly have been steps forward." — AFP

where the victim lived, police said.

Indian newspapers often carry reports of brutal rapes and murders, many involving children, despite the adoption this year of tougher laws, some of which provide for capital punishment for the rape of children younger than 12. "It is very unfortunate that such cases are still happening in India, despite the government framing a law and approving the death penalty for rape," said Priti Mahara, an official of child rights organization CRY. "The police, government officials and society at large need to support the victims and their families." — Reuters

Rapporteur of the public funds defense committee MP Abdulwahab Al-Babtain said the panel yesterday discussed a number of issues on its agenda and asked the Audit Bureau to provide it with new information and dates on several issues. Babtain said that there are 33 issues on the panel's agenda, 20 of which are under study and research and will be considered during the committee's next meeting. He said 10 other issues have been completed in the previous terms, while the committee will soon start discussing the remaining three issues.

A number of MPs meanwhile demanded in a letter to the Assembly to give priority to debate a number of important issues in the Assembly's next session.

These issues include a draft law to ban taking interest on loans offered by the social security agency and a proposal to set up a special agency for managing crises.



## Sports

# Kuwait wins five medals in Arab Shooting Championship in Doha

Hamad Al-Namashan, Saad Al-Ajmi and Ali Al-Mutairi wins gold



DOHA: Kuwait on Tuesday won five medals in women and men teams and individuals in the fourth day of the 14th Arab Shooting Championship, which features more than 200 athletes representing 10 Arab countries.

Kuwaiti shooter Turki Al-Shammari won the gold medal in the 50m rifle individual men's competition, while the Omani Ibrahim Al-Muqbali came second and Hamad Al-Khattari was third. In the same com-

petition at the teams level, Kuwait - Turki Al-Shammari, Abdullah Al-Harbi, and Khaled Abdulmajed - won the gold medal, while Oman got the silver and Qatar the bronze.

In the (10 meters air pistol teams) competition, Kuwait's Hamad Al-Namashan, Saad Al-Ajmi and Ali Al-Mutairi won the gold medal, Oman came second, and Jordan came in third place. Kuwaiti shooter Hamad

Al-Namashan won the bronze medal in the men's 10m pistol individuals, while Ismail Al-Abri of Oman came first and Kuwait's Ali Al-Mutairi was second. In the competition of 10m air rifle, the Kuwaiti team made up of Abdullah Al-Harbi and Mariam Erzuqi ranked second and silver medal while Oman came in first place and the Qatari team in third place. For his part, the head of the Kuwaiti delegation and the secretary-gen-

eral of the Kuwaiti and Arab Shooting Federation Obaid Al-Osaimi expressed to KUNA his pride of the results achieved by the Kuwaiti men and women during the tournament.

Al-Osaimi noted that such championships aim to enhance the confidence of our athletes in the game, especially as most of them have great achievements, whether Asian or global. — KUNA

## Alghanim Industries participates in Fifth Gulf Bank 642 Marathon

KUWAIT: More than 400 employees from Alghanim Industries, one of the largest privately owned companies in the region, participated in the fifth edition of the Gulf Bank 642 Marathon.

The event, which was held over the past weekend, saw attendance of more than 7,500 participants from 68 countries, who participated in the race's four different categories. For this edition of the 642 Marathon, Gulf Bank collaborated with the Kuwait Red Crescent Society to bring medical aid to those who are unable to afford medical treatment. All donations made from the marathon registration fees will go towards the provision of medical devices such as pacemakers, cochlear devices, hearing aids, electric wheelchairs and stents. Alghanim Industries covered the registration fees of all its participants as part of its commitment to engage with employees in activities that promote health and wellbeing.

Commenting on the company's participation in the event, Chief Human Resources Officer at Alghanim Industries, Henning Schlutt, said: "We are happy to partner with different organizations around the year to promote the health and wellbeing of our employees. Our company promotes a healthy lifestyle, and we always encourage our employees to participate in



Alghanim Industries employees at the marathon.

such events and engage with one another. We are also very honored to contribute through our participation in this event to the activities of the Kuwait Red Crescent Society, with whom we have a long-standing partnership to help the underprivileged."

The event kicked off on Saturday morning from Souq Sharq, and included four different categories, at different difficulty levels, for those looking to run or walk. The categories were: 5km family fun run for beginners; a 10km for amateur runners, an advanced

21km half marathon, and the 42km full marathon.

Alghanim Industries regularly holds employee engagement activities, ranging from awareness to networking events. These include blood drives in collaboration with the Kuwait Central Blood Bank (KCBB), breast cancer awareness campaigns in collaboration with different entities, in addition to charity runs and marathons, in which the company funds the registration fees for employees interested in participating.

## Vonn to miss start of final season with knee injury

WASHINGTON: Alpine skiing legend Lindsey Vonn will miss the start of her farewell season on the World Cup circuit due to a knee injury the American picked up in training, the 34-year-old said on Twitter on Tuesday.

The news comes as a setback in her quest to become the most prolific World Cup winner in history. Vonn's 82 career victories leaving her four short of Swede Ingemar Stenmark's record haul.

"Yesterday I crashed training Super-G and hurt my knee," Vonn tweeted on her verified account. "The good news: I do NOT need surgery. The bad news: I won't be able to race in Lake Louise. "LL (Lake Louise) has always been my favorite stop on the WC (World Cup) and I am devastated to not be coming this year." Vonn was referring to the World Cup downhill and Super G races to be held at the Canadian resort on Saturday and Sunday.

The series shifts to Beaver Creek in Colorado the following weekend, before heading to Europe for the rest of the season. Vonn did not indicate the exact nature of her injury, or how long she expected to be out of action. The Colorado resident has made 392 career World Cup starts and more than half of her wins (43) have been in the downhill, followed by 28 in Super G, five in the combined, four in giant slalom and two in slalom. Vonn ended her tweet on a positive note. "I am down but I am NOT out! #nevergiveup." — Reuters



Lindsey Vonn

## Pacquiao, Roach at loggerheads over reunion

LOS ANGELES: Filipino boxing legend Manny Pacquiao said Tuesday he hopes to be reunited with long-time trainer Freddie Roach for his January bout against Adrien Broner but admitted he had not spoken to the veteran cornerman about renewing their partnership.

Pacquiao ended a 16-year association with Roach ahead of his victory over Lucas Mattheys in Kuala Lumpur in July, breaking up one of boxing's most famous double-acts. However the 39-year-old raised eyebrows during a press conference in New York on Monday when he said Roach would be back in his corner for his January 19 fight against Broner in Las Vegas.

Roach though expressed bemusement about Pacquiao's announcement in remarks to Sports Illustrated, saying he had not been in contact with his former protegee. "I still have never directly spoken to Manny (since 2017)," Roach said.

"I'm not going to make a move until Manny calls me. I've been like a father to Manny for 15 years. If he can't call me, there will be no deal." When asked to clarify the situation by AFP on Tuesday, Pacquiao said he hoped Roach would work as a "supervisor", with long-time associate Buboy Fernandez taking a lead role in training.

"I don't have any problem with Freddie Roach," Pacquiao said at a media roundtable. "All I say is that I think the other work in training should be assigned or designated to Buboy. "Freddie can supervise or instruct Buboy, this is what we're going to do."

When pressed on whether he had spoken to Roach however, Pacquiao admitted that there had been no contact. "We have scheduled to talk today," he said. "My idea is to let Buboy handle the mitts, and (Freddie) should just

supervise and correct the training situation, or techniques, or anything like that."

Pacquiao said he plans to divide his training camp into two parts, with the first half taking place in the Philippines and the final part in the United States.

He said Roach would play no part in the Philippines leg of his training camp. "He can just wait here," he said. "I'll be here next month in December." If Pacquiao and Roach are reunited, it will come after a striking and pronounced divorce.

Despite the father-son like bond they had shared for over a decade, Pacquiao said he could not remember the last time he spoke to Roach, blaming demands of his role as a Senator in the Philippines for the rupture.

"It's been a long time ago," Pacquiao said. "A long time ago that I didn't speak to Freddie. I was busy in the Philippines. "I don't even have time to come to United States for a vacation for relaxation. It's really busy being a Senator."

Pacquiao, who turns 40 next month, has not fought in the United States for two years. His last bout in Las Vegas in 2016 was a convincing victory over Timothy Bradley that had been billed as his retirement fight. Pacquiao however told AFP that "loneliness" had prompted him to return to the ring.

"When I stopped boxing I just realised after watching some fights, I feel so lonely," Pacquiao said. "Despite my work in the Senate as a public servant, I really miss boxing. I feel lonely. Boxing is my passion, I grew up in boxing."

Pacquiao, 60-7 with two drawn and 39 knockouts in a career that began in 1995, said he still hopes to negotiate a rematch of his 2015 superfight with Floyd Mayweather. Mayweather, who won a fight widely regarded as a letdown, has frequently teased the possibility from his retirement. Pacquiao said any move for a rematch would have to come from Mayweather. "We met in Japan. I said 'I'm the champion, I have the belt. It's up to you if you want to come out of retirement and challenge me.' I'm ready any time." —AFP

## No post-baby blues, boxing champ Potkonen wants Olympic gold

NEW DELHI: She took up boxing at 27 to get back in shape after pregnancy. A decade on, Finland's Mira Potkonen is the European champion with an Olympic bronze medal—and her eyes set on gold at Tokyo 2020.

Now 37, Potkonen is one of the few female boxers, alongside the likes of India's Mary Kom, to strike a successful balance between motherhood and a top sporting career. But Potkonen, who bowed out of the women's world championships in the lightweight 60kg category in New Delhi on Tuesday, told AFP that juggling boxing and family life had thrown up few obstacles.

"It hasn't been a big challenge for me. It actually balances my life," Potkonen said on the sidelines of her training. "We have a good support system and people who can take care of my children when I am away."

"My focus all the time has been on getting better and better. My goal is to be in the Tokyo 2020 Olympics and win a gold there," she said with a smile. In contrast to their male counterparts, only a small band of female boxers who compete at the highest level are parents.

India's Kom, a 35-year-old mother of three sons, is assured of winning her seventh world championships medal at the Delhi event. Carolina "Crespita" Rodriguez, a world bantamweight champion from Chile, made headlines two years ago training whilst eight months pregnant with her daughter.

Potkonen took up the sport after the birth of her second daughter, who is now 11 — the other daughter is 13 — and soon went professional. "It all started as a hobby in trying to be fit after the birth of my daughters. I realised very soon that it is a sport that I really like and started competing," said Potkonen.

"But the girls don't follow me to the gym. They have their own dreams and own sports and enjoy that very much. They are not interested in boxing. They play football and aerobics," she added.

Potkonen has been in top form since bagging Finland's only medal at the 2016 Rio Olympics. She won the European title this year. She said her coach Maarit Teuronen has played a major role in her making a success of a late-blooming career.

"It's not difficult because I have such a good coach who has been a boxer herself. She was in the 2006 championships in India. She knows what she is doing, so that makes my life easy," Potkonen said.

"The training is getting better, and it's getting harder. "I feel very very fit but still (have a) way to go before the Tokyo Olympics," she added. Potkonen, who showed no sign of slowing down as she pumelled the bag, said she does not have a sports idol for inspiration.

"I generally admire top athletes in any sport who are very good and very technical in their sport," said Potkonen. "But I don't have any idol or something like that. I just generally enjoy athletes who really know what they are doing," she concluded. — AFP



## Sports

# St Louis Blues and Edmonton Oilers fire coaches after woeful NHL starts

## Oilers have dropped six of their past seven games

**NEW YORK:** Todd McLellan was fired Tuesday as coach of the NHL's Edmonton Oilers and replaced by Ken Hitchcock only hours after the rival St. Louis Blues dumped coach Mike Yeo. The latest ousters raised the number of axed coaches this season to four after seven weeks, following a campaign in which no coaches lost their jobs.

The Oilers have dropped six of their past seven games, falling to 9-10 with one over-time loss for 19 points, sixth in the Pacific division. Edmonton's frustrations come despite having one of the NHL's top young stars in 21-year-old Canadian Connor McDavid, who ranks third in the league in total points with six goals and 12 assists.

"Obviously disappointed," Oilers captain McDavid said. "Todd was a guy that everyone liked, but ultimately we're a team that's underachieving right now and no one likes where we're at, so the change is necessary."

Edmonton's 3.3 goals a game ranks 24th in the 31-team league while the penalty-killing unit ranks 27th. "It's tough to pinpoint what we need, but we're all to blame here," McDavid said. "This obviously isn't on Todd at all. It's on us as players. That's just how the business works sometimes. We got to wake up here."

Oilers general manager Peter Chiarelli began pondering the move after Edmonton's 6-3 home loss Sunday to Vegas. "I felt like it was time," he said. "I saw levels of flatness and levels of non-responsiveness and when that happens, the radar goes up."

McLellan, 51, was named Oilers coach in May 2015 after seven seasons with the San Jose Sharks. He was 123-119-24 with Edmonton and in 2017 guided the

Oilers to their first playoff berth in 10 seasons.

Hitchcock, 66, ranks third on the all-time NHL coaching win list at 823-506-119 with 88 drawn over 22 seasons with Dallas, Philadelphia, Columbus and St. Louis. He guided Dallas to the 1999 Stanley Cup.

"I know what's wrong but it's not going to get fixed overnight," Hitchcock said. "I think I can clear the deck. I think I can help this team turn it around." Hitchcock had retired from coaching last season after Dallas went 42-32-8 and missed the playoffs.

### MIDNIGHT STRIKES ON YEO

Yeo was fired just before midnight after a 2-0 Monday home loss to Los Angeles, leaving both teams level at the bottom of the NHL with only seven wins, and replaced by associate coach Craig Berube on an interim basis.

Blues general manager Doug Armstrong said Tuesday he might hire a new full-time coach before the end of the season. "I'm going to throw my full support behind Craig and his staff right now as we try and cauterize the wound and get back into the playoff picture," Armstrong said.

"Ultimately it comes back to our record," Armstrong said. "Mike is paying for the sins of our collective group." Yeo, 45, went 73-49-11 as St. Louis coach after he replaced Hitchcock in February 2017. He exited after three shutout losses in four games.

Berube, 52, coached Philadelphia to a 75-58-28 record from 2013-15. McLellan and Yeo departed following John Stevens of the Los Angeles Kings and Joel Quenneville of the Chicago Blackhawks being dropped earlier this season. — AFP



**GLENDAL:** In this file photo taken on January 12, 2018, head coach Todd McLellan of the Edmonton Oilers watches from the bench during the first period of the NHL game against the Arizona Coyotes in Glendale, Arizona. McLellan was fired on Tuesday, as coach of the NHL's Edmonton Oilers and replaced by Ken Hitchcock only hours after the rival St. Louis Blues dumped coach Mike Yeo. — AFP

## Anderson out of final S Lanka Test

**COLOMBO:** England have left record-breaking fast bowler James Anderson out of the final Test against Sri Lanka starting tomorrow to give match practice to fellow pacesman Stuart Broad. "Yes I'm not playing this game, Broady's going," Anderson said Wednesday, expressing frustration over a tour in which he has taken just one wicket in two Tests where spinners have dominated.

Anderson, who has taken more Test wickets than any other fast bowler in history, said that while Broad was "delighted" at getting a chance he was feeling like a "spare part". "The thinking is that with the series sewn up it's an opportunity to rotate."

"I think the feeling is they want Broady to get some Test cricket under his belt," added the 36-year-old. England go into the third and final Test in Colombo with a 2-0 lead and gunning for a whitewash.

"So it's going to be a week off. It's been a frustrating trip for me really because you want to contribute to the wins. "But I feel like I've tried my best but it's not really been a series for the seamers," he added.

"I feel like a bit of a spare part but I think that's just the nature of playing cricket here," England sewed up the series-a first away series win since beating South Africa in 2015-16 — on Sunday in Kandy.

And Anderson said he was happy to have



**COLOMBO:** Sri Lanka's coach Chandika Hathurusingha talks with Nishan Peiris (R) during a practice session at the Sinhalese Sports Club Ground in Colombo yesterday. The third and final Test between England and Sri Lanka will be played tomorrow, at the Sinhalese Sports Club (SSC) international cricket stadium in Colombo. — AFP

been part of a squad that has played so well away from England. The veteran of many highs and lows in England's fortunes said the tour under captain Joe Root had been "a real big stepping stone for us as a team."

"We've been good in parts over the past 18 months but a bit inconsistent. I think the improvements we've made and continue to make have really shown this trip." He highlighted the batting of stand-in wicketkeeper

Ben Foakes, Rory Burns and Keaton Jennings as well as England's spin trio Moeen Ali, Adil Rashid and Jack Leach.

"I certainly feel like in the past previous teams might not have played as positively as we have with the bat," said Anderson. "The message from Joe is to go out, be confident. We've played positively, tried to take the attacking option and I think that's why we're 2-0 up." — AFP

## Bangladesh's Shakib doubtful for first West Indies Test

**CHITTAGONG:** Bangladesh suffered a blow yesterday after skipper Shakib Al Hasan said he was not sure if he would be fit in time for the opening Test against the West Indies. Shakib, 31, missed the recent Test series against Zimbabwe because of surgery on an injured finger in September.

The batsman was declared fit by the team's physio and included in the squad for the two-Test West Indies series starting today in Chittagong. "We know how challenging it is to play a five-day match. So still there is confusion whether I have reached that level (to play)," Shakib told reporters in Chittagong. "I have trained only in four sessions. Among them, two sessions were optional. Let's see, I may have to wait till the end."

Shakib's return was a big boost for the home side, who have struggled in recent Tests. They were thrashed 2-0 by the West Indies in July, and then salvaged a 1-1 home series draw against Test minnows Zimbabwe earlier this month.

Shakib acknowledged playing the West Indies would be more challenging than the Zimbabwe series,

but said the two sides are closely matched. "I think both the teams will have equal chances. The wicket may get spin... (but) sometimes the wicket starts behaving well after a few days of playing," he said of the Chittagong venue. "As both the teams are very close in rankings-eighth and ninth, I think the series will be a very important one. I am hopeful we will perform well."

West Indies captain Kraigg Brathwaite said they must not rest on their success during the home series against Bangladesh. "Pitches are obviously different to what we played on (in the Caribbean). Whatever we do, whether fast bowling or spin, we have to do it well," he said.

"We can't think about the past series. We have to stick to our plans, and I think we will go on top." The West Indies have never lost a Test match in Bangladesh, winning six and drawing one. The second Test will be played in Dhaka from November 30 to December 4. The visitors will also play three one-day internationals and three Twenty20 internationals during their month-long tour of Bangladesh. — AFP

## Win over Woods worth more than \$9 million, says Mickelson

**LAS VEGAS:** Bragging rights will be worth more than the \$9 million prize money to Phil Mickelson when he takes on Tiger Woods in an 18-hole winner-takes-all pay-per-view showdown in Las Vegas.

For two of the world's richest athletes the prospect of pocketing millions for playing an afternoon round at Shadow Creek Golf Club on Friday may not set the heart racing. But for Mickelson the thought of forever being able to wave that cheque in Woods' face was something priceless that left him giddy with excitement ahead of the Thanksgiving holiday clash.

"It's great to win the \$9 million but I just don't want to lose to him and give him the satisfaction because the bragging rights are what is going to be even worse than the money," Mickelson said at a news conference on Tuesday to drum up interest in "The Match".

"Every time I see you I want to be able to rub it in. I want to sit in the Champions locker room at Augusta and talk smack. I want that." That was about as close as Woods and Mickelson, two of the most fascinating and successful golfers of their generation, came to trading shots as they attempted to help sell the pay-per-view duel which can be seen for a modest \$19.99.

Despite their best efforts the obligatory trash talk around the golfing cage match has been forced and limp. Fifteen years ago the dislike was real and palatable, the jabs they



**LAS VEGAS:** (L-R) Phil Mickelson and Tiger Woods speak with the media during a press conference before The Match at Shadow Creek Golf Course on Tuesday in Las Vegas, Nevada. — AFP

took at each other stung. But that once frosty relationship has thawed to the point that they play practice rounds together.

Anyone expecting the sort of foul mouth baiting that is part of boxing and UFC promotions were left sadly disappointed as the news conference turned into a love-in. The 42-year-old Woods and Mickelson, 48, spent so much time lavishing praise on each other that it was hard to remember there was time when they actually disliked each other.

Even an attempt to end the news conference with a traditional boxing nose-to-nose stare down ended in farce with neither man able to keep a straight face for more than a few seconds before breaking into laughs and a hug.

"He's one of the greatest players to ever pick up a golf club," said Woods, the winner of 14 major titles. "Greatest of all time," replied Mickelson, who has five majors in his trophy case. One aspect of the event not manufactured

is the competitiveness Woods and Mickelson bring to the golf course.

The showdown will be highlighted by several side bets and Mickelson wasted no time throwing down the gauntlet by betting Woods \$100,000 that he would birdie the first hole. Woods took the bait but not before upping the ante, telling Mickelson, "Why not \$200,000?"

"So you think you can make birdie on the first hole," said Woods smiling. "Double it." The biggest bet being put down, however, is the one made by WarnerMedia and Turner Sports who are gambling there is enough interest to make the unique pay-per-view event a success.

"This is me versus him, this is winner take all and it has a unique special feel golf doesn't have all the time or rarely has ever had if ever," said Mickelson. "I am hopeful that this is received well, I am hopeful we provide a glimpse into the future of what sport-watching is all about." — Reuters

## F1 farewells abound as Abu Dhabi wraps up 2018 season

**LONDON:** Champions Fernando Alonso and Kimi Raikkonen will be saying farewell under the Abu Dhabi floodlights this weekend - the Spaniard to Formula One and the Finn to Ferrari. With both titles won by Mercedes and Lewis Hamilton, each celebrating their fifth, the focus of the season-ending race has switched to those who are moving on - even if only around the paddock.

Raikkonen's speech is unlikely to be long or emotional, Ferrari's 2007 champion generally preferring to say less and do more, but the 39-year-old will be back in Sauber overall next year. Sunday looks realistically like the Finn's last shot at victory, and success at Yas Marina would be a first for Ferrari who have not won any of the nine previous editions of the race at a circuit often short on thrills.

Alonso's exit - announced in August and much talked about since then - is likely to be permanent and his absence will be felt even if he has been scrapping only for meagre points with McLaren of late. The two times world champion might have had more titles to his name with better fortune and more astute career moves but he has remained a racer to the end, even in an uncompetitive car. "I have

won more races than I dreamed of when I came here and this part of my career is done - it was a success," the 37-year-old told ESPN.

"I have ticked the box. I need to go for another tick and find another box to fill." The winner of 32 grands prix, including Monaco twice, Alonso won the 24 hours of Le Mans this year with Toyota and is now targeting the Indianapolis 500 with McLaren to complete the 'triple crown of motorsport'. McLaren team mate Stoffel Vandoorne is also bowing out, headed for a new start in the electric Formula E series, while Marcus Ericsson will switch to IndyCar after relinquishing his Sauber seat.

Monaco's Charles Leclerc is starting his last race for Sauber before joining Ferrari as Raikkonen's replacement alongside Sebastian Vettel. Australian Daniel Ricciardo has his 150th race, all within the Red Bull family, to celebrate before saying his own goodbyes and starting afresh at Renault.

"I'm yet to get an Abu Dhabi podium, but that would be a pretty awesome way to end my stint with Red Bull and to end the season," he said. "I'm sure it's going to be emotional afterwards, especially when I cross the line for the last time with the team. But I'm going there guns a-blazing, showing a lot of love." Dutch team mate Max Verstappen, in the headlines after Brazil for an altercation with Force India's Esteban Ocon, is chasing his season's hat-trick of wins. Saturday also represents Verstappen's last chance to become the youngest driver, at 21, to secure a pole position. The Dutch driver is also just three points behind Mercedes' Valtteri Bottas in the drivers' standings. — Reuters



## Sports

# Portugal held by Poland, Sweden promoted in Nations League

## 'It's always good to have Ronaldo in the line-up'

PARIS: Portugal finished off their successful Nations League group campaign with a 1-1 draw against Poland in Guimaraes on Tuesday, while Sweden earned promotion to the top division. Hosts Portugal had already qualified for June's inaugural Nations League finals alongside England, the Netherlands and Switzerland, while Poland could not avoid relegation.

Fernando Santos' side finished three points clear of Italy at the top of Group A3, after an unbeaten campaign despite the absence of star forward and captain Cristiano Ronaldo.

"It's always good to have Cristiano Ronaldo in the line-up, but we've proven that we have other quality players besides him," centre-back Pepe told television channel RTP.

"The spirit of these players has been very positive. Now we have to be humble and respect the other teams in the final four and show our qualities." Renato Sanches started brightly for Portugal and saw an early effort blocked, and the 21-year-old Bayern Munich midfielder created the opening goal as his 34th-minute corner was headed in at the near post by Andre Silva.

The European champions appeared to be in control, but the game changed when Danilo Pereira was harshly sent off and Poland were awarded a penalty. The referee gave the Porto midfielder his marching orders after Arkadiusz Milik tumbled to the floor under his challenge, despite appearing to win the ball cleanly.

The Napoli striker picked himself up to slot the ball past Beto in the Portugal goal and level for the visitors with quarter of the match still remaining. Poland have struggled since a disappointing World Cup group-stage exit, failing to win in the Nations League, and they wasted late chances, with Piotr Zielinski being denied by Beto and Damian Kozminski firing wide as the 10 men held on.

"I thought the double red card and penalty call was harsh, from my point of view it didn't exist," bemoaned Portugal coach Santos. "The referee could whistle for a penalty and not give a red card. In spite of that I'm proud of the players."

Elsewhere, Sweden pipped Russia to promotion to League A as a 2-0 victory over the 2018 World Cup hosts in Stockholm saw Janne Andersson's men finish top of Group B2. Manchester United centre-back Victor Lindelof smashed home a loose ball to put the hosts in front shortly before half-time, and Marcus Berg wrapped up the win with 18 minutes to play by tapping in after Sebastian Larsson's shot was saved by Russia goalkeeper Andrey Lunev.

Fulham forward Aleksandar Mitrovic and Besiktas midfielder Adem Ljajic both scored for the second consecutive game as Serbia brushed aside Lithuania 4-1 in Belgrade. That saw them promoted from Group C4 despite closest challengers Romania's 1-0 win in Montenegro. — AFP



GUIMARAES: Poland's defender Tomasz Kedziora (L) vies with Portugal's forward Bruma during the international UEFA Nations League football match between Portugal and Poland at the Dom Alfonso Henriques stadium in Guimaraes on Tuesday. — AFP

## Late goal earns point for Philippines

KUALA LUMPUR: Jovin Bedic scored a lucky late equaliser to secure a deserved 1-1 draw for Sven-Goran Eriksson's Philippines against champions Thailand yesterday evening in the Asean Football Federation Championship that keeps Azkal hopes of a semi-final place alive.

Both teams move on to seven points from three

games following the meeting in Bacolod and remain one point ahead of group B rivals Singapore, who closed the gap on the top two to a point with a 6-1 thrashing of East Timor. Defending champions Thailand will seal their place in the last four on Sunday with a draw against the Singaporeans while the Philippines will go through even if they lose to already-eliminated Indonesia and the Singaporeans lose to the Thais.

The Philippines looked set to go down to an undeserved defeat when Supachai Jaided put the Thais in front in the 56th minute, just five minutes after Azkals captain Phil Younghusband missed the best chance of the game. Younghusband was unmarked and in space just six yards from goal when his effort found the arms

of Thai goalkeeper Chatchai Budrom, while Supachai made no mistake at the other end when he coolly slotted past Michael Falckesgaard.

The Philippines, though, claimed a deserved leveller with just nine minutes remaining when Bedic's shot from outside the area was deflected onto the post before rolling across the face of goal and directed over the line by the diving Chatchai.

Singapore's hopes of a place in the next round were enhanced as Safuwani Baharudin claimed a hat-trick in a comfortable win over East Timor, and victory over Milovan Rajevac's side in Bangkok on Sunday would take them through to the semi-finals for the first time since 2012. — Reuters

## FIFA Ethics Committee judge held

Kuala Lumpur: A FIFA Ethics Committee judge was arrested on suspicion of corruption in his native Malaysia and has resigned as director of an arbitration service, his lawyer and reports said yesterday.

Sundra Rajoo was detained late Tuesday by anti-graft investigators after flying in from Zurich, where FIFA has its headquarters, to assist in a corruption probe. He was held overnight, but released after a court accepted his representatives' arguments that he effectively has diplomatic immunity due to his high-profile legal roles, lawyer Cheow Wee told AFP.

As well as sitting on FIFA's Ethics Committee, Rajoo was the director of the Malaysia-based Asian

International Arbitration Centre. Cheow said the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) had applied to hold him for seven days as "they wanted to question him regarding a corruption allegation".

Rajoo has been accused of using his position to gain financial favours, reports said. Local media reported that he has now given up his position at the arbitration centre. "My client has offered assurances that he will extend the full cooperation to MACC regarding the investigation," his lawyer said, but added that authorities could not arrest him.

Rajoo was appointed last year as one of two deputy chairmen of the Ethics Committee's adjudicatory chamber, which has slapped lifetime bans on several football executives named in a sprawling US Justice Department probe into football corruption.

The adjudicatory chamber was responsible for banning former president of the governing body of world football Sepp Blatter and UEFA head Michel Platini. — AFP

## Mancini nurturing green shoots of Italy recovery

ROME: Twelve months after a humiliating 0-0 draw in a playoff against Sweden ensured Italy would miss the World Cup for the first time in 60 years, a repeat of that scoreline against Portugal at the weekend was greeted with far more positivity by the local media. A year ago, the Corriere dello Sport said the 1-0 aggregate defeat to the Swedes was "an intolerable footballing shame" while the Corriere della Sera warned: "Italian football is about to be battered by an unprecedented storm".

The failure to reach Russia cost coach Gian Piero Ventura his job and it was left to Roberto Mancini to navigate Italy through that storm and salvage something from the wreck of a failed World Cup campaign.

Since taking over in May, the former Manchester City, Lazio and Inter Milan coach has successfully built foundations for a solid future, while beginning to restore the national team's tarnished reputation in the eyes of its public.

The goalless draw at the San Siro

against Portugal on Saturday was only good enough to seal second place in their UEFA Nations League group, however, and afterwards Mancini described the task ahead of him.

"There's a long way to go and we are working, trying to renovate the national side with young players and a different tactical approach," he said. The new tournament was his team's first competitive test and while results have not blown anyone away, the performances have been encouraging as Italy avoided relegation to the second tier by finishing ahead of Poland in the three-nation pool. Scoring goals has been the main problem but not for a lack of trying, and in four games against Portugal and Poland, the Azzurri hit 53 shots, 12 on target, but managed to score just three times. During Tuesday's 1-0 friendly win over the United States in Belgium, Italy needed a 94th-minute Matteo Politano strike to seal victory despite boasting 74 per cent possession and having 17 attempts on goal. — Reuters

## Buzzer-beater sends Raptors past Magic

ORLANDO: Danny Green hit a 6-foot jump shot at the buzzer to give the visiting Toronto Raptors a 93-91 victory over the Orlando Magic on Tuesday night. The winning shot off a pass from Kyle Lowry came after Evan Fournier tied the game for Orlando on a dunk with 2.3 seconds to play. Kawhi Leonard led Toronto with 18 points, Pascal Siakam had 15 points and nine rebounds, Serge Ibaka had 14 points and nine rebounds and Green scored 13. Fournier led Orlando with 27 points, Aaron Gordon had 16 points and nine rebounds and Nikola Vucevic had 14 points and 18 rebounds.

### TRAIL BLAZERS 118, KNICKS 114

CJ McCollum scored 13 of his 31 points in the fourth quarter and helped Portland get past host New York. Damian Lillard added 29 points for the Trail Blazers. Portland came back from a 10-point deficit and outscored the Knicks 53-39 in the final 19:15. McCollum made 13 of 23 shots and posted his third game of at least 30 points this season as Portland won for the sixth time in eight games. Tim Hardaway Jr. scored 32 points, but his third straight game of at least 30 points was not enough for the Knicks, who dropped their sixth straight despite shooting 50.6 per cent.

### NETS 104, HEAT 92

D'Angelo Russell scored 20 points as Brooklyn sent host Miami to its fifth straight home loss, the Heat's worst home skid since 2014. The Nets, who had lost four of their past five games, also got 13 points, 14



ORLANDO: Evan Fournier #10 of the Orlando Magic drives to the basket against the Toronto Raptors on Tuesday at Amway Center in Orlando, Florida. — AFP

rebounds and two blocks from Jarrett Allen. Russell, who added nine rebounds and six assists, scored eight of his points in the fourth quarter. Hassan Whiteside led Miami with 21 points and 23 rebounds—both game highs. Josh Richardson added 16 points, and Rodney McGruder scored 15 points.

### WIZARDS 125, CLIPPERS 118

John Wall scored 30 points, Bradley Beal added 27,

and Washington rallied from 24 points down in the first half to defeat visiting Los Angeles. The Wizards trailed by nine to start the fourth quarter. Reserve Jeff Green scored 20 points on 8-of-11 shooting for the Wizards, and Otto Porter Jr. contributed 11 points and 14 rebounds. Tobias Harris had 29 points and nine rebounds for Los Angeles, which had won five straight. Reserve Montrezl Harrell scored 20 points and grabbed nine rebounds. — Reuters

## Mbappe injured as France see off Uruguay

PARIS: A shoulder injury to Kylian Mbappe overshadowed France's 1-0 friendly win over Uruguay at the Stade de France on Tuesday as Didier Deschamps' world champions ended the year on a high note.

Mbappe had to be replaced in the first half after a nasty fall, continuing a miserable night for his Paris Saint-Germain coach Thomas Tuchel after the German had already seen Neymar hobble off injured early in Brazil's friendly with Cameroon in Milton Keynes.

PSG face Liverpool in a crucial Champions League clash at the Parc des Princes on November 28. When asked if he could give "reassuring news" about Mbappe in his press conference, France coach Deschamps said: "Not necessarily reassuring, but not worrying either."

"He had some shoulder pain after his fall and he has to have tests tomorrow (Wednesday) morning, but there is no serious concern." After the disappointment of seeing the Netherlands pip them to a place at the Nations League finals with a late Virgil van Dijk goal in Germany on Monday, Olivier Giroud's 52nd-minute penalty gave France victory in a repeat of the two teams' World Cup quarter-final meeting in Russia.

"It was important to finish on a positive note, even in the last defeat (by the Netherlands) saw us miss out on the (Nations League) semi-finals," Deschamps told M6. Roared on by a large crowd in Paris, France opened up the Uruguay defence in only the fourth minute, but Giroud fired a first-time shot wide of the near post with just goalkeeper Martin Campana to beat.

Matijs Vecino headed too close to Hugo Lloris as the visitors settled into the game, but Mbappe should have put France ahead when he raced clean through on goal, only to mishit a chipped effort well wide.

### MBAPPE IN AGONY

The 19-year-old was left writhing on the ground in pain after a heavy touch saw him tackled by Campana, appearing to sustain a shoulder injury as he crashed to the turf.

Mbappe tried to play on, but he only lasted a matter of seconds before signalling to the bench that he could not continue and was replaced by Florian Thauvin. Chelsea striker Giroud wasted another good opportunity for the French shortly after the break, heading over from the edge of the six-yard box.

But he was given an even better chance to get on the scoresheet as Martin Cacares was penalised for handball after Antoine Griezmann's shot struck his chest and his arm. Giroud stepped up and slammed a confident spot-kick into the bottom corner past Campana.

"We're a little disappointed not to be qualified in the Nations League, but it's like that," Giroud said. "We may have lost a game we shouldn't have, but we had the heart to react, and I think we did it pretty well."

The world champions started to play with more confidence, and Tanguy Ndombele forced the onrushing Campana into a good save after a wonderful scooped pass by Griezmann. Substitute Jonathan Rodriguez went close as Uruguay piled bodies forward looking for an equaliser, but Oscar Tabarez's team slipped to a second successive 1-0 friendly loss after their defeat by Brazil in London last week.

"We have to understand against whom we came to play in Europe-Brazil and France," said Tabarez. "I think the French were superior in the first 15 or 20 minutes, but after that it was relatively balanced in the second half." — AFP



**25** Kuwait wins five medals in Arab Shooting Championship in Doha

**26** St Louis Blues and Edmonton Oilers fire coaches after woeful NHL starts

**27** Portugal held by Poland, Sweden promoted in Nations League



## Australia edge India in T20 win

Rain-marred match in Brisbane reduced to 17 overs



BRISBANE: Australia's batsman Glenn Maxwell (R) hits a shot off the bowling of India's Krunal Pandya during the T20 international cricket match between Australia and India in Brisbane yesterday. — AFP

**BRISBANE:** Australia edged India by four runs for a nerve-wracking win in their opening Twenty20 yesterday despite a gallant 76 from Shikhar Dhawan, giving them a huge confidence boost after a run of poor results.

With a rain-marred match in Brisbane reduced to 17 overs, the visitors were set 174 to win under the Duckworth-Lewis-Stern system after the hosts made 158-4. Glenn Maxwell top-scored with 46.

India needed 13 off the last over from Marcus Stoinis, but in a desperate bid to get the runs two wickets fell and they missed the target. It eased the pressure on Australia who have been struggling to find their feet after the ball-tampering scandal in South Africa in March.

They have endured a dire run of results since and had lost four T20s before this one. "The boys played

really well especially through the middle overs with the bat. They showed a lot of courage," said skipper Aaron Finch. "The bowling was outstanding under a lot of pressure. I was confident. Stoinis was the one I pencilled in to do that job at the end. He had clear plans and executed his plans really well." Indian captain Virat Kohli called it an "exciting see-saw battle".

"A lot of Indians came to support us. It was a great atmosphere to play in," he said. "We bowled well and then they came back into the game with Stoinis and Maxy (Maxwell) batting well. And a really good knock from Shikhar (for us)."

Dhawan opened the innings in the run chase and immediately began plundering the Australian attack, smashing two boundaries off Jason Behrendorff's opening over. Behrendorff got the scalp of dangerman Rohit Sharma for seven, but there was no stopping Dhawan

who hit 16 off one over to bring up his ninth T20 50 off just 28 balls. Lokesh Rahul made 13 before he was cleverly stumped by Alex Carey, bringing Kohli to the crease to huge roars from the big Indian contingent. But he didn't last long, gone for four with Chris Lynn taking a catch at third man off Adam Zampa. And Dhawan wasn't far behind, caught on the boundary ropes attempting an upper cut off Billy Stanlake's bowling.

### QUICK-FIRE

It left Rishabh Pant and Dinesh Karthik needing to score 78 runs off 36 balls. They whittled it down to set up a nail-biting finish before succumbing to the pressure. Earlier, Maxwell smacked four sixes in an explosive display before the heavens opened and the teams were called off by the umpires after 16.1 overs.

After an hour-long delay, they came back out to face

five balls and Maxwell was out to the first of them, with Australia making 158-4.

Experienced bowlers Jasprit Bumrah and Bhuvneshwar Kumar had set the early tone, restricting Finch and D'Arcy Short to just 12 runs off the opening three overs after Kohli put them into bat.

Short fell to Khaleel Ahmed for seven, bringing Lynn to the crease and he set the Gabba on fire by crunching three huge sixes in one loose over from Ahmed.

Finch went for 27 soon after when fooled by a wrong'un from Kuldeep Yadav and Lynn also fell to the spinner after a quick-fire 37 off 20 balls. Maxwell played himself in then went into Lynn mode, whacking three successive sixes to take 23 off a Krunal Pandya over. Ably partnered by Stoinis—who clubbed an unbeaten 33—they put on 78 before the weather halted their progress. —AFP

## France seek rare repeat in 'last' Davis Cup final

**LONDON:** When the players of France and Croatia step onto the clay court laid down inside Lille's huge Stade Pierre Mauroy tomorrow it will mark the end of an era for the 118-year-old Davis Cup. This year's final will be the last in its current guise after the International Tennis Federation's decision to revamp the team event starting in 2019.

It has not been a pain-free process and fans and players alike will lament the scrapping of the 'home and away' format which has been such an integral part of the Davis Cup's charm. Next year, after an initial

qualifying round in February, 18 nations will assemble in Madrid in November to compete in a week-long competition to find an overall winner.

French doubles player Pierre-Hugues Herbert is unequivocal when asked what this week's showdown in Lille means. "They are killing the competition that has been here for decades and for us we see it as the last final," Herbert, runner-up with Nicolas Mahut at last week's ATP Finals, told Reuters ahead of the tie.

"The next one will maybe have the same name but will be something new and something we don't know but we will see what happens. It definitely feels like it's the last one."

"(The ITF) tried to think of something new and it needed it because the best players were not playing. But I think the changes they have done are the worst for the competition." With the announcement of the ATP Cup to start in Australia in January 2020, just six weeks after the new Davis Cup finale, there are doubts over whether two team competitions can exist,

especially in such close proximity on the calendar.

The ATP Cup's slot, just before the Australian Open, makes it an attractive proposition for the players. But for this weekend, at least, the Davis Cup will have the spotlight for a final in which Croatia, hoping to repeat their 2005 triumph, will start slight favourites.

France captain Yannick Noah, who led his country to the title last year and will be in charge for the last time before Amelie Mauresmo takes over, is without several top names. Richard Gasquet is injured and Gael Monfils and Gilles Simon are missing, yet with a fanatical home crowd cheering every point, Les Blues will still feel confident of back-to-back titles for the first time since 1932.

In world number 32 Lucas Pouille and number 40 Jeremy Chardy they still boast two dangerous singles players while Mahut and Herbert are the reigning French Open doubles champions. Noah also has former world number five Jo-Wilfried Tsonga up his

sleeve after including the injury-troubled 33-year-old in his squad for the final.

France have won their last six times on home soil but Zeljko Krajan's Croatia will certainly not be intimidated by the raucous atmosphere they will encounter. Marin Cilic, the world number seven, is vastly-experienced on the big stages and has won 27 of his 38 Davis Cup singles.

Youngster Borna Coric has risen to 12th in the ATP rankings this season and has twice sealed victory for Croatia during their run to the final, most notably winning the fifth rubber in then went into Lynn mode, whacking three successive sixes to take 23 off a Krunal Pandya over. Ably partnered by Stoinis—who clubbed an unbeaten 33—they put on 78 before the weather halted their progress. —AFP

In Franko Skugor and Mate Pavic they also have a formidable doubles lineup while 35-year-old Ivan Dodig adds useful backup. "We're having another opportunity now. Two years ago we were close," Cilic said, referring to the 2016 in which Croatia lost to Argentina. "We have a good chance. But it's going to be a fight, a big battle against France." — Reuters