

# Friday Times

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## Kuwait, Saudi, UAE extend \$1.1bn to Jordan



AMMAN: Jordanian King Abdullah II receives the finance ministers of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the UAE at Al-Husseiniya Palace in the capital yesterday. — AFP

**AMMAN:** Gulf states have deposited over \$1 billion in Jordan's central bank as part of a \$2.5 billion package to shore up the kingdom's struggling economy. The three states, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, announced the aid package in June after IMF-backed austerity measures sparked some of the largest protests in Jordan in years.

As well as the deposits, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates also committed \$250 million each in budget support to Jordan over five years, while Kuwait pledged \$500 million in project finance over five years. Senior officials from all four countries signed an agreement in Amman yesterday on the deposit of funds.

Jordan's King Abdullah II affirmed yesterday the deep rooted brotherly ties that bind Jordan with Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and the UAE. A statement issued by the Royal Jordanian Court said King Abdullah met Kuwaiti Finance Minister Nayef Al-Hajraf, Director General of Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development Abdulwahab Al-Bader, Saudi Finance Minister Mohammed Al-Jadaan and UAE Minister of State for Financial Affairs Obaid Al-Tayer. King Abdullah expressed his appreciation to the three Gulf countries for their continued support for Jordan to face the economic burdens it is suffering as a result of regional crises.

The \$1.1 billion in deposits will help cushion Jordan's \$11 billion in foreign reserves,

while the direct budget support will ease pressure on the government. "It will consolidate financial and monetary stability and confidence in the Jordanian economy and spur growth," Central Bank of Jordan governor Ziad Fariz told Reuters. "This will bolster the reserves and allow the treasury to implement its projects to provide better services with the least burden possible," Fariz added.

Kuwait was the first to place \$500 million in the Central Bank while another \$333 million were received each yesterday from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, a Jordanian government source said. Last month Jordan's government sent a new tax bill to parliament, which it wants to push through this year to help it get a clean bill of

health from the IMF to avoid higher servicing costs on over 1 billion dinars (\$1.4 billion) of foreign debt due in 2019.

Credit guarantees extended by the Gulf states yesterday will also help Jordan avoid being downgraded by credit ratings agencies, officials said. The UAE alone extended \$200 million in guarantees to allow Jordan to secure cheaper World Bank credit for much-needed infrastructure projects. Jordan's key role in providing geopolitical stability in the Middle East already makes it one of the highest per capita recipients of foreign aid in the world, according to figures from USAID, the US aid agency. The kingdom receives over \$1 billion a year from the United States, its largest donor, as well as aid from Europe and elsewhere. — Agencies

## Local

## You eat your meat and I will eat my vegetables



JUST KIDDIN', SERIOUSLY

By Sahar Moussa

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You don't eat meat, chicken or fish? How are you surviving? Are you a Buddhist or Hindu? Why should you deprive yourself from the pleasures that God created?! Are you on a diet? Do you eat cheese, eggs or drink milk? Are you crazy? These are some of the comments that I hear whenever I'm invited to a restaurant by my friends, at a family dinner or at the office.

Just for the record - I'm surviving perfectly without eating meat, chicken or fish. I'm not Buddhist or Hindu. I'm not depriving myself from anything because it's totally my choice, and eating fruits vegetables, whole grains, etc is a pleasure for me. I'm not on a diet to lose weight. I'm a vegetarian and not a vegan (yet), so I still do eat cheese and labneh. And yes, I'm crazy because I have to explain myself every time I'm asked how and why I'm vegetarian.

I have been a vegetarian for almost a year now. First I stopped eating meat and chicken, and a few months later I decided to stop eating fish and eggs. My father-in-law is a meat-eater - he (along with all his family) just love to eat meat, chicken and fish. He might get sick if one week passes and he didn't eat any kind of meat (along with his family). The day he

We are the only species with the power to destroy the earth and also the capacity to protect it. – Dalai Lama

found out I had decided to go vegetarian, he went mad, as if I was depriving him from eating all the meat in the world. He couldn't comprehend that someone in his full mental capacity can willingly stop eating (according to him) all the pleasures that God offers. Every time my husband and I are eating lunch or dinner at his place, he asks me - with a piece of kebab - in his mouth: "Why did you become a vegetarian? Are you insane?"

I became vegetarian for various reasons - one of them is to shrink the dietary carbon footprint and help reduce the climate change effects being caused by emissions of animals bred for their meat. Because according to a report that was published in The Guardian in 2006, the UN calculated that the combined climate change emissions of animals bred for their meat were about 18 percent of the global total - more than cars, planes and all other forms of transport put together. The figure was revised upward in 2009 by two World Bank scientists to more than 51 percent, but attempts to fully account for meat-eating are condemned as simplistic. In general, livestock's contribution to climate change can be calculated as low as 5 to 10 percent of global emissions or as high as 50 percent.

Martin Heller of the Center for Sustainable Systems at the University of Michigan simplified the whole idea by saying, "Certainly the way that we produce meat currently and in the quantities that we produce it, it's much more impactful on the

environment from a variety of indicators including carbon footprint, land use and water use."

The other reason comes from a personal experience - the day I cleansed my body from all kinds of meat and started to live on fruits, vegetables and grains, my skin became shinier and my body became more energetic. Overall, my health is better and I'm cured from a lot of ailments. Kuwait is known as a food capital of the world for its countless choices of restaurants and amazing food. Kuwaitis and expats do eat a lot of meat, chicken and fish. In fact, Kuwait is listed as the second country in the world after the US that eats the most meat.

But at the same time, veganism in Kuwait is on the rise. One proof is an increase in the number of exclusively vegan restaurants in Kuwait, as well as non-vegan restaurants having clearly-marked vegan dishes on their menus, according to Dr Abeer Al-Sharhan, founder of Kuwait Vegan Society.

Being a vegetarian or a meat-eater - it's totally a personal choice. When I'm invited to a restaurant or to a dinner at a family house, I don't ask them why you are eating meat, chicken or fish and give them lectures and go mental on them for not eating fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes and seeds. I simply respect their food choices and I expect the same from them. So don't judge me for the way I eat. At the end of the day, you eat your meat and I will eat my vegetables.

## A trip to Syria from Kuwait

By Ibtisam Ayman

It was an unforgettable feeling that nobody can describe. It was zero hour, and we were waiting for our plane at Kuwait International Airport with mixed feelings of excitement and worry, joy and sorrow. We were about to head to war-torn Syria. It is my country, my land, that I love and fear. Our plane arrived and took us straight to Lebanon. At first I felt a huge burden had been lifted off my shoulders. But anxiety was apparent on my face, and when a private car arrived to take my mother and me to Syria, that's when I realized things were about to get serious. We left the beauty of Lebanon with its sea views and adorable farm life of its villages by a traffic-choked road, and there it was - the Syrian border.

Tension and anger were palpable in the air. We were required to pass 15 roadblocks - luckily the driver was a regular and knew how to get us through. When we reached Homs, it was as if the day of reckoning had hit it. Everything - building or house, hospital or school - were mere walls with bullet holes. There was complete silence in a once-bustling city - if you were to throw a pin you could hear it ring all over the city. We were on an empty road in our vehicle, reminiscing about Homs. You could still hear the echoes of children laughing and the call to prayer during Ramadan, all of which had now turned to dust. How was it possible for people to kill and destroy their own blood? Their own fellow citizens?

We made it to Rastan bridge and crossed into the heart of Hama, famous for its luscious greenery, fruits popping everywhere and simple

and cozy farm life, all of which have turned into a soulless desert, with random lampposts standing and destroyed homes with bullet holes and roofs caved in from the daily air raids.

After this came a scene that I will never forget. We reached our relatives' district, with army personnel patrolling the streets with pistols on their waists and Kalashnikovs in their arms. When we entered our relatives' home, they gifted me the eidi I had missed - a small sum of money given to youngsters on Eid. The ground then shook and the dark skies were lit up by horrible bombing raids with their roaring sounds. At 6 o'clock, 14 army planes flew above our district, creating streaks in the sky to mark the targets for the jets to strike. This was a weekly event for our relatives, who lived close to the warzone - a 15- to 30-minute ride would take you there. Our hosts kept their spirits high, smiling, praying and comforting themselves and us that all of this chaos was only in the warzone. You could see that this had become a part of their routine.

The first week passed sitting in a paradisiacal garden, and the only sound we heard was of bullets being shot. Then all of a sudden, people returned from the hajj, and they were greeted with a joyous welcome. At night, power was cut off, and the skies were filled with streaks.

Despite these horrors, my mother and I went to visit the old bazaar - it was completely destroyed by bombs and previous battles, yet you can still find little shops intact here and there. People were like zombies, neither alive nor dead, of mixed races and religious affiliations. Most of the people didn't know each other - they were all refugees, traumatized and hurt, and could not afford to trust others any more. The



Hamah

army has informed all shop owners to close their shops at 6 pm daily.

Amidst all this emerged a young boy with the most beautiful face I have ever seen. He ran towards me, begging for a dime to buy bread for his little sisters. I hugged him and collapsed crying. I took him to all the shops he wanted to go to, bought a meal for him and his family and new clothes for all of them. Pickup trucks mounted with guns crossed the street - it was a group of soldiers headed to the warzone for backup. People are very used to such scenes by now. The roads were surrounded by barricades and the buildings were empty shells. Up on the mountain, a new army base has been set up.

The final week came ever so slowly, and it was time to go back to Kuwait on a Thursday morning. We felt that we had left a piece of us in this land. Back in the car, you could only see trucks loaded with weaponry, crumbling government buildings and crushed trees. After arriving in Kuwait, I felt depressed for two long days from all that I had witnessed.

I have a message to deliver to Syrians in Kuwait - love and peace is the only way out of this.

*Ibtisam Ayman is a Syrian student born and raised in Kuwait. She recently returned to Syria in order to complete visa requirements*

# Kuwait Times

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# *Siddiqah Fatima Zahra Mosque:* **The Taj Mahal of Kuwait**

By Ben Garcia

**T**he majestic Siddiqah Fatima Zahra Mosque, a replica of the Taj Mahal, has become a much-photographed building in Kuwait. Located in the affluent Kuwaiti neighborhood of Abdullah Mubarak near Kuwait International Airport, the mosque is a must-see attraction for tourists visiting Kuwait. According to a caretaker, people of various nationalities regularly drop by to take pictures of this beautiful mosque.



The construction of the mosque started in 2008 and was completed in 2011. The minarets and dome are adorned with brass crescents. The color of the mosque is a little different - while the real Taj Mahal is white, the Siddiqah Fatima Zahra Mosque is a combination of white and light brown marble sourced from Iran. Iranian and Indian artisans worked 24/7 for eight months etching designs into it.

From afar, the mosque is an impressive structure, and is no doubt a copy of the Taj Mahal, even though I haven't seen the real Taj. I went there one afternoon and only caretaker Raja Zaidi was there to guide visitors. He said even non-Muslims stop here to take photos. To enter the mosque, visitors need to pass through multiple security checks.



\*\*\*\*\*

The caretaker doesn't allow anyone inside without prior permission. "This is a mosque visited by people to worship Allah, and it's not a museum. The real Taj Mahal is a museum and is visited because of its rich history and because it was built many years ago without computers or engineers. It is recognized by people all over the world," said Zaidi. The Taj Mahal was built around 1632 by Mughal emperor Shah Jahan as a monument to his beloved wife Mumtaz Mahal. Located in Agra, India is it a globally recognized landmark and has been designated at UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1983.

The Siddiqah Fatima Zahra Mosque, according to Zaidi, has a library, separate male and female community centers and a diwaniya. The parking area can hold about 1,000 cars. The mosque is flanked by a row of villas on one side, and empty desert on the other. The gated building is centrally air-conditioned and is fully equipped with security cameras in all corners.

The mosque is reportedly the brainchild of former MP Hassan Jowhar, who raised about KD 1.2 million to pay for its construction. Inside, the walls have carefully carved inscriptions from the Holy Quran. While there are copies of the Taj Mahal in other countries such as the US, China and UAE, it is said that the builders obtained permission from the Indian Embassy in Kuwait to avoid copyright issues.



# 1st



**Kuwait Times**  
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## Local

# Libraries, bookstores vs digital age: Uphill battle for relevance



Abdulaziz Sanad public library



Sophia bookstore.

The ushering of the digital age has resulted in a huge leap in information and data gathering, as well as overall progress for mankind. But before such developments, public libraries and private bookstores were places to go when one sought knowledge and wisdom. While public libraries have been present in Kuwait since 1923, the current boom in information access through digital platforms has forced such facilities to fight an uphill battle for relevance.

Providing their response on the issue, a number of librarians and bookstore owners told KUNA that their facilities remain as beacons of knowledge and education despite all the circumstances and challenges. Official at Al-Faiha Public Library Fatima Al-Arada said that libraries are a huge part of the education process, helping countless knowledge seekers in the past and present to expand their horizons. The Faiha Public Library and its counterpart in Khaldiya continue to serve their purpose despite the digital age, said Arada, who indicated that some public libraries, such as those in Aradiya and Kaifan, still conduct tours for school students to instill the importance of reading. She added that the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL) continues to support public libraries, heeding their calls for development and progress.

Meanwhile, to compensate for the lack of physical material, the Kaifan Public Library began to digitize content to keep up with the current status quo. Kaifan library official Huda Al-Humaidan said publishers are keen on digitizing their products to appeal to the masses. She affirmed that such a step was a necessity to survive

nowadays, stressing that the NCCAL and the ministry of education should provide more assistance to keep public libraries up-to-date. Humaidan indicated that a lack of interest in reading was due to the advent of easy and on-the-go material, almost substituting books. She also blamed the current economic and political happenings in the region for driving people away from seeking books or heading to public libraries. Libraries and bookstores owned by the private sector do not fare any better, suffering from the dilemmas plaguing their public counterparts.

Razan Al-Marshad, a partner in Sophia bookstore, said the digital age was the least of the problems facing book lovers in Kuwait, because there are other matters, such as censorship, that keep dragging down public interest in reading and knowledge. To have a successful private bookstore, one must have a vast variety of books appealing to every age and gender, said Marshad, who indicated that most library costumers in her opinion were children and females.

Some private libraries and bookstores - such as Takween bookstore owned by Bothayna Al-Essa - are eager to have an extensive database of e-books. Having such a database, alongside physical books, is not necessarily a bad thing, because both formats complement each other, said Essa, who affirmed that any facility catering to the needs of knowledge seekers and students is a welcome sight in her opinion. The argument whether the digital age would kill libraries and bookstores might be subjective according to whom a person asks - however, such facilities seem to withstand the test of time as long as there are enthusiasts willing to open books. — KUNA



## Ghanem receives ice hockey team

**KUWAIT:** National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem received in his office yesterday Kuwait's ice hockey team on the occasion of their victory in a Hong Kong international tournament. Ghanem congratulated the team members for their achievements and wished them all the best in future competitions. The members of the team expressed their gratitude for Ghanem's support, stressing their determination to do more to proudly represent the Kuwaiti flag. — KUNA



KUWAIT: National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem meets Kuwait's ice hockey team.— KUNA

## Local

## News in brief

## KISR organizes workshop

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) has organized, in coordination with the UN resident coordination bureau, a workshop for universities and think-tanks to map out a strategy for technical, development and humanitarian coordination between the state and the UN during 2019-2023. UN expert Alexander Mackenzi said in a press release that the workshop aimed at establishing cooperation between Kuwait and the UN to back up and execute objective of the national policy for development, humanitarian aid, as outlined in New Kuwait Vision 2035. He added that the activity was also designed to ponder measures and common executive schemes for agile response and drawing up methods of cooperation, namely with the General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development and the office of the assistant foreign minister for international organizations. — KUNA

## Quality of Arab cities

**CAIRO:** Member of the Kuwaiti Municipal Council and chairman of the council's structural planning and projects committee Abdulwahab Buresli yesterday stressed the importance of exchanging Arab experiences in improving the quality of Arab cities. This came following a meeting with Assistant Secretary General of the Arab League Ambassador Haifa Abu Ghazaleh as part of preparations for the Arab Conference on Arab governments' vision to implement goals of "Sustainable Development 2030" scheduled to be held in Kuwait in Nov 2019. Buresli said that the meeting with Abu Ghazaleh dealt with a number of issues, as well as an invitation extended to Abu Ghazaleh to visit Kuwait to meet with the president and members of the municipal council to exchange ideas and experiences on the large projects being implemented by the country, topped by Silk City. — KUNA

## Disabled students' forum

**CAIRO:** Assistant Undersecretary for Private and Qualitative Education at the Ministry of Education Abdulmohsen Al-Huwailah stressed yesterday the importance of scientific, cultural, educational and sport activities as well as programs in enhancing disabled talents of various disabilities. This came in a speech on behalf of Education Minister Hamid Al-Azmi at the first Arab Forum for Schools for Special Needs and Integration, held under the auspices of Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Sisi in Sharm el-Sheikh. Huwailah said the activities and programs will boost students with movement, auditory or visual disabilities, even mental disability and autism, adding that these activities are a motivation to progress. He pointed out that this forum is the first at the level of the Arab world and does not only focus on sports - it extends to the scientific, cultural and educational arenas. — KUNA

## Social security forum wraps up

**KUALA LUMPUR:** The Regional Social Security Forum for Asia and the Pacific (ISSA) concluded yesterday its gathering, involving a delegation from Kuwait's Public Institution for Social Security. Head of the Kuwaiti delegation Khaled Al-Fadallah, in remarks to KUNA, expressed satisfaction at the forum outcome, namely the institution winning an excellence award and a certificate of admiration. He indicated that the participants took part in a contest on technological applications in social services. As for Kuwait, Fadalalah noted keenness on switching to electronic services, noting that state law 2014 stipulated digitizing all transactions by the government and public departments. Up to 400 personalities representing 42 Asian and Pacific countries took part in the forum. —KUNA

# Diplomat hails S Korean participation in projects

## Labor agreement with Philippines finalized

**KUWAIT:** A Kuwaiti diplomat extolled on Wednesday the role by South Korean firms in carrying out the state's development projects. Major development and construction projects will be executed in the coming period, which need expertise and contribution of friends in South Korea, Assistant Foreign Minister for Asian Affairs Ambassador Ali Al-Saeed told reporters. Saeed's remark was made on the sidelines of his participation in a ceremony held by the South Korean embassy marking its national day.

The diplomat referred to distinguished relations between Kuwait and South Korea in all domains. He stressed the importance of sharing visits by two countries' officials to further strengthen cooperation. Asked about joint agreements with the Philippines, Saeed revealed Kuwait's foreign ministry has put the finishing touches on an agreement to regulate contracting Filipino domestic workers.

He noted that a joint meeting between officials of the two countries' foreign ministries and relevant bodies will be held next week to discuss the workers' file. Kuwait understands the concerns of the Philippine side and affirms that its laws protect workers, he said, noting that these laws are lauded on the international level. — KUNA



**KUWAIT:** Assistant Foreign Minister for Asian Affairs Ambassador Ali Al-Saeed participates in a ceremony held by the South Korean embassy to mark its national day. — KUNA

## Head of Afro-Asian council lauds Kuwait over development

**CAIRO:** President of Afro-Asia Economic Council in New York Tareq Al-Obaid has praised Kuwait for implementation of visionary development. Kuwait will host the second session of the "Arab conference for governments' visions for implementing sustainable development objectives 2030" in Nov 2019, he affirmed in remarks to KUNA yesterday. Obaid, chair of the planned conference preparatory committee, told KUNA that Kuwait had been chosen to host the conference because it had worked out multiple visionary schemes for executing mega ventures, in line with the broad strategy launched by the government themed "New Kuwait 2035".

This visionary approach is inspired by guidelines from HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Obaid affirmed, singling out Silk City and the islands' development as some of the country's major ventures - projected to cost more than \$450 billion. Such projects are forecast to impact positively on economies and development in the GCC countries in general and the northern Gulf in particular, where Kuwait will host one of the key ports in Central Asia.



**Tareq Al-Obaid**

In his lengthy elaborations about Kuwait's successful approach toward development, he singled out HH the Amir's latest visit to China, capped with inking a number of accords, forecast to revamp investments "and quality of life in the region". The Afro-Asian council was established in 2017 as an international, independent entity to link up Asia with Africa economically. —KUNA

## Reducing inequality 'integral' part of SDGs: Kuwaiti envoy

**NEW YORK:** As stated in the tenth goal of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the world must find ways to reduce inequality globally to eradicate poverty and achieve social welfare worldwide, said a Kuwaiti diplomat late Wednesday. In the UN General Assembly's social, humanitarian and cultural issues meeting, known as the Third Committee, Kuwaiti diplomat Abdulrahman Al-Shatti said within the GCC and Arab context, Kuwait called for nations to band together to achieve the SDGs.

Shatti said his country's efforts in achieving equity, equality, and development globally was realized through the establishment of the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED), which has around 960 projects in 106 nations. The fund has allocated loans worth KD 6.2 billion (around \$21 billion) since its establishment in the 1960s. Within the Kuwaiti sphere, Shatti affirmed that

his country has been backing youth through the establishments of the National Fund for SMEs Development - an entity geared toward developing Kuwait's youth entrepreneur spirit - as well as the state ministry of youth and the Public Authority for Youth (PAY).

The Kuwaiti diplomat touched on the global challenges facing the SDGs, affirming that addressing inequality within the framework of family development, treatment of people with disability and lack of education were important to realize the UN plans. Shatti stressed that Kuwait will do its best to implement the tenets of the SDGs, saying that the future of the world depended on achieving this particular plan. According to the UN, the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), otherwise known as the Global Goals, are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity. —KUNA



**Abdulrahman Al-Shatti**



## Local

# Talks on Kuwait Olympic ban heading 'in positive direction'

## More issues still need to be ironed out

**BUENOS AIRES:** Negotiations to lift an Olympic ban on Kuwait are making progress but more issues still need to be ironed out before the country's Olympic return, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) said on Wednesday. Kuwait's national Olympic committee (KOC) has been banned since October, 2015 after the government was accused of interference with a new sports law. As a result, Kuwaiti athletes had to compete under the Olympic flag at the Rio de Janeiro Games in 2016 and they have no access to IOC funds.

With the dispute still to be resolved Kuwait now risks missing out on a second consecutive summer Olympics with the 2020 Tokyo Games less than two years away. The issue was discussed at the IOC executive board in the Argentine capital on Wednesday, IOC spokesman Mark Adams said. "There is progress there

but there is still a lot of work to be done," Adams told reporters. "But we are heading in the right direction."

The IOC, in what it said was a gesture of goodwill, provisionally lifted a ban on Kuwait two days before the start of the Asian Games in August, allowing the country to participate under its own flag. Talks in past years, however, failed to yield a result and Kuwait in 2016 repeatedly sued the IOC unsuccessfully for \$1 billion as compensation for the ban.

Kuwait said at the time the ban was unjustifiable and unfair and the IOC had not conducted "an appropriate investigation". Kuwait had also been suspended in 2010 over a similar dispute but was reinstated before the 2012 London Olympics. The country has had more than 15 national sports bodies suspended in the past years, including its football federation. — Reuters

## Fingerprint system must for all medics

By A Saleh and Meshal Al-Enezi

**KUWAIT:** The health ministry's administrative sector is preparing to implement the fingerprint attendance system for all employees at primary care centers, including doctors. In-

formed sources said this measure comes as a result of demands by the Civil Service Commission with regards to the illegality of making any exemptions.

Meanwhile, the health ministry's information office held two awareness exhibitions at The Avenues mall. The first exhibition was to mark World Heart Day, while the second was for Alzheimer's Day. Head of the office Dr Ghalia Al-Mutairi said the office marks several days in October, including those for breast cancer, the elderly, psychiatric health and osteoporosis. She said the office will participate in awareness activities in all health ministry sectors.

## KFSD chief meets sector leaders



Director General of Kuwait Fire Services Directorate Lt Gen Khalid Al-Mikrad met leaders of all sectors to discuss several matters related to work performance according to plans and strategies. — Hanan Al-Saadoun

## Frustrated thief goes on rampage

**KUWAIT:** A masked man who failed to steal money from a supermarket became enraged and destroyed ATM machines and cash registers. Employees were surprised by the state of the store, so they called the police, who reviewed surveillance tapes but could not identify the suspect immediately because he wore a mask. A co-owner said the suspect may have hidden until the store closed, then carried out his acts, adding that all funds are placed in a safe in the basement and only a few people know its location.

### Tweeters sought

The interior ministry sent several people to the public prose-

cution because of offensive tweets against Saudi Arabia. The suspects are being sought by detectives at the prosecution's orders, adding the tweets were made during the visit of the Saudi crown prince to Kuwait. This action was made by the interior ministry and not the information ministry because the latter is responsible for licensed sites only.

### False alarm

A malfunction in a school fire alarm caused chaos. Police received a call about a fire, so they rushed there along with firemen, only to discover there was no fire.

### Wanted men arrested

Police arrested three wanted men on theft charges, and one of them is wanted to serve four years in jail for a felony. The three were in a car that was pulled over and after their IDs were checked, they were found wanted. — Al-Rai

## Reckless driver held, car seized

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

**KUWAIT:** The interior ministry's relations and security information department commented on a video of a pickup driver driving recklessly in Qairawan. The department said traffic patrols located the vehicle and impounded it, and charged the motorist with endangering his and others' lives by driving the wrong way and concealing the license plate numbers.



### Sewage dump

The driver of a sewage truck who dumped his load on King Fahd Road was arrested and sent to the environment police, and action is being taken to deport him.



## KRCS to deliver relief supplies to Sulawesi island

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) yesterday announced the dispatch of a field team to Indonesia to distribute relief aid to people affected by the earthquake and tsunami on the island of Sulawesi which caused human and material losses. KRCS Chairman, Dr Hilal Al-Sayer, told Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that the KRCS will provide assistance and assess the needed equipment in order to meet the basic needs of all those affected on the island of Sulawesi as a result of the earthquake and devastating tsunami.

Sayer added that the KRCS sent the team to distribute emergency relief aid in cooperation with the Kuwaiti embassy in Indonesia and provide the basic needs of those affected people through purchase from local markets. He said that the relief team will review and assess the conditions of the affected people in the island in preparation for providing the necessary Kuwaiti aid to them and alleviate their plight and suffering. — KUNA



UK, Australia blame Russian military for cyber attacks

## Senators to review new FBI material on Kavanaugh

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ISTANBUL: A Saudi family waits at the barriers in front of the Saudi consulate yesterday. — AFP

# Mystery surrounds journalist's disappearance

## Turkey summons Saudi ambassador over missing journalist

ISTANBUL: Mystery surrounded the whereabouts of a prominent Saudi critic yesterday after Riyadh announced he had left their consulate in Istanbul—but Turkey and his fiancée said he had not been heard from since entering the building. Jamal Khashoggi, a contributor to the Washington Post, went to the Saudi consulate on Tuesday to receive an official document for his marriage. His fiancée reported him missing after the journalist, who has lived in self-imposed exile in the US since last year to avoid possible arrest, was not seen to emerge.

Saudi Arabia's ambassador to Turkey was yesterday summoned to the foreign ministry after a prominent journalist critical of Riyadh went missing, a Turkish diplomatic source said. The former government adviser, has been critical of some policies of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and Riyadh's intervention in the war in Yemen. After an initial period of silence Saudi Arabia said the consulate was working with Turkish authorities "to uncover the circumstances of the disappearance of Jamal Khashoggi after he left the consulate building" in a statement published yesterday by the state-run SPA news agency. A senior Turkish official however said on Wednesday the journalist was being held at the consulate.

"According to information we have, this in-

dividual who is a Saudi national is still at the Istanbul consulate of Saudi Arabia," presidential spokesman Ibrahim Kalin told reporters in Ankara. He said the Turkish foreign ministry and police were closely monitoring the case, adding that Ankara was in touch with Saudi officials. Khashoggi's Turkish fiancée has been waiting outside the consulate since Wednesday morning.

"I haven't received any news from him since 1 pm on Tuesday," 36-year-old Hatice, who would not give her family name, told AFP as she stood near barricades. She said Khashoggi had left his mobile phone with her. "We want to know his whereabouts. Where is Jamal?" she said. "We want him to come out of the consulate safe and sound."

### 'Very concerned'

The US State Department said it was investigating the matter. "We... are very concerned about where he may be," the Washington Post's international opinions editor, Eli Lopez, said in a statement late Tuesday. "It would be unfair and

outrageous if he has been detained for his work as a journalist and commentator," Lopez said. Turan Kislakci, a friend of Khashoggi and head of the Turkish-Arab Media Association, told AFP: "We are certain that Jamal is being held inside unless the consulate has a tunnel."

Hatice said Khashoggi had gone to the consulate to obtain documents for their own marriage to prove he was not married. Reporters Without Borders said Khashoggi's disappearance was "extremely worrying," calling on Saudi and Turkish authorities "to do everything to ensure that this journalist reappears - free-as soon as possible."

The Committee to Protect Journalists said the Saudi's disappearance was a cause for alarm "given the Saudi authorities' pattern of quietly detaining critical journalists".

In an article written for the Post in September 2017, Khashoggi wrote: "When I speak of the fear, intimidation, arrests and public shaming of intellectuals and religious leaders who dare to speak their minds, and then I tell you that I'm from Saudi Arabia, are you surprised?" At about

the same time, Khashoggi said he had been banned from contributing to the Al-Hayat daily, owned by Saudi Prince Khaled bin Sultan al-Saud. The writer admitted to defending the Muslim Brotherhood, which did not appear to please the newspaper.

While Riyadh classifies the Brotherhood as a "terrorist organization", Turkey is one of the group's main supporters. The hashtag "#kidnappingofJamalKhashoggi" was one of the most shared in Arabic on Twitter since Tuesday evening. Saudi Arabia, which ranks 169th out of 180 on the World Press Freedom Index issued by Reporters Without Borders (RSF), has launched a modernization campaign since the 2017 appointment of Prince Mohammed as heir to the throne. But the ultra-conservative kingdom, which won plaudits in June for lifting a ban on women driving, has drawn heavy criticism for its handling of dissent.

Khashoggi once said that before he left the kingdom, the Saudi government banned him from Twitter for warning "against an overly enthusiastic embrace of then-president-elect Donald Trump". He is one of the rare Saudi journalists to condemn repression in the country. In one of his last tweets, he criticized the lawsuit filed against a Saudi economist, Essam al-Zamel, after his arrest by Saudi authorities. —AFP

“  
**Where is Jamal?**  
”

## International

# Merkel pledges German fight against anti-Semitism on Israel visit

## Merkel, Netanyahu brush past differences, promote cooperation

**JERUSALEM:** Chancellor Angela Merkel spoke of Germany's "everlasting responsibility" to oppose anti-Semitism during a visit to Israel yesterday as she and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu brushed past their differences and promoted cooperation between their nations. The one-day visit by Merkel and members of her cabinet was part of German-Israeli government consultations held regularly, but came after Netanyahu's harsh criticism of European countries over their efforts to keep alive the Iran nuclear deal.

Germany and other European countries have also repeatedly hit out at Israeli settlement building in the occupied West Bank and warned over threats to remaining prospects for a two-state solution to the conflict with the Palestinians. But both leaders seemed determined to have the visit run smoothly, greeting each other warmly after Merkel's arrival on Wednesday night and touring an innovation exhibit together yesterday.

Merkel began the day with a visit to Israel's Holocaust memorial high in the hills above Jerusalem. After laying a wreath in the Yad Vashem memorial's solemn Hall of Remembrance, where an eternal flame burns, she spoke of Germany's responsibility as the perpetrator of the Holocaust. "From this comes the everlasting responsibility of Germany to remember this crime and to oppose anti-Semitism, xenophobia, hatred and violence," she said, reading out the message she wrote in the memorial's guest book.

Later after receiving an honorary doctorate from Israel's Haifa University, she answered questions from students and touched on the Iran nuclear deal. Ne-

tanyahu has urged European nations to follow the lead of US President Donald Trump and withdraw from the accord with his country's main enemy. Germany, like other signatories to the deal, says it is preventing Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons for now. Merkel noted the Iranian presence in neighboring Syria and how that has exacerbated the threat from Israel's enemy. She said the nuclear deal would be discussed further with Netanyahu. "On the principle that everything must be done to prevent nuclear armament, we absolutely agree," she said.

### 'She's lost hope'

Germany says the joint government meeting yesterday afternoon will focus on economic ties, innovation and technology, while noting that the consultations have been in place for 10 years. Felix Klein, who heads the German government's fight against anti-Semitism, is part of the delegation. Fears over a resurgence in anti-Semitism in Germany are expected to be discussed.

Merkel said ahead of the trip that there was "unfortunately a lot of anti-Semitism" in Germany, while also noting the two countries were linked by a "unique relationship".

There was however no shortage of controversy in the run up to the visit. Netanyahu's criticism of Europe related to Iran has been especially strong, and last week at the UN General Assembly he accused EU nations of "appeasement". At the same time, Germany has remained steadfast in its support for a two-state solution and in recent weeks joined calls against Israel's planned demolition of a Bedouin village located in a strategic area of the occupied

West Bank. On Wednesday, children from the village, Khan al-Ahmar, held signs with Merkel's picture outside the German representative office in Ramallah to ask for help. Speaking to students from Haifa University, Merkel denied a report that she threatened to cancel the trip if Israel moved ahead with demolition of the village beforehand. Yoram Ben-Zeev, a former Israeli ambassador to Germany, said Merkel would likely only "go through the motions" during the visit on issues related to the con-

flict with the Palestinians. "I think that for the time being she's lost hope that things can move," Ben-Zeev told AFP, noting Trump's confusing statements on the conflict, Netanyahu's right-wing stance and Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas's unpopularity. "Why should she put her hands in the fire?" The last joint government consultations in 2017 were postponed, with scheduling conflicts cited as the official reason. —AFP

for self-rule over the past year. Allied with army troops trained by the United Arab Emirates, the separatists in January seized control of parts of Aden province. Last month, UN-led peace talks failed to take off after Shiite Huthi rebels refused to fly to Geneva over what they said was the UN's failure to guarantee a safe return to the capital Sanaa, which the group has controlled since 2014.

Griffiths is pushing for another round of talks between the Saudi-backed government and the northern-based Huthi rebels linked to Iran. Nearly 10,000 people have been killed in Yemen since 2015, when Saudi Arabia and its allies joined the government's war with the Huthis. The war has triggered what the UN calls the world's worst humanitarian crisis, with more than three-quarters of Yemen's population needing aid and 8.4 million people at risk of famine.

## UN envoy meets south Yemen separatists head

**ABU DHABI:** UN envoy Martin Griffiths held talks yesterday with the head of Yemen's southern separatist movement, which has called for a "peaceful uprising" against President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi in the war-torn country. Aidarous al-Zoubeidi and Griffiths met in Abu Dhabi for talks on "the UN envoy's efforts to revive (peace) talks and the participation of the Southern Transitional Council in future negotiations", his STC movement said in a statement.

The STC, based in the government bastion of Aden and which has a representative branch in Washington, has accused Hadi's government of negligence and corruption. On Wednesday, it called for a "peaceful, popular uprising" against the Hadi government. The STC, which calls for the reinstatement of an independent south Yemen, has gained traction in its push



**JERUSALEM:** Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and German Chancellor Angela Merkel shake hands during a joint press conference at a hotel in Jerusalem. —AFP

Seven Turkish soldiers were killed yesterday by an improvised explosive device in southeastern Turkey, the local governor's office said in a statement. The governor's office in the Kurdish majority province of Batman blamed the attack on "terrorists" and said a wide operation had been launched to capture the culprits. The state has been battling Kurdish fighters in the southeast region after the collapse of a two-year ceasefire in 2015.

## Seven Turkish soldiers killed in bomb attack

ANKARA: Seven Turkish soldiers were killed yesterday by an improvised explosive device in southeastern Turkey, the local governor's office said in a statement. The governor's office in the Kurdish majority province of Batman blamed the attack on "terrorists" and said a wide operation had been launched to capture the culprits. The state has been battling Kurdish fighters in the southeast region after the collapse of a two-year ceasefire in 2015.

Local authorities had previously said four soldiers were killed and another five injured in the explosion as their military vehicle was passing through the Gercus district. But they updated the toll after three soldiers later died

in hospital. The outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) has waged an insurgency inside Turkey since 1984 that has claimed some 40,000 lives. The PKK is blacklisted as a terrorist group by Ankara, the United States and the European Union.

In its official Twitter account, the US embassy in Ankara condemned the "brutal attack" in Batman, offering condolences to the relatives of the dead, in a message in Turkish. "PKK terrorists must put an end to their attacks. We are standing by our ally Turkey in the fight against terrorism," the embassy said. Turkey and the United States are in recent months locked in one of the worst spats in their history over the detention by Ankara of an American pastor, which sent the Turkish lira into a freefall against the dollar.

Ankara is also frustrated by US support for the Syrian Kurdish militia forces deemed as "terrorists" by Ankara linked to the PKK, but by Washington as an effective force in the fight against Islamic State militants. —AFP

## International

# UK, Australia blame Russian military for cyber attacks

## Russian President Putin angrily rejects charges

**LONDON:** Britain and Australia yesterday blamed Russia's military intelligence service for some of the biggest cyber attacks of recent years—including one on the Democratic National Committee during the 2016 US presidential campaign. They said the GRU military intelligence service could have only been conducting operations of such scale on Kremlin orders. Russian President Vladimir Putin has repeatedly and angrily rejected similar charges.

He told US President Donald Trump during a July summit in Helsinki that talk of Russia meddling in the 2016 election was “nonsense”. But Britain's National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) and the Australian government pointed the blame directly at alleged GRU front operations such as Fancy Bear and APT 28.

The announcement could further strain relations between Russia and Britain that began to deteriorate with the 2006 assassination with polonium in London of former Russian spy Alexander Litvinenko.

“This is not the actions of a great power, this is the actions of a pariah state,” British Defense Secretary Gavin Williamson said during a visit to Brussels. “We'll continue working

with allies to isolate, make them understand they cannot continue to conduct themselves in such a way.” The Australian government added that Russia's actions violated its international commitments to “responsible state behavior” in cyberspace. “Cyberspace is not the Wild West,” Prime Minister Scott Morrison and Foreign Minister Marise Payne said in a joint statement.

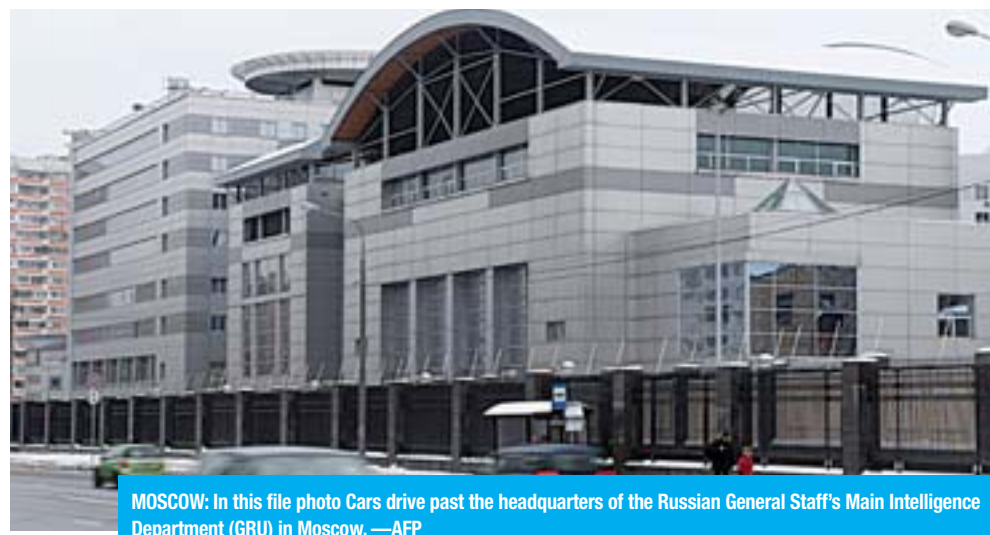
### Airports and tennis stars

Russia is not the only nation accused of conducting aggressive cyber operations in recent years. The United States blames North Korea for hacking Sony in 2014 and launching the WannaCry ransomware attack last year. US security researchers said on Wednesday that an elite group of North Korean

hackers was also the source of attacks on world banks that netted “hundreds of millions” of dollars. But British government sources said the NCSC has assessed with “high confidence” that the GRU was “almost certainly” behind the DNC hack that some Hillary Clinton supporters helped tip the US election in Trump's favor.

Batches of DNC emails were later published by WikiLeaks. Special Counsel Robert Mueller

“This is the action of a pariah state”



MOSCOW: In this file photo Cars drive past the headquarters of the Russian General Staff's Main Intelligence Department (GRU) in Moscow. —AFP

is investigating whether their release was coordinated with the Trump campaign. Mueller in July indicted 12 Russian GRU officers in connection with the DNC attack. The independent findings by Britain and Australia may help Mueller fend off some of the accusations of political bias in his probe. British sources said the GRU was also behind BadRabbit ransomware that caused disruptions on the Kiev metro and at an international airport in the Ukrainian port of Odessa last October.

The same attack affected Russia's Interfax news agency and the popular Fontanka.ru news site. British sources said the third strike resulted in the release of the medical files of global sports stars in August 2017. They included tennis's Serena and Venus Williams and Britain's Tour de France winning cyclists Chris Froome and Bradley Wiggins. The World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) thinks the files' release resulted from a data hack of its Doping Administration and Management system. —AFP

## European court rejects call for British massacre probe

**STRASBOURG, France:** Europe's top rights court yesterday rejected a call to probe the shooting deaths of 24 Malaysian rubber plantation workers by British troops in 1948, saying it came too late. Relatives of the workers have waged a decades-long fight for an enquiry into the “Batang Kali massacre”, which occurred on December 12, 1948 during what is known as the Malayan Emergency, when Commonwealth forces fought a communist-inspired revolt in what was then a British colony.

But the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg, eastern France, which hears complaints about alleged violations of the European Convention on Human Rights, rejected the petition as “inadmissible”. “The Court found it had no competence to examine the applicants' complaint because it did not come within its temporal jurisdiction,” a panel of seven judges

ruled. The court explained that it had no jurisdiction in the matter because the deaths occurred more than 10 years before Britain allowed individuals to bring cases directly to the European court.

The judges also noted that complainants had far exceeded the six-month limit on bringing a case in the wake of significant new evidence, given that soldiers had admitted to being ordered to fire on the workers as far back as 1970. The court's decision is final. In November 2015, Britain's Supreme Court also rejected an appeal by relatives for a public enquiry into the killings.

The ethnic Chinese laborers were killed after British soldiers entered the Batang Kali rubber plantation about 30 kilometers north of Kuala Lumpur, where they rounded up villagers for interrogation. Communist rebels in what was then called Malaya were predominantly ethnic Chinese who had begun arriving in Malaya in the early 20th century to work as laborers.

The British government said at the time that the villagers were suspected insurgents and were shot when they tried to escape, but other villagers said the men were summarily executed. The killings have been referred to as “Britain's My Lai” after a Vietnam War massacre by US troops, and Britain's Ministry of Defense has called it a “deeply regrettable incident”. —AFP

## Chile archbishop silent over abuse cover-up claims

**RANCAGUA, Chile:** Santiago Archbishop Ricardo Ezzati on Wednesday went before a prosecutor investigating a sex abuse scandal that has roiled the Catholic Church in Chile but declined to answer questions about accusations he was involved in a cover-up. The Catholic Church is under increasing scrutiny because of the escalating worldwide sex abuse crisis, which has seen scandals emerge in North and South America, Europe and Australia that have involved widespread claims of abuse-and cover-ups.

The highest-ranking member of the church in Chile, Ezzati entered the prosecutor's offices in the southern town of Rancagua under heavy police guard and surrounded by media. A solitary protester brandished a sign that read: “Depraved Roman Church.” After an hour being interviewed by Emilio Arias—the prosecutor investigating decades of sexual abuse of minors by Chilean priests — 76-year-old Ezzati left the courthouse saying: “We are all going to collaborate with everything.”

### No answers

Hugo Rivera, his lawyer, said the cardinal had used his right not to answer questions

about accusations he covered up the sexual abuse of minors, in particular crimes committed by a top diocesan aide. “For now the cardinal has not spoken until we speak with the public prosecutor's office about the definitive dismissal” of the charges, the lawyer said. He insisted the cardinal “is innocent.”

Arias began investigating scores of abuse cases in July after outrage over the church's own probe into decades of abuse by priests—crimes for which it often failed to take any action or handed down lenient punishments. Pope Francis, who has removed several Chilean bishops over the scandal, admitted there was a “culture of abuse” within the Chilean church after sending investigators from the Vatican. The pontiff said after meeting abuse victims that the church had failed “to listen and react” to the allegations, and vowed to “restore justice.”

Arias' office said in August that it was investigating 119 cases of abuse against Chile's clergy going back to 1960. “We are going to prosecute anyone who has committed crimes,” Arias told reporters after questioning Ezzati. “There is no witch hunt,” he said. “If there is a crime, we will prosecute... we will accuse and go to trial,” he said. Ezzati has denied allegations that he covered up cases of abuse, including those of a top aide, Oscar Munoz. Munoz, 56, is under house arrest while a probe continues into allegations he raped at least seven children. Abuse victim Juan Carlos Cruz mocked Ezzati's stance on Twitter. —AFP

# Campaigners hit the streets in bid to reverse Brexit

## Politicians call for another vote as fears grow over no-deal Brexit

**SOLIHULL:** Campaigners for a second referendum on Brexit are braving skepticism and even hostility as they hit Britain's streets as part of a growing movement to get Britons to change their mind. More and more politicians are calling for another vote and recent polls show some 40 percent of the population support it but reactions are very different in Brexit-voting areas. On a recent weekend, pro-EU volunteers fanned out in the centre of Solihull, a town in central England that voted 56 percent for Brexit in 2016 — four points higher than the national result.

One of the campaigners, 53-year-old Kevin McLaughlin, said he was "a bit apprehensive" about handing out leaflets. "Not everybody is going to share my point of view and you have to be prepared for that negativity coming back," he told AFP. McLaughlin is taking part in a political campaign for the first time, he said, because of his fears for the economy even if Britain and the European Union do strike a Brexit deal.

Solihull is an affluent town of 200,000 people that has benefited from the car industry—one of the sectors most concerned about Brexit because of international supply chains. But the local Jaguar Land-Rover plant will be shedding hundreds of jobs next year because production is being shifted to a factory in Slovakia as fears grow over a no-deal Brexit.

Despite the uncertainty, few passers-by appeared concerned or in favor of what campaigners are calling a "People's Vote". "We had a vote two years ago," said Todd Bonehill, a 21-year-old employee of a local hardware store. "They say it's a people's vote but the people's vote was two years ago. 17.4 million people voted for Brexit, that's the biggest political mandate the British government has ever been given," he said.

### I just hope

Another pro-EU campaigner, IT engineer Mark Wheatley said he was not put off and would continue pushing for a second referendum for the sake of "young people who want to work around the EU, travel around the EU". Wheatley, who took part in the Remain campaign ahead of the Brexit referendum, said he was "utterly disgusted" by the result. "The People's Vote" campaign, which brings together various anti-Brexit groups, has gathered momentum since the summer with a string of lawmakers expressing their support.

Prime Minister Theresa May has ruled out a second referendum, arguing that it would destroy trust in politicians, but some Conservative MPs have said they would be in favor. The main opposition Labor Party has said it would only consider it if parliament votes against a Brexit



**BIRMINGHAM:** Britain's Prime Minister Theresa May is pictured sitting with her ministerial red box, as she prepares her keynote speech in her hotel room, in Birmingham, central England. —AFP

deal and no general election is called in the next few months. The Liberal Democrats, a small opposition party, are the only mainstream force calling for a vote and are supporting a major demonstration planned in London later this month.

Philip Beyer, a local coordinator for the People's Vote campaign in Solihull, said he had already bought his train tickets for the protest in

the capital on October 20 — some five months before Britain is due to leave the bloc on March 29, 2019. Beyer said he was hoping for "at least a quarter of a million" people to take part. "That could change things," he said. But he admitted: "We've got a lot more work to do. I just hope that as we get nearer, people start thinking of the effect of leaving, enough people will change their mind". —AFP



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## International

# Senators to review new FBI material on Kavanaugh

## Lawmakers rebuke Trump for mocking Kavanaugh accuser

**WASHINGTON:** US Senators prepared yesterday to review the results of the new FBI probe into the background of Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh ahead of a final confirmation vote perhaps as early as tomorrow. The White House reviewed new interviews conducted by the FBI in its investigation of sexual assault allegations against the man President Donald Trump wants to secure a conservative majority on the court for the coming decades.

It sent the material to the Senate in the middle of the night and said it found nothing in them to corroborate the allegations against Kavanaugh. "With this additional information, the White House is fully confident the Senate will vote to confirm Judge Kavanaugh to the Supreme Court," White House spokesman Raj Shah said in a statement.

Even before Senators saw the new FBI material, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell moved to end debate on Kavanaugh's nomination, setting up a Friday procedural vote and a final vote as early as the following day. "There will be plenty of time for members to review and be briefed on the supplemental material before a Friday cloture vote," he said. Senators will review the new material in a secure room in the Senate, or can choose to be briefed on it.

### Sex assault allegation

Christine Blasey Ford, a university professor

in California, testified to the Senate Judiciary Committee last week that Kavanaugh sexually assaulted her at a house party in the early 1980s



### Trump gives FBI a week to investigate

while they were in high school. Kavanaugh vehemently denied the allegation and further sexual misconduct claims against him from two other women. One of them, Deborah Ramirez, has alleged that he showed her his genitals during a party in college.

As Senate Republicans moved quickly for a vote, Democrats and one key Republican, Jeff Flake, insisted that the FBI be allowed to reopen its background investigation of Kavanaugh. Trump relented, giving the FBI another week to investigate. The controversy over Kavanaugh's nomination comes ahead of November congressional elections in which Trump's Republican Party will battle to keep control of Congress.

In the new background probe, the FBI con-



**WASHINGTON:** Activists take part in a protest against US Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh in Washington, DC. — AFP

tacted 10 people and interviewed nine, The New York Times reported. It was not clear why the 10th was not interviewed. They include three people who Ford says were in the house at the time of the party. One is Mark Judge, a friend of Kavanaugh who the professor says was in the

room when Kavanaugh lay on top of her, ground his genitals against her and covered her mouth to keep her from screaming. Ford and Kavanaugh were not interviewed. The White House said their testimony before the senate committee was enough, the Times said. —AFP

## US mulls withdrawal from arms treaty

**GENEVA:** The United States hinted yesterday it might withdraw from a landmark Cold War nuclear arms reduction treaty if Russia does not stop "violating" the accord. Washington has complained for nearly two years that a ground-launched missile system deployed by Russia breaches the 1987 Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF). "This situation is untenable, and we have to take measures to deal with this continued violation of this very important treaty," US ambassador on disarmament Robert Wood told reporters in Geneva.

He said that pushing Russia to "come back into compliance" with the INF would be a top US priority at disarmament meetings at the United Nations in New York next week. But he added: "I just don't know how much longer we can continue to live up to our obligations under this treaty with Russia violating this treaty so blatantly and openly." Russia has repeatedly insisted its 9M729 missile system does not breach the treaty, but Wood said Moscow had long denied the weapon even existed.

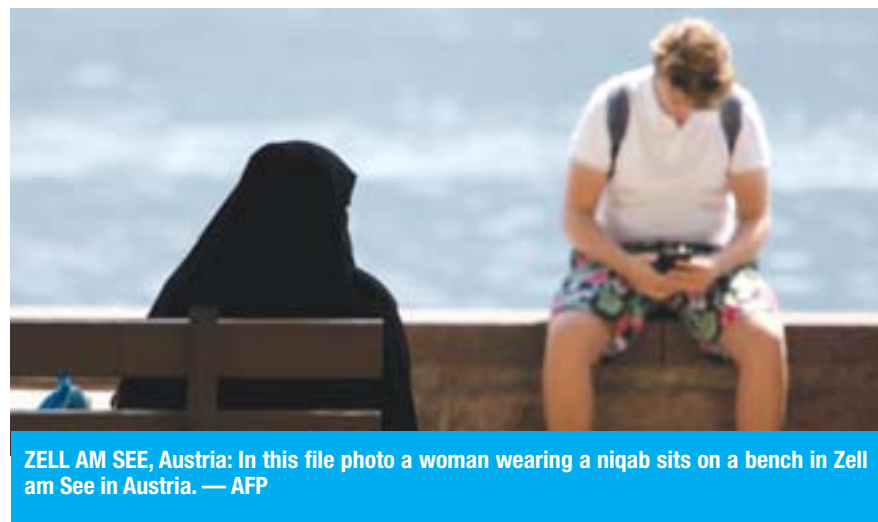
"The Russians continue to obfuscate, deny, because this is what they do best," he said. His comments came after the US ambassador to NATO, Kay Bailey Hutchison, said Tuesday that Washington was looking to "take out the missiles that are in development by Russia". She later clarified that she was not suggesting the United States would launch preemptive strikes on Russia, but underlining the need for Western allies to find ways to counter any escalation. —AFP

## Austria's burqa ban, delicate matter in Alpine resort

**ZELL AM SEE, Austria:** With its pristine waters, snow-covered mountains and breathtaking Alpine views, the Austrian lakeside town of Zell am See is one of the top European destinations for visitors from the Gulf region. And it aims to remain so, even though Austria introduced a ban on face-covering burqa or niqab veils a year ago. The picturesque little town south of Salzburg with a population of 10,000 is regularly described as "paradise" in Arabic-language reviews online. It draws tens of thousands of visitors from Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates or Oman every year.

They make up more than a quarter of all annual visitors and holiday brochures are readily available in Arabic. So when Austria banned the wearing of burqas or niqabs in all public spaces in October 2017 — under pain of fines of up to 150 euros — the town's authorities knew that enforcing the rule could be a delicate matter.

The aim of the ban, according to the government, is to further integration among Austrian Muslims at a time when fears about immigration and radical Is-



**ZELL AM SEE, Austria:** In this file photo a woman wearing a niqab sits on a bench in Zell am See in Austria. — AFP

lamists are sharply dividing society. But in resorts such as Zell am See, police are having to enforce it against tourists, fuelling fears that the high-spending Arab guests, and the valuable revenue they represent, might be scared off.

### Penalties

"I've heard some people say they don't want to come back now," said one restaurant worker who asked not to be named, even if he said hadn't particularly noticed a drop in business this year. Local police chief Kurt Moeschl said more than 200 fines had been handed out between June and September alone. But his officers were always at pains to remain respectful. "We

have been trying to implement the law with as much tact and sense of proportion as possible," he said.

Austrian embassies and missions abroad had been working to raise awareness of the new law, Moeschl said. And the police chief himself had hosted the Saudi ambassador in Zell am See to discuss the issue. Moeschl estimated that in around 90 percent of cases, the women had agreed to remove their veil after police officers explained the new law to them.

Walking along the lakeside, one couple from Saudi Arabia—who did not wish to be named—said they had been approached by police during their stay. "Yes, the police did talk to us about the niqab law. —AFP

## International

# Trump shrugs off report revealing a fortune in tax dodges, parental gifts

## Trump helped his father in improper tax deductions

**NEW YORK:** US President Donald Trump on Wednesday shrugged off a New York Times investigation that concluded he made his fortune with the help of more than \$400 million from his parents, partly through tax schemes, as a boring, rehashed “hit piece.” Trump has often boasted that he built a multi-billion dollar real estate empire from a \$1 million loan from his father, Fred, himself a prominent New York builder.

But the Times reviewed more than 100,000 documents including confidential tax returns and financial records that it said showed he actually received at least \$413 million in today’s money, in part through schemes to avoid taxes. “They used the concept of ‘time value of money’ in doing a very old, boring and often told hit piece on me,” he tweeted. “Added up, this means that 97% of their stories on me are bad. Never recovered from bad election call!”

Forbes magazine, meanwhile, estimated Trump’s fortune at \$3.1 billion—the same as last year, but a third smaller than it was in 2015. Forbes ranked Trump’s fortune at 259 in the world, down from 248 the year he was elected president. The Times story said that from the time Trump was a toddler, his father funneled millions of dollars to his four children through a sham corporation to avoid gift taxes. The Times said the records also indicate that Trump helped his father take millions more in improper tax deductions.

### Father’s favorite

And he helped devise a scheme that undervalued his parents’ real estate holdings by hundreds of millions of dollars, sharply reducing taxes on those properties when they were transferred to their children, according to the paper. A lawyer for Trump, Charles Harder, called the account “100 percent false, and highly defamatory.” “There was no fraud or tax evasion by anyone. The facts upon which The Times bases its false allegations are extremely inaccurate,” he added. “President Trump had virtually no involvement whatsoever with these matters.”

Addressing a press conference, White House spokeswoman Sarah Sanders criticized the article’s main claims, but said it was right in one important aspect: Trump’s business acumen. “I will say one thing the article did get right was that it showed that the president’s father had a great deal of confidence in him. ‘The president brought his father into a lot of deals and they made a lot of money together. His father went on to say that everything he touched turned to gold.’”

### Wealthy toddler

The paper’s contention that Trump was earning as much as \$200,000 a year in today’s money by the time he was three years old, and was the equivalent of a millionaire by the age of eight, drew considerable attention. The assertion

was pounced on by several late night talk show hosts, including comedian Stephen Colbert, the host of “The Late Show” on CBS. “So, let me get this straight: At one point, Donald Trump was an extraordinarily wealthy toddler. And today? He is still that,” he said.

Not everything, however, was a laughing matter: The Times said Trump’s tax-hating father used various methods to funnel his wealth to his children and shield it from the Internal Revenue Service, some of which tax experts said were improper or possibly illegal. Following the article’s publication, the New York State Department of Taxation and Finance announced it was “reviewing the allegations in the NYT article and is vigorously pursuing all appropriate avenues of investigation.” Democratic Senator Ron Wyden called for federal tax authorities to investigate as well.

“It’s critical that IRS fully investigate these allegations and prosecute any violations to the fullest extent of the law,” Wyden wrote on Twitter. Speculation about the source of Trump’s wealth has mounted since 2015, when he declared his candidacy for the nation’s highest office but broke with long-standing tradition by refusing to release his tax returns. He has been repeatedly rebuked over ethics violations for refusing to divest his assets in the Trump Organization, instead turning over control of the entity



**WASHINGTON:** In this file photo US President Donald Trump speaks during a roundtable discussion on the Foreign Investment Risk Review Modernization Act in the Roosevelt Room of the White House. — AFP

to his sons, Donald Jr and Eric. The president also continues to stay or make use of hotels and golf clubs he owns, leading to conflict of interest allegations and multiple lawsuits.

In July, a federal judge allowed a suit to proceed accusing Trump of violating the constitution by maintaining his interest in a hotel that does business with foreign governments. It marked the first time a court interpreted the anti-corruption clause in the constitution, known as the emoluments clause, and applied it to a sitting president. —AFP

## MeToo sharply polarizing US, one year on

**NEW YORK:** The #MeToo movement in one year has shaken the United States, brought down dozens of powerful men and threatens the confirmation of a Supreme Court judge, yet it has also become deeply polarizing and its long-term impact remains unclear. Accusations last October that Hollywood titan Harvey Weinstein engaged in decades of sexual assault, opened the floodgates with liberals still reeling from President Donald Trump’s 2016 election despite boasting that he groped women with impunity.

But #MeToo, like almost everything in America these days, has proved divisive. And with Supreme Court pick Brett Kavanaugh accused of misconduct by three women in the 1980s, the polarization is becoming near hysterical. On Tuesday, Trump was cheered by supporters in Mississippi when he mocked Kavanaugh’s accuser, Christine Blasey Ford, provoking a furious backlash from Democrats and criticism from moderate Republicans.

“It’s a very scary time for young men in America, where you can be guilty of something that you may not be guilty of,” he

said earlier this week. “You have this backlash that many Republicans are feeling that if Kavanaugh is not confirmed, it allows this liberal movement to take precedence over their politics and concerns,” explained Melissa Deckman, professor of political science at Washington College in Maryland.

Research indicates a gender gap—that women care more than men about sexual misconduct—but that party is the deciding factor, with Democrats caring more than Republicans. #MeToo spurred the ouster of Democratic lawmakers such as the popular Al Franken and John Conyers, hugely respected for his civil rights work. This 20 years after Bill Clinton survived allegations of sexual assault and harassment, as well as an attempt to remove him from office over a consensual affair with an intern that many now consider an abuse of power.

### Marathon, not a sprint

In an Alabama election last year, meanwhile, Republicans backed their guy despite accusations he molested teenage girls. With Kavanaugh, having a conservative judiciary appears to carries more weight with many in his camp than anything he may or may not have done as a teenager. #MeToo has been credited with spurring women to run for office in record numbers as Democrats hope next month’s midterm elections will strip Trump of his majority and elevate women into power. But a revolution remains a long way off.

The best possible outcome in November is that women will make up 24 percent of Congress, a US record and up from the current 19.3 percent, a rate of representation still flagging far behind many in the developed world. “This is a marathon, not a sprint,” says Jean Sinzdek, associate director of the Center for American Women and Politics at Rutgers University. “We are likely to see some gain... but we are not going to be at parity.”

Women have come forward to vent their anger over harassment and assault that for years they kept quiet, humiliated and disbelieving that they would be heard. Instead now they are being heard, being believed and supported. There are signs attitudes are shifting. This year, Bill Cosby, once one of the most famous Americans in the world, was convicted of sexually assaulting a woman in 2004 and sentenced to at least three years in prison.

From police reopening a rape investigation into one of the biggest soccer stars on the planet, to ex-gymnastics USA doctor Larry Nassar being jailed for life, barely a day goes by when #MeToo is not front-page news. But the lasting impact is unclear. There has been growing pushback questioning whether all sexual misdemeanors should be treated with the same kick-them-to-the-curb attitude. An increasingly vocal segment believe the movement may have gone too far in ousting at least some men without the evidence to back up their accusations. — AFP

## US state left with one abortion clinic

**CHICAGO:** The US state of Missouri was left Wednesday with one abortion clinic for its population of six million, after a new state rule effectively barred another clinic from performing the procedure. The Midwestern state is requiring abortion clinic physicians to have admitting privileges at a hospital. Officials say the rule is aimed at patient safety. But a Planned Parenthood clinic in the city of Columbia could not meet the requirement and its license to perform abortions expired, The Kansas City Star reported.

Opponents of hospital affiliation rules say clinics often can’t meet such a standard, because abortions are generally safe and their doctors don’t hospitalize enough patients to qualify for affiliation, according to Kaiser Health News. The Columbia clinic has asked a federal judge for a temporary exemption from the Missouri rule, but the judge has not yet ruled, The Star said. In the meantime, women seeking abortion were being directed to another provider in St Louis, 126 miles away, or to providers in neighboring states, US media reported.

The US Supreme Court in 2016 struck down a similar hospital-affiliation rule in Texas, saying in a 5-3 decision that the regulation was too burdensome, and “a substantial obstacle to women seeking abortions.” But a federal appeals court last month allowed Missouri’s requirement to take effect. About two dozen states led by conservative politicians have passed numerous measures to set limits on abortions, according to the pro-abortion rights Guttmacher Institute. The state of Iowa earlier this year passed the most restrictive abortion limit in the country. —AFP

## International

# US, China unease as Putin seeks India arms deals

## US pours cold water on India's efforts to avoid sanctions

**NEW DELHI:** Russian President Vladimir Putin headed for India yesterday looking to tie up billions of dollars in arms deals with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, likely irking the US, China and Pakistan in one fell swoop. The Kremlin said before the two-day visit by Putin and top Russian ministers that the "key feature" would be the signing of a \$5-billion deal for the S-400 air defense system, despite the risk of US sanctions against countries buying Russian defense kit.

On the eve of Putin's arrival later yesterday, the United States poured cold water on India's efforts to obtain a waiver to avoid sanctions under legislation called Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA). Upgrades in arms systems "including the S-400 air and missile defense system" would be a particular focus for CAATSA, a US State Department spokesperson was quoted as saying by India's PTI news agency.

Last month Washington slapped financial sanctions on the Chinese military for buying Russian Sukhoi Su-35 fighter jets—and the S-400. However, the US is in a difficult position when it comes to India. It wants to bolster ties with New Delhi to counter China's growing assertiveness, something that has also rattled India. Washington and New Delhi announced plans last month for joint military

drills in 2019, and agreed on the exchange of sensitive military information. The US is now India's second biggest arms supplier.

But Russia remains number one, and a string of new deals with the Asian giant would be a major win for Moscow—and a big snub to the US. Putin and Modi, who appear to enjoy a personal rapport, are also likely to discuss a deal for four Krivak-class frigates worth \$2 billion and 200 light utility Ka-226 helicopters pegged at \$1 billion. "It's about time we showed that we are not going to be pushed around by Washington," R.R. Subramanian, a Delhi-based strategic affairs analyst, told AFP.

Experts say India needs the sophisticated S-400 to fill critical gaps in its defense capabilities, in view of China's rise and

perceived threats from Pakistan, against whom India has fought three wars. Indian Air Force Chief Birender Singh Dhanoa said Wednesday that the S-400, and the 36 Rafale fighter jets purchased from France—a 2016 deal mired in political controversy—represent a "booster dose" for the country.

Last year India and China had a military stand-off over a Himalayan plateau claimed by Beijing and Bhutan, a close ally of India. China has also perturbed India by loaning vast amounts of money to countries such as Sri Lanka where it has long held sway.

“**US in a difficult position**”

## Pakistan urges US to resume aid

**WASHINGTON:** Pakistan pledged Wednesday to support negotiations with the Taliban to end Afghanistan's 17-year war as it asked the United States to restore military aid and stop blaming Islamabad for the extremists' strengths. Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi visited Washington to explain the Afghanistan strategy of new Prime Minister Imran Khan, who has long advocated talks over military action with the Taliban and other Islamist insurgents.

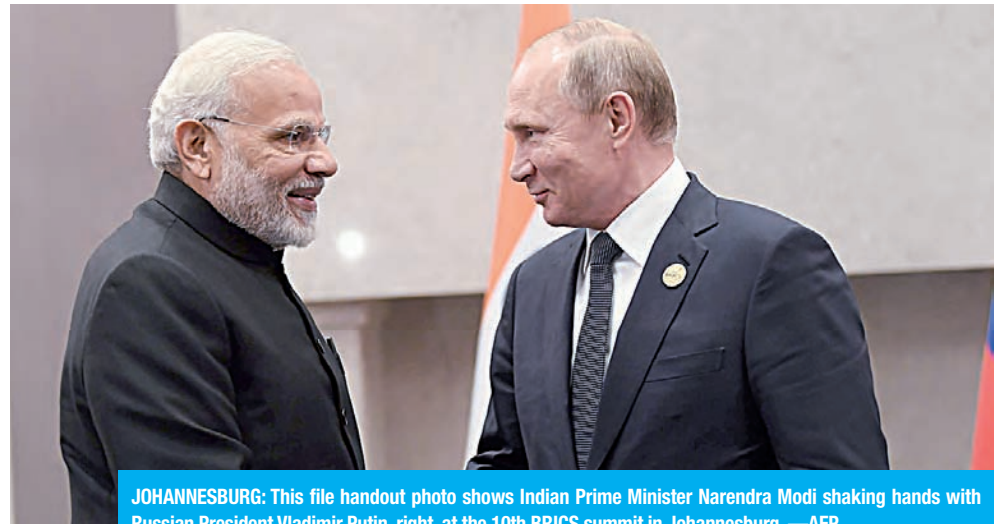
A month after Washington cut \$300 million in military aid, Qureshi said he found Secretary of State Mike Pompeo "ready to listen" to Pakistan and said he was returning to Islamabad "slightly more hopeful" than before. Pakistan had been the main supporter of the Taliban regime which imposed an austere brand of Islam on much of Afghanistan until a US military campaign launched after the September 11, 2001 attacks. The United States has pressed for years for Pakistan to crack down on militant groups involved in Afghanistan as well as virulently anti-Indian groups that operate virtually openly.

It says the insurgents have safe havens in Pakistan's border areas and links to its shadowy military

establishment, accusations which Islamabad has repeatedly denied. Trump has accused Pakistan, where US commandos killed Al-Qaeda chief Osama bin Laden, of duplicity. Qureshi said Pakistan would act "in good faith" to jumpstart diplomacy with the Taliban, whose representatives held a breakthrough meeting in July in Qatar with US representatives in a tentative bid to try to end the longest-running US war.

"Pakistan is willing and Pakistan will use all its influence to do that. We feel that Afghanistan's stability and peace are linked to ours," Qureshi said at the US Institute of Peace a day after meeting Pompeo. But he added: "Contrary to the largely held view here, our influence on the Taliban is diminished." He said he believed that the Taliban's shift to negotiations, as well as an unprecedented if temporary ceasefire, was based on the militants' own calculations. "Even the Taliban recognize that things have changed in Afghanistan. They can at best maintain a stalemate but those days are gone when they will just go in and take over Kabul."

Qureshi said Pakistan "cannot and should not be held responsible for the failures in Afghanistan" as he pointed to disunity in the Kabul government as well as corruption. "I have seen or read a lot of criticism and think it's unfair not to recognize the contributions Pakistan has made to the successes that you've had in Afghanistan—and you've had successes despite the challenges," he said. —AFP



JOHANNESBURG: This file handout photo shows Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi shaking hands with Russian President Vladimir Putin, right, at the 10th BRICS summit in Johannesburg. —AFP

### Boldly go

Putin, 65, and Modi, 68, are also set to discuss a possible second Russian-built nuclear power plant. Moscow is currently expanding India's biggest nuclear power plant in Kudankulam. Also on the agenda is Russian training for Indian astronauts as New Delhi aims to launch its first crewed space mission in 2022. Rakesh Sharma, the only Indian to travel in space, did so on a Soviet spacecraft in 1984. But military kit is the main focus. India is the world's biggest arms importer and is undergoing a \$100-billion upgrade of

its ageing hardware, much of it of Soviet vintage including MiG jets that have frequently crashed in the Indian countryside. Russia and India have had warm ties since Stalin died in 1953. But annual Russia-India trade has slipped below \$10 billion since 2014, as Modi cultivated closer diplomatic and economic ties with Washington, while Russia has courted Pakistan and China. Ties received a boost last year when Modi and Putin held a fruitful annual bilateral summit, followed by meetings in Astana and at the G20 in Germany. —AFP

## India deports seven Rohingya to Myanmar

**GUWAHATI:** India yesterday deported seven Rohingya to Myanmar, despite UN warnings that the men faced persecution in a country where the army is accused of genocide against the Muslim minority. The men, who had been in detention for immigration offences since 2012, were handed over to Myanmar authorities at a border crossing in India's northeast state of Manipur. "Seven Myanmar nationals have been deported today. They were handed over to the authorities of Myanmar at Moreh border post," said senior Assam police officer Bhaskar Jyoti Mahanta.

Photos showed the seven men seated in a bus bound for the border in the remote hilly state bordering Myanmar's far northwest. The UN had voiced concern that returning the men ignored the danger they faced in Myanmar, where for decades the Rohingya have been targeted in violent pogroms by security forces. A UN special rapporteur had warned India risked breaking international laws on refoulement—the return of refugees or asylum seekers to a

country where they could be harmed.

Legal efforts to stymie their deportation failed when the Supreme Court yesterday rejected a petition on their behalf and upheld their status as illegal immigrants. "Even the country of their origin has accepted them as its citizens," a three-judge bench said. The Rohingya are despised by many in Buddhist-majority Myanmar, which refuses to recognize them as citizens and falsely labels them "Bengali" illegal immigrants.

They were concentrated in Rakhine state, the epicenter of a Myanmar army offensive that over the past year has driven 700,000 Rohingya Muslims into Bangladesh. Myanmar's army has denied nearly all wrongdoing, insisting its campaign was justified to root out Rohingya insurgents. But a UN fact-finding mission said there was enough evidence to merit prosecution of several top Myanmar military commanders for crimes against humanity and genocide against Rohingya civilians.

India considers the Rohingya a security threat, pointing to intelligence which it says links the minority group to extremist organizations. The government had ordered last year that all Rohingya inside India—New Delhi puts the figure at 40,000—be deported. The Supreme Court is considering a petition challenging the order as unconstitutional. The UN says there are 16,000 registered Rohingya in India. —AFP



## International

# Extortion, abuse: Myanmar workers arrive debt-laden in Thailand

## Thai agents auction off jobs to highest bidder

**YANGON, Myanmar:** A “mafia” of recruitment agents is trapping Myanmar migrants to Thailand in debt bondage despite a 2017 law meant to fight exploitation in the kingdom’s notoriously shadowy job market, activists and workers say. Migrant labor-much of it from Myanmar-has propped up Thailand’s economy for years, with foreigners working everywhere from factories to fishing boats, part of a global chain to produce standard supermarket items such as frozen shrimps, ready meals and pet food.

After allegations of slave labor and trafficking prompted the European Union to threaten a ban on Thai products in 2015, the kingdom’s ruling junta has scrambled to clean up industries reliant on a migrant workforce. The new law that came into force in July last year was meant to crack down on a shady recruitment process, which left desperate migrants vulnerable to corrupt brokers and exploitative companies. But more than a year later, foreign workers and labor experts say a lack of enforcement and government oversight means migrants are no safer, often shelling out hundreds of dollars in inflated fees to agents and ending up in debt even before they even secure a job.

Although the legislation says Myanmar migrants should pay no more than 150,000 kyat in fees to agents, many end up paying up to \$800, a colossal

sum for low-paid workers from one of the most impoverished countries in the world. “The agents took advantage of us,” said 40-year-old Ma Oo, who had to pay \$400 for a job in an electronics factory near Bangkok and was visibly scared to speak out.

### Real mafia

Thai firms usually hire local agents to scout workers from neighboring Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar, although the latter is by far the largest source for labor, with more than two million migrants working in Thailand. But in many cases, Thai agents then auction off the jobs to the highest bidder among their Myanmar peers clamoring for business in a highly-competitive market, activists say. The Myanmar brokers-or their sub-agents-scour rural villages for workers and

transfer all the extra costs to them, leaving migrants trapped in “debt bondage” as they struggle to pay the exorbitant fees, says migrant labor specialist Andy Hall.

Thai and Myanmar agents collaborate as “a real mafia that makes a lot of money on the backs of migrant workers”, explains Aung Kyaw, president of the Migrant Workers Rights Network in Thailand, which acts as a de facto union. The situation is even worse, he says, for the several hundred thousand Myanmar migrants working unregistered, who are even more vulnerable. In one ongoing case, a fam-

“The agents took advantage of us”

”

## Bangladesh kids fight climate change aboard floating schools

**CHALAN BEEL, Bangladesh:** Mosammat Rekha’s older cousins grew up unable to read and write, their tiny village so frequently cut off from the nearest school by floods that would rise suddenly in their remote corner of disaster-prone Bangladesh. But seven-year-old Mosammat is learning her ABCs aboard a boat fitted with a classroom and play equipment that is helping children thrive even as climate change alters the world around them. “We can attend classes even during the rainy season, when our homes are barely above water,” the seven-year-old said aboard the vessel in Chalan Beel, some 175 kilometers northwest of Dhaka.

Climate change is already taking its toll across Bangladesh, a densely populated and impoverished country the United Nations has identified as among the most vulnerable to a warming planet. Millions in the low-lying nation are being forced to adapt to overflowing rivers, rising seas and increasingly extreme weather in a country frequented by destructive storms and cyclones. Twenty million people there could be made “cli-

mate refugees” by the end of the century, a UN panel has warned, turfed out of their homes as rivers swallow towns and seas encroach on coastal communities.

In villages like Kalidaskhali on the banks of the Padma River, these forces are already reshaping lives by the hour. As much as five meters of river-bank can disappear in a single day, consuming everything in its path, local government official Azizul Azam told AFP. More than 9,000 people have been displaced by the Padma in just five years, as the main tributary of the Ganges encroaches further and further inland. “Today my backyard is gone. I had a cowshed over there... now it is just water,” said Rukaiya Khatun, watching helplessly as chunks of earth disappeared into the turbid water inching towards her home.

“The Padma has devoured everything.” River erosion-though long a phenomenon in the delta nation-is rapidly accelerating due to climate change, said Atiq Rahman, a member of a Nobel Peace Prize-winning UN climate panel. A warming planet has made monsoon rainfall more unpredictable across Bangladesh and melted Himalayan glaciers to the north, turbocharging the waterways that criss-cross the country. Many have struggled to adapt as the river has turned, in the words of one villager, “wild and furious”.

### Full steam ahead

But elsewhere, local ingenuity is finding ways around the turbulent and unpredictable forces of nature. Students at BRAC University in Dhaka last month unveiled a model for a floating bamboo



**THAILAND:** This photo shows Myanmar migrant workers walking through a housing complex behind a seafood market in the Thai coastal province of Samut Sakhon. —AFP

ily-including two children-was trafficked into the kingdom and forced into slavery on a fishing boat, beaten, unpaid and their documents confiscated.

### Finger Pointing

Thai authorities insist that they maintain strict oversight of the country’s agents and threaten them with stiff penalties if they do not respect the law. If there are problems, “they may be on the side of the Burmese recruiters”, Anurak Tossarat from the Ministry of Labor said. But agents in Myanmar blame their Thai peers for stoking the illegal trade and demanding kickbacks in exchange for jobs.

“(We) have to fight to get job offers from Thai agencies. The more money you give them, the more offers your agency gets,” an agent in Yangon told AFP on condition of anonymity. “They are bullying us.” Campaigners urge tighter scrutiny by officials in both countries and up the supply chain to the multinational buyers of Thai produce to bring an end to the exploitative practices. Britain’s biggest retailer Tesco, food giant Nestle and chocolate maker Mars-which all source products in Thailand-said they were working with local partners to improve practices, vowing to probe any allegations of wrongdoing. —AFP

home, one that could survive a flood or be easily relocated elsewhere in case of inundation. In Chalan Beel, floating schools chug along rivers and lakes swollen by floods, bringing education to students long denied a chance to learn in one of Bangladesh’s poorest locations. “Now, they have year-round education,” said Mohammad Rezwan, head of the Shidhulai Swanirvar Sangstha charity that runs the pioneering project.

Today they run more than 20 “floating schools” in the Chalan Beel area. Other charities have replicated the idea in different parts of Bangladesh, where the world’s largest river delta empties into the Bay of Bengal. Smaller models are equipped with desks, libraries and blackboards while more elaborate, twin-storey designs also boast slippery slides, monkey bars and swing sets for playtime. Children even learn to use laptop computers, all powered by banks of solar panels atop the boats. At night, once school is over, adults come aboard to learn new techniques for farming in an extreme climate.

Rezwan said farmers were being taught how to plant flood-resistant crops in floating seed beds, a possible lifeline for rural communities who can lose a year’s harvest when the waters suddenly rise. Bangladesh has invested more than \$400 million into a new special agency for adaptation projects, including flood embankments, floating farm technology and mobile water-purification stations. “It shows how seriously we are taking this,” said Mukhlesur Rahman Sarker, deputy chief of the government’s Bangladesh Climate Change Trust, of the new fund. —AFP

## Six rescue divers drown in bid to save boy

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Six Malaysian rescue divers drowned in a freak accident while searching for a boy who had gone missing in a pool at an abandoned tin mine, emergency officials said yesterday. The 17-year-old boy had gone missing Wednesday while fishing in the pool popular with anglers in the township of Puchong west of the capital Kuala Lumpur.

Mohammad Hamdan Wahid, fire and rescue department director-general, said the divers encountered strong undercurrents that spun them around in the murky water.

Local police chief Abdul Aziz Ali said the spinning caused them to lose their diving gear. They were pulled out of the water after 30 minutes but by then they were already unconscious, he added. Fire chief Mohammad described the death of six officers in one day as the “worst tragedy” to hit his department. The search for the missing youth was continuing, he said. —AFP

## International

# Wife of ex-Malaysian leader Razak charged with money laundering

## Rosmah Mansor pleads not guilty to 17 charges

**KUALA LUMPUR:** The luxury-loving wife of Malaysia's former prime minister was yesterday charged with money laundering and tax evasion linked to a multi-billion-dollar scandal that helped bring down the country's previous government. Rosmah Mansor, the 66-year-old wife of former prime minister Najib Razak, pleaded not guilty to 17 charges that could see her spend the rest of her life in prison.

Revealed in Malaysia for her lavish overseas shopping sprees and fetish for Birkin handbags as well as dazzling jewelry, Rosmah was released on bail after spending the night in detention at the office of the country's anti-corruption agency. Her husband is also out on bail on more than two dozen charges linked to the alleged plunder of state funds during his nine years in power.

Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, 93, who came back from retirement to challenge Najib, has launched a crackdown against corruption in the previous government. "There is no idea of revenge and anything like that... If you steal money, you will be charged in court," the official Bernama news agency quoted him as saying. In



### Prime Minister Mohamad launches crackdown

the charge sheets, prosecutors accused Rosmah of having "engaged directly in a transaction that involves proceeds of unlawful activity" in violation of laws against money laundering.

A dozen charges involved deposits to a single bank account belonging to her from 2013-2017, totaling more than seven million ringgit. The remaining charges were for dodging taxes on the deposits. Lead prosecutor Gopal Sri Ram told the court Rosmah's alleged offences were "very serious". He also said Rosmah "had approached a witness with a request to give a statement in her favor". Rosmah was allowed to post bail of two million ringgit (\$483,365) and ordered

to surrender her passport. She was barred from contacting any witnesses.

### Battered image

Rosmah, wearing an orange dress and scarf, arrived under heavy security at the court complex yesterday after being arrested the previous day and held overnight at the headquarters of the country's anti-corruption agency. In court, she sat quietly in the dock and did not look at



**PUTRAJAYA:** Rosmah Mansor, wife of former Malaysian prime minister Najib Razak, arrives at the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) in Putrajaya, Malaysia. — AFP

the gallery, where family members were seated. Meanwhile her husband made a separate court appearance yesterday in connection with some of the more than two dozen charges lodged against him.

Najib, 65, has denied any wrongdoing despite revelations that hundreds of millions of dol-

lars ended up in his bank accounts. Lawyers said the disgraced former first couple face protracted legal battles as they are being tried in ordinary courts. "For the trial and all subsequent appeals to conclude, this may take some years," said N. Surendran, a lawyer who advises the rights group Lawyers for Liberty. —AFP

## International aid effort for Indonesia swings into gear

**PALU, Indonesia:** An international aid effort to help tens of thousands of victims of Indonesia's quake-tsunami disaster swung into gear yesterday after days of delays, with planes flying in vital supplies for shattered communities. A total of 1,424 people have been confirmed dead and over 2,500 injured after the monster earthquake struck Friday, sending destructive waves barreling into Sulawesi island. The double disaster reduced buildings in the seaside city of Palu to rubble-but aid has been slow to arrive and looting has broken out.

Yesterday, police armed with guns stood guard outside petrol stations to ensure order in long, winding queues. Trucks carrying supplies have reportedly been ransacked en route to Palu. Authorities initially turned a blind eye but now police have been rounding up dozens of suspected looters and the military warned that soldiers will fire on anyone caught stealing. While rescuers continue to comb through destroyed buildings, hope is fading that anyone will be found alive under the rubble. Authorities say over 100 people are



**PALU:** This aerial image shows a damaged mosque in Palu in Indonesia's Central Sulawesi after an earthquake and tsunami hit the area on September 28. —AFP

still unaccounted for.

Hundreds have been buried in mass graves as overwhelmed authorities race to avert a disease outbreak from corpses rotting in the tropical heat. The Indonesian government initially refused to accept international help, insisting its own military could handle the response, but as the scale of the disaster became clear President Joko Widodo reluctantly agreed to allow in overseas aid. Efforts to get desperately needed aid to hungry and thirsty victims, many now homeless and sleeping in evac-

uation camps, were slow to get off the ground due to severed transport links.

Palu airport, badly damaged in the twin disaster, finally re-opened to all flights Thursday, allowing the international aid effort to ramp up. "The government of Indonesia is experienced and well-equipped in managing natural disasters, but sometimes, as with all other countries, outside help is also needed," said United Nations aid chief Mark Lowcock, announcing the UN was pledging \$15 million towards the recovery effort. —AFP

## S Korea proposes US-North Korea tradeoff

**WASHINGTON:** An end to the Korean War in return for the verified dismantling of its major North Korean nuclear facility: South Korea's foreign minister on Wednesday proposed this tradeoff to unblock stalled negotiations between the United States and North Korea. North Korea's leader Kim Jong Un and US President Donald Trump held a groundbreaking summit in Singapore in June, where they reached a vague agreement to denuclearize the Korean peninsula, but there has been little movement since.

The North, which is under United Nations sanctions, has carried out six nuclear tests and says it has missiles that can hit the United States. "What North Korea has indicated is they will permanently dismantle their nuclear facilities in Yongbyon, which is a very big part of their nuclear program," Seoul's Foreign Minister Kang Kyung-wha said in an interview with The Washington Post. Her comments came ahead of a visit on Sunday by US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo to North Korea, where he will meet strongman Kim Jong Un in an effort to further the denuclearization effort. During a summit with South Korean President Moon Jae-in in September, Kim expressed his readiness to close the Yongbyon facility, which is capable of uranium enrichment, if Washington took "corresponding measures." —AFP

# Lifestyle

Friday Times

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2018

[www.kuwaittimes.net](http://www.kuwaittimes.net)

A model presents a creation by Junko Shimada during the Spring-Summer 2019 Ready-to-Wear collection fashion show in Paris. —AFP

Asia's stars grace the red carpet at Busan Film Festival

See Page 20



Hong Kong film director Stanley Kwan (center) poses with actress Baihe Bai (left), Sammi Cheng (second left), Gigi Leung (second right) and Angie Chiu (right) on the red carpet during the opening ceremony of the 23rd Busan International Film Festival (BIFF) at Busan Cinema Center in Busan yesterday.



South Korean singer and actress Choi Soo-young (center) walks on the red carpet during the opening ceremony.— AFP photos



Hong Kong actress Baihe Bai (second right) and Sammi Cheng (right) walk on the red carpet.



South Korean actress Shin So-yul poses on the red carpet.

## Asia's stars grace the red carpet at *Busan Film Festival*

The looming threat of Typhoon Kong-Rey failed to cloud a glittering opening to the 23rd Busan International Film Festival (BIFF) yesterday, with a parade of the region's brightest stars gracing the red carpet. South Korean K-pop singer-turned-actress Choi Soo-young was joined at the festival's opening gala by the likes of Hong Kong actress Sammi Cheng, here with the drama "First Night Nerves", and China's Zhao Tao, who stars in the latest Jia Zhangke feature "Ash is Purest White". Veteran Japanese composer and pianist Ryuichi Sakamoto, in town to collect the Asian Filmmaker of the Year award, took to the stage to perform the theme song from his Oscar-winning score for "Merry Christmas, Mr Lawrence".

Sakamoto also scored the animated feature "My Tyrano: Together, Forever", a Korean-Japanese-Chinese co-production having its world premiere in Busan. The composer said he hoped its themes of peace and tolerance would resonate with recent political developments in the region. "It seems finally that peace is coming to the Korean peninsula and as an Asian this fills me with immense joy," said Sakamoto. "Film helps connect people and this is also what this film festival does."

Noted international filmmakers attending this year's event include Hollywood producer Jason Blum ("Whiplash", "Get Out") and Indian hit-maker Rajkumar Harani ("3 Idiots"). Festival organizers were bracing for the imminent arrival of Typhoon Kong-Rey tomorrow, as the storm front was projected to close in on the South Korean coast over the next 48 hours. After being downgraded from Super Typhoon status on Thursday, organizers hoped the storm would weaken further as it moved north. Regardless, the local weather bureau has suggested there was an 80 to 90 percent chance of a direct hit on Busan, with winds of up to 110 kilometers per hour (68 mph) and heavy rain.

Meet-the-public events scheduled for the city's Haeundae Beach, featuring the likes of local star Moon So-ri, have been moved under cover at the Busan Film Centre over the next few days, with memories of the havoc wrought by Typhoon Chaba in 2016 still fresh in the minds of organizers. This year they are taking no chances after that storm uprooted stages and lay waste to festival displays. The world premiere of the South Korean drama



South Korean actress Soo Ae



Chinese actress Zhao Tao



Japanese musician Ryuichi Sakamoto (left) and director Kobun Shizuno (right) pose on the red carpet.



South Korean actress Kim Gyu-ri



Martine Therouanne (left) and Jean-Marc Therouanne (right), the co-founders of the Festival International des Cinemas d'Asie (Vesoul International Film Festival of Asian Cinemas), pose on the red carpet during the opening ceremony.

"Beautiful Days" opened the festival yesterday, starring acclaimed actress Lee Na-young in her first role for six years. Lee plays a North Korean mother reunited with her family after escaping to the South looking for a better life.

Director Jero Yun told the festival's opening press conference the film's themes of reconciliation were a direct response to his personal hopes that relations between North and South Korea would continue to thaw. "Like in my film, dialogue is the first step," Yun said. "I wanted to send a positive message to the audience and the hope that we see the dialogue continue."

#### Fresh start

Festival organizers are positioning the 2018 edition as a fresh start for the influential event, which has endured government funding cuts and backroom turmoil ever since screening the controversial "The Truth Shall Not Sink with Sewol" documentary in 2014. That film was critical of Seoul's handling of the tragic April 2014 sinking of a ferry which left more than 300 people dead-

most of them schoolchildren. "Of course we are excited to be back and we are excited about the future for Busan and for Korean film," said festival director Jay Jeon.

Jeon and BIFF organizing committee chairman Lee Yong-kwan were removed from their previous posts at BIFF during the Sewol documentary turmoil, but both have been reinstated for this year's event. Expected highlights include the world premiere Friday of acclaimed Hong Kong director Stanley Kwan's theatrical-themed drama "First Night Nerves", along with the world premiere of the Philippine triptych "Lakvayan".

That film's premiere-combining the talents of leading filmmakers Brillante Mendoza, Lav Diaz and Kidlat Tahimik-will launch the festival's "Cinema as a response to the nation" program, which is helping celebrate 100 years of Philippine film. BIFF runs until October 13 and will feature 323 films from 79 countries, including 115 having their world premieres. — AFP

## 'Beautiful Days' portrays N Korea refugee's past and hope

This year's Busan International Film Festival (BIFF) opened yesterday with a movie portraying the plight of a North Korean defector and the unlikely family she formed during her harrowing journey. South Korean feature film "Beautiful Days" centers on Zhen Chen, a young Korean-Chinese man who visits Seoul to find the mother who abandoned him 14 years ago, in a bid to fulfill his dying father's wish to see her. The college student is left disappointed by the cold reception from his mother, played by top South Korean actress Lee Na-young—a bar waitress who lives in a decrepit house with her gangster lover.

But Zhen Chen soon finds out his mother's dark secret—she was a defector from the North sold by human traffickers to his father, a poor Korean-Chinese farmer living near the border.

Once full of resentment over her fate, she eventually finds peace with her newfound family but her dark past continues to haunt her, leading to tragic events that leave her separated from her husband and son. The sombre, 104-minute film borrows many bleak details from the reality of the border between North Korea and China, home to a booming trade in human trafficking, drugs and prostitution.

Those fleeing poverty and repression in the North must first cross this border—but many women who do so are sold by human traffickers to rural Chinese men as brides or forced into sex work. Many endure a life akin to slavery, fearing harsh punishment at home once they are caught by Chinese authorities and are sent back. China largely considers the North's defectors as economic

migrants and repatriates them to the North where they face imprisonment, torture or time in labor camps.

#### Reconciliation

Director Jero Yun said his earlier chronicle of North Korean defectors—and many people he had met at the frontier between the North and China—inspired the latest film. "Madam B" — told the story of a married North Korean refugee sold to a poor Chinese farmer, who she lived with for more than a decade before escaping to the South. "I was always interested in telling stories of those at the margins of society... including those marginalized by the division of the two Koreas," the French-educated director told reporters. "I wanted to pose questions about 'What is the true meaning of family?' by portraying (a) family that is unconventional in many aspects," he added.

Despite the bleak plot, "Beautiful Days" ends with cautious optimism, which Yun said was a metaphor for hopes of reconciliation and a better future between the two Koreas. The flashpoint Korean peninsula is the last frontier of the Cold War, where hundreds of thousands perished during the 1950-53 war that sealed the division between North and South. The two rivals have occasionally clashed over the heavily-fortified border, and the North has staged nuclear tests for decades. But ties have warmed to a level unseen for decades after three historic summits between the North's leader Kim Jong Un and the South's dovish President Moon Jae-in. "One of the key messages I wanted to convey through this movie is 'starting anew,' regardless of what happened in the past," Yun told reporters. "And the two Koreas coincidentally are moving closer to each other these days as if starting their once-fraught relationships anew... I find the whole development very positive," he said. — AFP



(From left to right) Jay Jeon, director of the Busan International Film Festival (BIFF), South Korean director Jero Yun, actor Lee Yu-jun, actress Lee Na-young, actor Jang Dong-yoon, actor Oh Kwang-rok and actor Seo Hyun-woo pose for photographs during a press conference of the opening film 'Beautiful Days' for the BIFF at Busan Cinema Center in Busan yesterday. — AFP

## Lifestyle | Music &amp; Movies

## Cabello leads in nominations for MTV Europe Music Awards

US singer Camila Cabello leads in nominations for the MTV Europe Music Awards, according to a list released yesterday. Even before the ceremony to be held November 4 near Bilbao in northern Spain, it has been a banner year for the 21 year old singer born in Cuba. Her hit song "Havana" reached the top of the US charts in late January in the US, as did her album "Camila" that same week. The audio version of the song, without video, has been heard more than 1.3 billion times on YouTube.

In August Cabello won two of the prestigious prizes at the MTV Video Music Awards—artist of the year and video of the year. Last year the former member of the band Fifth Harmony was named best pop artist at the MTV Europe Music Awards. This year she has been nominated in six categories including best song, best video and best artist. Next are singer Ariana Grande and rapper Post Malone with five nominations, followed by Canadian artist Drake and Britain's Dua Lipa with four. Canadian singer Shawn Mendes, winner of three prizes last year, was nominated for three awards this year. — AFP



Camila Cabello performs on-stage during Taylor Swift's Reputation Stadium Tour at NRG Stadium in Houston, Texas. — AFP

## EgyptAir stands by 'surreal'

## Drew Barrymore interview

EgyptAir stood by its story yesterday after US actress Drew Barrymore's spokesperson denied she took part in an interview with the airline's in-flight magazine that went viral over its bizarre content. "This interview with Drew Barrymore in the Egypt Air inflight magazine is, umm, surreal," journalist and Yemen expert Adam Baron wrote on Twitter. The post, which included pictures of the three-page interview in the print edition of the magazine, has been liked or shared more than 10,000 times since Baron tweeted it on Tuesday.

A spokesperson for Barrymore told the Huffington Post website that the actress "did not participate" in the interview and that her team was "working with the airline PR team". But EgyptAir insisted the interview was legitimate. "This a professional magazine interview

conducted by Dr Aida Tekla Former president of the HFPA (Hollywood Foreign Press Association) and one of the voting members of the Golden Globes," it tweeted back at an aviation journalist who asked if it was "completely false".

A spokeswoman for EgyptAir told AFP yesterday that the article was authentic, without giving further details. The journalist Tekla also defended the story. "The interview with Drew Barrimoor (sic) which took place in New York is genuine & far from fake," she tweeted. "As far as Drew we interviewed her several times I saw her grow up before my eyes she is charming and talented." The article in EgyptAir's Horus magazine is also sprinkled with grammatical errors. It opens with a commentary on Barrymore's private life, suggesting she had been "unstable in her relationships most of her life" and that she had been in "almost 17 relationships, engagements and marriages".

"Psychologists believe that her behavior is only natural since she lacked the male role model in her life," it says. Barrymore's reported responses to the questions also raised eyebrows. "I feel overwhelmed when someone tells me that I have regained my image and managed to lose that extra weight," she was quoted as saying in answer to a question about being overweight due to pregnancy. "I find this a great opportunity to encourage every woman who is overweight to work on regaining her beauty and body." Asked about the status of women today, she was quoted as saying: "I cannot deny that women made a great achievement over the past century; there is a significant progress recorded by people who study women status throughout history." — AFP

In this file photo shows Drew Barrymore attending Netflix's "Santa Clarita Diet" Season 2 Premiere at The Dome at Arclight Hollywood in Hollywood, California. — AFP

## Will Bollywood brush #MeToo claims under the red carpet?

The first time Bollywood actress Tanushree Dutta accused her co-star of sexually harassing her on set a decade ago, she was threatened with violence - and then ignored. When she repeated the accusation in an interview last week - a year after reports of sexual misconduct engulfed Hollywood - it unleashed a wave of sympathy that some are predicting could launch India's own #MeToo moment. "Woah, looks like the code of omerta in Bollywood is finally cracking," film writer Radha Rajadhyaksha said on Facebook, using the Italian word for the Mafia's code of silence.

Veteran actor Nana Patekar has denied harassing Dutta on the set of the film "Horn OK Please". Patekar's lawyer was not immediately available for comment, but has previously said he would take legal action over what he called "false allegations". Among those who have backed the actress are Priyanka Chopra and Sonam Kapoor Ahuja, daughter of one of Bollywood's best known actors and a top star in her own right. Ahuja urged others to come forward, saying many of her colleagues had been harassed and bullied. "If we don't encourage their voices and instead vilify and question them, how will victims ever become survivors? Let them speak up! Stand up with them!" she tweeted.

Meanwhile Amitabh Bachchan's refusal to respond to a question about the issue - he testily responded to a journalist with the words "neither is my name Tanushree Dutta nor Nana Patekar" - sparked rare criticism of Bollywood's biggest star. Indian film expert Meenakshi Shedde said awareness was growing and younger people in the industry - particularly women - were now more willing to speak out against sexual misconduct. But she said the tight-knit nature of the lucrative industry, much of which is controlled by a handful of powerful families, worked against transparency as big players could close ranks against accusers. "Bollywood is extremely clanish and these issues are too close to the bone," said Shedde, a film critic, writer and consultant. "People are more aware and articulate, but the entire system is geared to protect the perpetrators," she told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

### 'A man's world'

In a television interview last week Dutta said harassment cases had for years been "discussed in hushed tones, behind closed doors" in Bollywood. India's Cine and TV Artistes Association said on Tuesday it was "highly regrettable" that a complaint filed by Dutta at the time had not been properly investigated and urged members who had suffered similar experiences to come forward. "No apologies can suffice, hence we must resolve today to never allow such lapses to occur again," said a statement from the association published by Indian media.

One of the few Indian actresses to have spoken out on harassment in the past year is Sri

Reddy, a star of films in the Tamil and Telugu languages of southern India. While less well known in the West than Mumbai-based Bollywood, the film industries of the south are a huge draw locally and among the diaspora, with hits such as the 2015 "Bahubali" smashing box office records.

"The truth is finally coming out," Reddy told the Thomson Reuters Foundation in an inter-



In this file photo Indian Bollywood actress Tanushree Dutta poses for a photo during an event for the Mandate Model Hunt contest in Mumbai. — AFP

view before the latest claims emerged. "Lots of girls looking for film breaks are abused, discriminated against and treated like prostitutes." In June three actresses from the Malayalam language movie industry of southern Kerala state walked out of their film association after an actor accused of orchestrating a colleague's kidnap and rape was readmitted. That led to the formation of the Women in Cinema Collective, which has brought together actresses with female editors, directors, cinematographers and costume designers. "It is all about entering a man's world, where a woman is powerless," said Beena Paul, critically acclaimed director of Malayalam movies. "There is no support system and it is a tradition that needs to change."

India's minister for women and child welfare wrote to major production houses in December asking them to comply with the Sexual Harassment at Workplace Act. The directive requires employers to set up committees to look into complaints of sexual harassment - but they only deal with cases involving staff, leaving freelancers out in the cold. "We are standing up because we have no choice," said director Vidhu Vincent, a member of the women's collective. "An awareness about what goes on in the industry has been created, but systems have to be put in place to deal with the issues." — Reuters

## Knotted gun sculpture unveiled in Beirut

A copy of a knotted gun sculpture which has become an emblem for peace was unveiled on Tuesday in Lebanon's capital Beirut near a tower block whose shattered facade evokes the civil war that once ripped the city apart. Swedish artist Carl Fredrik Reuterswärd made the original sculpture, a revolver with its barrel tied in a knot, as a tribute to John Lennon after he was shot in New York in 1980. It stands outside the United Nations building in Manhattan, and the Non-Violence Project Foundation, created by Reuterswärd, has placed copies in other cities around the world.

The version in Beirut stands on the seafront, just around the corner from the old Holiday Inn

building, a concrete tower block deeply scarred by shell and bullet holes from the 1975-90 civil war. The conflict was fought largely between Christians and Muslims and also drew in Palestinians, Syria, Israel and other foreign powers. For much of the war, Beirut was divided along its "green line" separating mostly Muslim west Beirut from the mostly Christian east. Twenty-eight years after the war ended, the damage is still visible in many parts of the city. While Lebanon is now at peace, conflict has mired many other parts of the region and the seven-year war in neighboring Syria has sent a million refugees to seek refuge in its borders. —Reuters



Knotted Pistol is unveiled on October 2, the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi which is considered to be the international day of non-violence. —EPA

## New York seeks to claw back 'Big Oyster' past



Workers with the Billion Oyster Project prepare to place oysters in the waters near Brooklyn's Bush Terminal Park in New York. — AFP photos



Workers with the Billion Oyster Project place oysters in the waters near Brooklyn's Bush Terminal Park.



A wagon full of oysters waits to be placed in the waters near Brooklyn's Bush Terminal Park by workers with the Billion Oyster Project.

One sunny morning in New York, a dozen biologists and volunteers stand in knee-deep water, chucking net sacks of oyster shells down a human chain, before planting them in containers on the riverbed. Why? To build an oyster reef. The goal? To restore a billion oysters by 2035 to America's largest city—not as a delicacy for the dinner table but in an environmental bid to clean up its notoriously filthy harbor water and generate greater biodiversity. Dressed in waders, the group battles under the hot morning sun on the Brooklyn shoreline, the Statue of Liberty and iconic skyscrapers of New York's Financial District rising up on the horizon. The net sacks contain empty oyster shells, or ones that have been assiduously cleaned or "cured"—then inserted with oyster larvae—and placed into containers planted on the seabed that will form a reef.

"This was the Big Oyster before it was the Big Apple," jokes Mike McCann, an urban marine ecologist with the non-profit group The Nature Conservancy. "That's a history that has been forgotten by a lot of New Yorkers and this project brings it back," explains the 32-year-old. When English explorer Henry Hudson sailed into New York harbor in 1609, he had to navigate 89,000 hectares of oyster reefs that fed Lenape Indians for generations, writes Mark Kurlansky in his 2006 book "The Big Oyster."

The Dutch colonialists who followed knew today's Ellis Island and Liberty Island as the Island of the Little Oyster and the Island of the Great Oyster. "Oysters are ecosystem



Workers with the Billion Oyster Project place oysters in the waters near Brooklyn's Bush Terminal Park.

engineers and they build (a) three-dimensional reef habitat," explains Katie Mosher, restoration manager of the Billion Oyster Project (BOP), which was set up in 2014.

### 'Immediate improvement'

"It's full of different shapes and sizes of oysters that other species love to hunt in and live in and to search for prey," she adds. Oysters also filter and clean the water when they breathe, making it clearer. This enables light to penetrate more easily to the bottom and allows more plants to grow on the seabed. The molluscs also recycle nutrients and nitrogen,

and can even mitigate the energy of large waves, reducing flooding and preventing erosion during storms or hurricanes.

But New York's original oyster population was almost extinct by the dawn of the 20th century, a victim of overfishing, industrial age pollution and sewage. The waters of New York became too toxic to cultivate much marine life until the Clean Water Act of 1972 prohibited the dumping of untreated wastewater and garbage. Since then, life has slowly returned. "I had no idea there were oysters in New York City!" exclaims Emma Latham, 22, one of the volunteers and recent ecology graduate from Princeton University.

"I think it's just great that we are able to take any small piece of land and make it do more, because there's such a dire environmental impact by having so many people in such a small space with so much concrete." The BOP works with dozens of partners, schools and hundreds of volunteers to build oyster reefs throughout the five boroughs of New York, and is already reaping the first rewards.

In just four years, they have already created 28 million oysters, estimating that the harbor waters have never been better in 150 years. "We definitely noticed an improvement when we put oysters down on the bottom," said Mosher. "There's more fish, more crabs. And it happens right away." The reefs have also fueled a growth in wild oysters. Every so often a whopper is found, such as one measuring 20 cm (8 in) in August—the largest known oyster in the city in a century—on Pier 40, in the Hudson River at Greenwich Village. — AFP



This photograph shows finished silk products at a showroom in a silk factory in Rajshahi.



Bangladeshi workers at a silk factory in Rajshahi. — AFP photos



A Bangladeshi worker pulling threads from boiled silk worm cocoons.



Silk threads at a silk factory.



Finished silk products at a showroom in a silk factory.

# Bangladesh seeks revival of silk industry

**B**angladesh's silk industry is one of the oldest in the world, with farmers in the northwestern border district of Rajshahi producing some of the most sought-after silk yarns. They specialize in high-quality mulberry silk—widely known as Bengal or Rajshahi silk—produced by the larvae of moths fed on fresh mulberry leaves and used for luxurious items of clothing. After around 40 days, the worms start to form cocoons—by spitting out saliva around their bodies—which are then placed in bamboo frames before being harvested. The cocoons are then boiled in hot water, killing the worm inside and separating the ultra-thin threads, which are coiled on huge bobbins and hung out to dry.

“Each cocoon contains around 500 meters (1,600 feet) of thin thread,” said Akhi Akter, a supervisor at the Sopura silk factory, one of the country's key silk producers. The dried threads are sent to a mill where workers join several threads together and put them onto looms to make cloth. This material is then boiled, washed and waxed before being sent to tailors to make mostly sarees, tunics and “dupattas”, a kind of shawl-cum-scarf. Bangladesh's silk industry was hit hard in the 1990s and 2000s by what officials called faulty government policy which flooded the market with cheap Chinese silk imports.

But now the country has initiated a multi-million-dollar plan to revitalize the industry and create hundreds of thousands of new jobs. “Sericulture has a huge prospect if we could nurture it properly,” Abdul Hakim, the head of the country's Silk Development Board, told AFP. He said the number of silk farmers has plummeted to around 2,000 from 10,000 only a few years ago.

“Our plan is to bring in Chinese experts and train our farmers. It will increase our silk production,” he said. With the booming of the Bangladesh economy—it grew over 7.5 percent last year—demand for Rajshahi silk has increased several fold, Akter said. An average quality Rajshahi silk saree now sells for some \$100 and premium silk items can go for over \$250 in the local market. “There is a huge potential export market for our silk,” she said. “We just need to do it right.” — AFP



Young silk worms eating mulberry leaves in a silk factory.



A Bangladeshi worker boiling silk worm cocoons.



Silk worm eggs in a silk factory in Rajshahi.





French chef Lionel Beccat (right) shopping for fish at a wholesaler at Tokyo's Tsukiji fish market. — AFP



Frozen tuna lined up in rows ahead of the new year's first auction at the Tsukiji fish market in Tokyo.

## Tsukiji: It's not all about the fish, says Michelin chef

When two-starred Michelin chef Lionel Beccat reminisces about Tsukiji, the world's biggest fish market in Tokyo, it is not the ocean's bounty that stirs memories but the fishmongers themselves. "The story of Tsukiji is quite simply a story about human relationships," Beccat tells AFP as he browses through the market at the crack of dawn in search of prawns and fish for his lunchtime service. Beccat, 42, is executive chef at Esquisse, a restaurant in the Japanese capital's ultra-chic Ginza district, and he has been making the short journey to the market for the past 12 years.

But all that will come to an end on October 6 when Tsukiji closes after 83 years, moving to a purpose-built site at Toyosu, several kilometers east. Now a veteran of the market, he says it took several years to establish a trusted relationship with the merchants of Tsukiji. "I quickly had to get used to the idea that I knew nothing about fish," said Beccat, even though he comes from the French fishing port of Marseille.

At Tsukiji, "it is the fishmongers who choose their clients. Not the other way around," he said, adding that even the top chefs show deference to the vendors and their knowledge. The market itself, a rabbit warren and tourist magnet of tiny shops selling every conceivable type of produce from the sea, cannot fail to inspire a professional chef, Beccat said. "Tsukiji is a world unto

itself." He finds inspiration in "the range of produce one finds there, the expertise and advice from the fishmongers" and even "the smell, the movements, the light". "Coming here, day after day, week after week, month after month, gradually changes the way you cook, even without you noticing it."

### 'So many fish'

One of Beccat's suppliers, Masatake Ayabe, has enjoyed a 30-year career in Tsukiji and fears that business might suffer when the market moves to Toyosu. "There is no other market in the world which brings together so much fish, and people do us the honor of coming to shop here," said Ayabe. "But I am sure we will have fewer customers at Toyosu." He said he was sad to leave Tsukiji and "was not really looking forward to going to Toyosu".

"It is further away for customers, we wonder how we will have such good relationships with them. There are also quite a few question marks over deliveries, access," said Ayabe, who runs the Kamemoto Shoten fishmongers. Tsukiji critics say the 83-year-old market is no longer fit for the modern world, pointing to questionable hygiene standards in the narrow streets and insufficient protection against fire.

Tokyo mayor Yuriko Koike, who has championed the move, says the new market, on the site of a former gas plant, will use cutting-edge technology to provide a modern environment for selling fish. Beccat himself acknowledges "it will be better from a sanitary point of view" and the fishmongers will suffer less from extremes of cold and heat, but he too points to a difference in atmosphere. "Tsukiji is addictive: if you do not go in the morning, the day is not quite the same," he said. "It is the place that has taught me most in my life. A page of my professional life is turning." — AFP



A general view of Tokyo's Tsukiji fish market.



French chef Lionel Beccat preparing shrimp for a meal at his restaurant in Ginza, Tokyo's shopping district and near the Tsukiji fish market.

## Thai bay made famous in 'The Beach' shut indefinitely

The glittering Thai bay immortalized in the movie "The Beach" will be closed indefinitely to allow it to recover from the impact of hordes of tourists, an official said Wednesday, as a temporary ban on visitors expired. Maya Bay, ringed by cliffs on Ko Phi Phi Ley island, was made famous when it featured in the 2000 film starring Leonardo DiCaprio. It was initially shut for four months in June due to beach erosion and pollution as the white-sand paradise sagged under pressure from thousands of day-trippers arriving by boat.

But a survey of the problem during the temporary ban made clear that the short-term fix was not going to work and that the damage was worse than originally thought. "We have evaluated each month and found out that the ecological system was seriously destroyed from tourism of up to 5,000 people daily," Songtam Suksawang, director of the National Parks office, told AFP. "It's very difficult to remedy and rehabilitate because its beach was completely destroyed as well the plants which cover it," he said, adding it was "impossible" for recovery to occur in the allotted time.



This undated handout photo shows the beach on Maya Bay closed to visitors on the southern Thai island of Koh Phi Phi. — AFP

He provided photos to AFP showing the degradation of Maya Bay's shores, where trees and smaller vegetation have been gradually uprooted as its white sands receded. Thailand's Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation announced the indefinite closure in a royal gazette published on October 1. It said the restrictions on tourism would not be lifted until the ecosystem "fully recovers to a normal situation". Besides beach erosion, heavy traffic around the azure waters can also damage sensitive coral reefs, already vulnerable to rising sea temperatures and climate change.

Arnaud Simons of Ocean Quest Global, an environmental organization assisting the government with coral recovery around Maya Bay, said the bay's rehabilitation could "last for four years at least" and the indefinite closure is "very good news". "Over the last few months, the monsoon season and rough sea conditions have indeed hindered the efforts of coral rehabilitation, but we have no doubt that the longer term objectives... will be met."

### Tourism overload

Thailand attracted up to 35 million visitors last year, many of whom flocked to Krabi town where boat trips carried visitors to nearby island destinations—of which Maya Bay is a key attraction. Nanthapat Horbut, who runs a tour company in Krabi, was "disappointed" by the closure as his company had promised Maya Bay to customers booked for Thailand's tourist high season which begins in November. "All tourists... want to see Maya Bay, both Chinese and western tourists alike," Nanthapat said. Paul Pruangkarn of Pacific Asia Travel Association—a non-profit working with Thai operators to promote responsible tourism—said the decision was a double-edged sword for local communities. "You need to also consider the livelihoods," said Pruangkarn. "They still have to feed themselves and support their families." "The government has to consider how then can they assist them." —AFP



Rooftop Macau is one of Taipa's hip outdoor spaces

# Authentic Macau: Exploring old Taipa Village

Poor old Macau. When this 30.5-square-kilometre region is not overshadowed by brasher neighbour Hong Kong, it's associated only with its Vegas-style casino-stuffed Strip. But this Special Administrative Region of China was a Portuguese colony for more than 400 years, and thanks to this history has developed a unique culture that blends European and Chinese values, cuisine and architecture.

Nowhere is this unique fusion more obvious than Taipa Village, a cultural district on the island of Taipa, which in spite of rampant development by casino resorts on the next-door Cotai Strip, has managed to cling onto its pastel-coloured houses, quiet backstreets and traditional restaurants. So if you're looking for a slice

of old Macau, here's what not to miss in Taipa Village.

## Rooftop Macau

You'll recognize Rooftop Macau by its gaggle of hipsters sunning themselves on the roof. They've gathered in this white-walled boutique to browse its printed t-shirts, playful stationery and trinkets - but most importantly, to drink its tiny drip coffees on the mini rooftop that overlooks Rua do Cunha.

## Taipa Village Art Space

Down pretty Rua Dos Clerigos (itself one of Taipa's most Instagrammable streets, with houses in a range of birthday-cake

shades) is the Taipa Village Art Space. This narrow, two-storey gallery anchors the arty side of Taipa Village. The space showcases the work of a range of artists (both local and from further afield) and hosts a number of hands-on workshops and classes.

## Antonio

The eponymous restaurant of Portuguese chef Ant nio Coelho is a Macau institution. Not because the kitchen churns out excellent Portuguese and Macanese favourites (although that it does: try the fried codfish cakes and classic octopus salad), or because its blue, white and yellow-tiled walls make it feel like a proper Lisbon tasca (local restaurant), but because at weekends, the atmos-

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phere gets kicked up a gear with live music and (sometimes) riotous sabrage. If you can't get a table at AntÙnio, try nearby La Famiglia, which fuses Macanese favorites with Italian flavors.

#### Rua do Cunha

Unofficially known as Macau's 'food street', Rua do Cunha is a pedestrianised avenue that runs through the spine of Taipa Village. As the (unofficial) name suggests, it's chocka with snack shops, restaurants and hawkers peddling Macanese favorites (expect plates of almond cookies, beef jerky, egg tarts) as well as Chinese dishes.

Must-visit eateries along this street include historic Lord Stow's Bakery, which sells Macau's favorite egg tarts; and O Santos, a traditional Portuguese restaurant whose walls are lined with football memorabilia. A few streets over is the owner's O Santos Loja Portuguesa delicatessen, which sells all kinds of Portuguese delights - from tinned sardines and olive oil to wine from the Douro Valley. The pastel blue exterior of a building. The Taipa-Houses Museum offers a glimpse into colonial Macanese life

#### Avenida da Praia

In the shadow of the mammoth Venetian and Galaxy casinos is relaxed, tree-lined Avenida da Praia, bracketed by a giant lily pad-covered pond on one side and pastel green Portuguese houses on the other. The houses are part of the Taipa Houses-Museum, five colonial residences that offer a window into what life was like in Macau in the first half of the 20th century. (You'll find another example of this mint-green Portuguese architecture at the Museum of Taipa and Coloane History, formerly a municipal building and now home to archaeological artefacts and handicrafts explaining the history of Macau.)

#### Pak Tai Temple

Pak Tai was an emperor who was believed to be able to withstand fire and flood. He's commemorated with this tiny Taoist temple, dating back to 1843, which is filled with incense and on the fringe of one of Taipa's prettiest squares. Time your visit with a Chinese opera performance - they take place on the third day of the third lunar month of the year.

#### Quarter Square

This three-level design shop, coffee bar and all-round hip hangout provides the design cool in traditional Taipa Village. On the edge of quiet square Largo Maia de Magalhaes, Quarter Square sells all the things you want to buy but don't need, such as design trinkets and beautiful toiletries. There's excellent coffee, and don't leave without saying hi to the PR director, French bulldog Copper. ([www.lonelyplanet.com](http://www.lonelyplanet.com))



Rua do Cunha: Macau's unofficial food street

Taipa retains the flavor of old Macau through its local shops and restaurants

# 48 hours in Singapore: Making the most of SE Asia's travel hub



A traveler walking through Chinatown

Singapore may look small, and geographically speaking it is, but this tiny island city-state is jam packed with a myriad of things to do, see, buy and devour. The sleek and efficient public transport system makes zipping around a breeze, allowing you more time to dip your toes into this melting pot of cultures, religions, food and architecture. With just 48 hours on your clock, here's an itinerary to make sure you experience the best that the Lion City has to offer.

## DAY ONE Morning

Begin your Singapore adventure with an early morning trip to one of the city's wet markets. At the Chinatown Wet Market, ensconced in the basement of the Chinatown Complex, you'll be greeted by the raucous sounds of enthusiastic home cooks and high-end restaurant chefs haggling for the finest and freshest produce. There's a mind-boggling array of colourful fruits, vegetables and seafood, plus more exotic offerings that include black chickens and bullfrogs. To take a taste of Singapore home with you, visit Anthony the Spice Maker - his meat rendang blend is a showstopper.

Recover from the sensory overload with a traditional Singaporean breakfast at nearby Nanyang Old Coffee. The 'breakfast set' comes

with two runny eggs, kaya (coconut jam) toast and a cup of caramel-noted kopi (coffee). Mix the eggs with a swirl of soy sauce and dash of white pepper, and use the toast to scoop up the creamy goodness. Finish off the morning by delving into the area's colourful history at the interactive Chinatown Heritage Centre, then go temple hopping down South Bridge Road. Must-stops include the imposing Tang-styled Buddha Tooth Relic Temple, the colorful and ornately decorated Hindu Sri Mariamman Temple and the mint green Jamae Mosque.

## Afternoon

If you're feeling peckish after a full morning, make your way to Maxwell Food Centre and join the queues for lip-smacking hawker grub. Worthy mentions include Tian Tian Hainanese Chicken Rice and Rojak, Popiah & Cockle. Make sure to chope (save) your seat before ordering by laying a packet of tissues on the table in front of a vacant spot. As is the case at all hawker centres, it is customary to share tables, which also gives you an opportunity to mingle with locals.

Once refueled, spend the afternoon wandering through the Colonial District, dipping in and out of some of Singapore's best museums, including the Asian Civilisations Museum, National Museum of Singapore and the Peranakan Museum. Take a moment to stand at the landing spot of Sir Stam-

ford Raffles, the founder of modern Singapore, and ponder the view over the Singapore River. Here, the towering skyscrapers dwarf the line of

riverside heritage shophouses, a testament to the Lion City's incredible journey from fishing village to world-renowned financial powerhouse.



A traditional breakfast enjoyed in Singapore

## Lifestyle | Travel

**Evening**

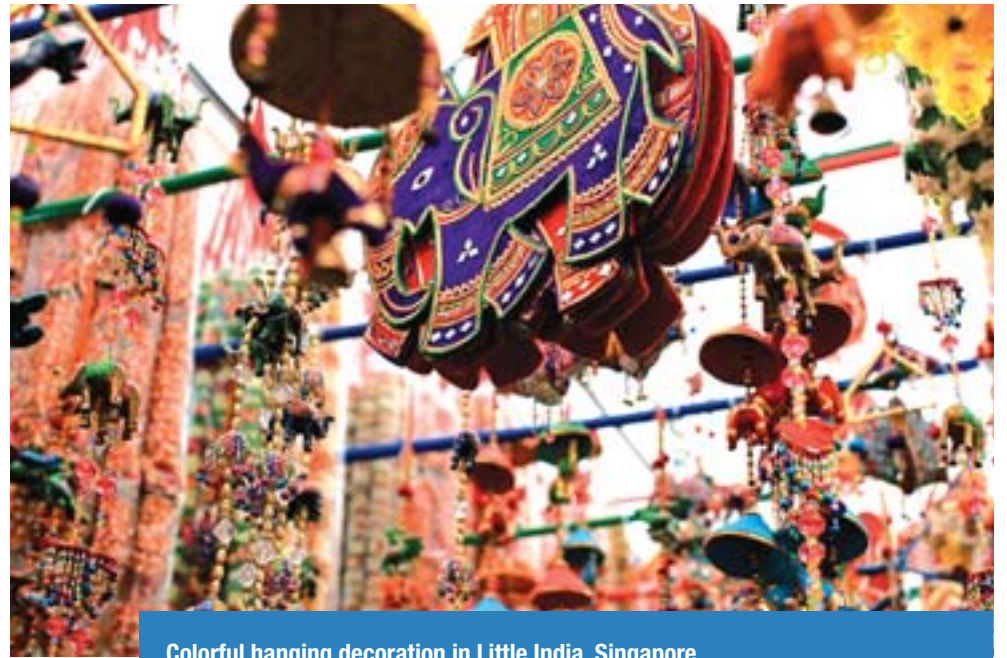
After freshening up from your day of exploring (Singapore is notoriously hot and humid), pull up a seat at one of the city's chic rooftop bars. For a sky-high view, head to trendy C... LA VI perched atop Marina Bay Sands Hotel, or the microbrewery Level33, which lays claim to being the world's highest craft brewery. For a lower vantage point, but no less spectacular view, Lantern at swanky Fullerton Bay Hotel, and sophisticated cocktail bar Smoke and Mirrors located above the acclaimed National Gallery of Singapore fit the bill. From each of these locations, you'll get a knockout view of the nightly Marina Bay Sands' light and laser show, Spectra.

Now it's time for dinner. Singapore's iconic chilli crab cannot be missed, and Jumbo Seafood at Riverside Point serves up one of the city's best versions. Don the complimentary bib and don't be afraid to use your fingers. Order a side of mantou (fried buns) to mop up every last bit of the sublime sauce. If you've still got fuel in the tank, the DJs and dance floors of mega-club Zouk are just steps away. Otherwise, a wander along the Quays of the river will help you digest your dinner before falling into bed after a full day in Singapore.

**DAY TWO  
Morning**

On your second day, leave the buzz of the city behind and spend the morning at the spectacular Unesco World Heritage Site, the Singapore Botanic Gardens. Here, hours can easily slip away as you discover themed gardens, sprawling lawns and dense rainforests. When you've finished ambling through the greenery, head for a coffee at local expat favorite, Cluny Court, opposite the Botanic Garden MRT.

Take the MRT a few stops to frenetic Little India. Armed with an empty stomach, slip into the Tekka Centre and order buttery roti prata (dough-flour pancake) and murtabak (savory stuffed pancake). Happily sated, head to the second level of the Tekka Centre for a bird's-eye view of row upon row of brightly colored saris on display. Then, head out into the surrounding lanes to discover the area's aromatic spice stores, colorful temples and burgeoning street art scene.



Colorful hanging decoration in Little India, Singapore



Singapore skyline from the water



#### Afternoon

Move on from your morning in Little India and hurtle at full pelt into the future at space-age Gardens by the Bay. The two cooled bio-dome conservatories offer both tropical and dry environments to explore, as well as a welcome respite from the midday heat. Together with the towering high-tech Supertrees and surrounding art-studded gardens, this urban planning masterpiece is an awe-inspiring sight to behold. If you've got time and energy to spare, spend the latter part of the afternoon exploring the brightly painted laneways of Kampong Glam. Here, hip boutiques share the scene with traditional oriental carpet and textile shops, with many live music venues and cocktail dens hidden along the way.

#### Evening

If you're looking to splash out, Singapore is not short on world-class fine dining restaurants. Among the most renowned are Waku Ghin, Odette and Whitegrass. Slightly easier on the wallet are trendy hotspots Ding Dong, Neon Pigeon, Artichoke and Cheek by Jowl. For budget-friendly chow, head to smoky Satay Street, where the melt-in-your-mouth satay pairs perfectly with a jug of ice-cold Tiger soda.

Cocktail connoisseurs can spend the rest of the evening ducking in and out of the hidden drinking dens of Amoy Street, or seek out the neon pink 'Psychic' sign that marks the entrance to Employees Only, or go bar hopping along trendy Club Street.

If the nightlife scene isn't your thing, instead get up close and personal with nocturnal critters at Night Safari, next door to the acclaimed Singapore Zoo. Enjoy being whisked around in an open-sided shuttle tram through what feels like a wild, animal-filled jungle. Don't worry, there are hidden barriers between you and the more dangerous beasts. Finally, if you've got room for one last meal on the island, head to late-night institution Swee Choon, where delectable dim sum has been dished up for over 40 years. — [www.lonelyplanet.com](http://www.lonelyplanet.com)



A white tiger at the Singapore Zoo

## Comic

### Word Search

#### Countries of Europe

Find and circle all of the Countries of Europe that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a secret message.  
Note: IRELAND and NORTHERN IRELAND are separately hidden and do not overlap.

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

- |                    |             |                    |                   |
|--------------------|-------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| ALBANIA            | ENGLAND     | LITHUANIA          | SAN MARINO        |
| ANDORRA            | ESTONIA     | LUXEMBOURG         | SCOTLAND          |
| ARMENIA            | FINLAND     | MACEDONIA          | SLOVAKIA          |
| AUSTRIA            | FRANCE      | MALTA              | SLOVENIA          |
| AZERBAIJAN         | GERMANY     | MOLDOVA            | SPAIN             |
| BELARUS            | GREECE      | MONACO             | SWEDEN            |
| BELGIUM            | HUNGARY     | NETHERLANDS        | SWITZERLAND       |
| BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA | ICELAND     | NORWAY             | SWITZERLAND       |
| BULGARIA           | IRELAND     | POLAND             | TURKEY            |
| CROATIA            | ITALY       | PORTUGAL           | UKRAINE           |
| CYPRUS             | LATVIA      | ROMANIA            | SERBIA/MONTENEGRO |
| CZECH REPUBLIC     | LIETHESTEIN | RUSSIAN FEDERATION | VATICAN CITY      |
| DENMARK            |             |                    | WALES             |

### Yesterday's Solution

#### Computer Jargon 2

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

- |            |          |            |            |              |
|------------|----------|------------|------------|--------------|
| ASCII      | DISK     | HARDWARE   | PASSWORD   | SOUNDCARD    |
| BANDWIDTH  | DOCUMENT | INPUT      | PCI        | SPYWARE      |
| BIOS       | DOWNLOAD | JAVA       | PERIPHERAL | TERAFLOP     |
| BUG        | DRIVER   | JPEG       | PORT       | TROJAN HORSE |
| CACHE      | EMOTICON | KEYBOARD   | PRINTER    | UPLOAD       |
| CHIP       | ETHERNET | LINUX      | REBOOT     | USB          |
| COPY       | FAQ      | MENU       | RESOLUTION | USERNAME     |
| CPU        | FIREWIRE | MODEM      | SAVE       | VIRUS        |
| CRASH      | FONT     | MULTIMEDIA | SCROLL     | WEB BROWSER  |
| CYBERSPACE | FREEWARE | NETIQUETTE | SERVER     | WINDOWS      |
| DATABASE   | GIGABYTE | OPEN       | SMILEY     | ZIP FILE     |
| DESKTOP    | HACKER   |            |            |              |

The hidden word is: MICROPROCESSOR

### Crossword 2026



#### ACROSS

- Make or move along with a sound as of a horse's hooves striking the ground.
- That are used.
- A woolen cap of Scottish origin.
- A specific instance of feeling hopeful.
- Titmice and chickadees.
- Goddess of criminal rashness and its punishment.
- In bed.
- A native or inhabitant of Sweden.
- A promontory in northern Morocco opposite the Rock of Gibraltar.
- A port city of northeastern Brazil on the Atlantic.
- A capacitance unit equal to one billion farads.
- A hard brittle blue-white multivalent metallic element.
- Tear down so as to make flat with the ground.
- Primitive chlorophyll-containing mainly aquatic eukaryotic organisms lacking true stems and roots and leaves.
- A unit of inductance equal to one billionth of a henry.
- United States Protestant theologian (1892-1971).
- Inability to coordinate voluntary muscle movements.
- A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
- Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
- On or toward the lee.
- A member of a Slavic people who settled in Serbia and neighboring areas in the 6th and 7th centuries.
- Committee formed by a special-interest group to raise money for their favorite political candidates.
- A self-funded retirement plan that allows you to contribute a limited yearly sum toward your retirement.
- In addition.
- (Irish) Goddess.
- An ancient unit of length based on the length of the forearm.
- Type genus of the Majidae.
- A nonstandard form of American English spoken by some American Black people.
- A small quantity of liquid.
- Something (especially a game) that is played again.
- Read anew.
- A mythical Greek hero.
- God of death.
- Above average in size or number or quantity or magnitude or extent.
- An emotional response that has been acquired by conditioning.
- How long something has existed.
- A river in central Brazil that flows generally northward (with many falls) to join the Tocantins River.
- Headdress that protects the head from bad weather.

#### DOWN

- A human female who does housework.
- (anatomy) A somewhat rounded subdivision of a bodily organ or part.
- An organization of countries formed in

- 1961 to agree on a common policy for the sale of petroleum.
- A tricycle (usually propelled by pedaling).
- A domed or vaulted recess or projection on a building especially the east end of a church.
- A clawed foot of an animal especially a quadruped.
- Manufactured in standard sizes to be shipped and assembled elsewhere.
- Either of two folds of skin that can be moved to cover or open the eye.
- Form a mental image of something that is not present or that is not the case.
- (Akkadian) God of wisdom.
- Lacking or deprive of the sense of hearing wholly or in part.
- Long-tailed arboreal mustelid of Central and South America.
- (Greek mythology) A Titan who was forced by Zeus to bear the sky on his shoulders.
- English economist noted for his studies of international trade and finance (born in 1907).
- Any of several compounds of barium.
- Austrian neurologist who originated psychoanalysis (1856-1939).
- A decree that prohibits something.
- (British) An informer or spy working for the police.
- An inhabitant of ancient Thebes.
- A tort consisting of false and malicious publication printed for the purpose of defaming a living person.
- Wheelwork consisting of a connected set of rotating gears by which force is transmitted or motion or torque is changed.
- An intensely radioactive metallic element that occurs in minute amounts in uranium ores.
- (law) A defense by an accused person purporting to show that he or she could not have committed the crime in question.
- Being deficient in moisture.
- Irish poet and dramatist (1865-1939).
- A federal agency established to coordinate programs aimed at reducing pollution and protecting the environment.
- (of complexion) Blemished by imperfections of the skin.
- Trees of chiefly South America.
- A person who dissents from some established policy.
- Small biscuit (rich with cream and eggs) cut into diamonds or sticks and baked in an oven or (especially originally) on a griddle.
- Profane or obscene expression usually of surprise or anger.
- Take away the weapons from.
- Angular distance above the horizon (especially of a celestial object).
- A grain of barley.
- Re-equip a factory or plant.
- An iconic mental representation.
- (Akkadian) Mother and earth goddess in Gilgamesh epic.
- (used of count nouns) Every one considered individually.
- A particular geographical region of indefinite boundary (usually serving some special purpose or distinguished by its people or culture or geography).
- A small narrow pointed missile that is thrown or shot.
- Call upon in supplication.
- A nucleic acid that transmits genetic information from DNA to the cytoplasm.
- A rare silvery (usually trivalent) metallic element.
- A state in the eastern United States.
- An official prosecutor for a judicial district.

### Yesterday's Solution

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

### Daily Sudoku

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

### Yesterday's Solution

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

TV Listings



- 01:20 Thor
03:30 Accidental Switch
05:10 Now You See Me 2
07:30 Thor
09:35 Real Steel
11:50 Dragon: The Bruce Lee Story
14:00 Iron Man
16:15 Allegiant
18:20 Beyond Skyline
20:15 Doom
22:05 The Assignment
23:45 Kidnapped In Romania



- 00:45 North Woods Law
01:40 Monsters Inside Me
02:35 China's Last Elephants
03:25 Whale Wars
04:15 North Woods Law
05:02 Wildest Middle East
05:49 Pit Bulls & Parolees
06:36 Animal Airport
07:00 Animal Airport
07:25 The Animals' Guide To Survival
08:15 Animal Cops Phoenix
09:10 Whale Wars
10:05 North Woods Law
11:00 Wildest Middle East
11:55 Pit Bulls & Parolees
12:50 China's Last Elephants
13:45 Dr. Dee: Alaska Vet
14:40 North Woods Law
15:35 Monsters Inside Me
16:30 Weird Creatures With Nick Baker
17:25 Animal Cops Phoenix
18:20 Adrift: 47 Days With Sharks
19:15 Extinct Or Alive
20:10 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
21:05 Wildest Latin America
22:00 Monsters Inside Me
22:55 Pit Bulls & Parolees
23:50 Extinct Or Alive



- 00:20 Friday Night Dinner
00:45 Uncle
01:15 Back
01:40 Holby City
02:40 Death In Paradise
03:35 Back
04:00 Doctors
04:30 EastEnders
05:00 Last Tango In Halifax
06:00 Doctors
06:30 EastEnders
07:00 Holby City
08:00 Casualty
08:50 Father Brown
09:40 Death In Paradise
10:35 Casualty
11:30 Casualty
12:25 Holby City
13:20 Father Brown
14:10 Death In Paradise
15:05 Casualty
16:00 Doctors
16:30 Doctors
17:00 Doctors
17:30 Doctors
18:00 Doctors
18:30 Agatha Raisin
19:15 Agatha Raisin
20:05 Bancroft
20:55 And Then There Were None
21:55 The Last Post
22:50 Father Brown
23:40 Doctors



- 00:00 Homicide Hunter
01:00 Homicide Hunter
01:55 The Killing Season
02:50 It Takes A Killer
03:20 It Takes A Killer
03:45 The First 48
04:30 Crimes That Shook Australia

- 05:15 Homicide Hunter
06:00 Robbie Coltrane's Critical Evidence
07:00 It Takes A Killer
07:20 The First 48
08:05 Cold Case Files
08:50 Homicide Hunter
09:35 Homicide: Hours To Kill
10:30 Robbie Coltrane's Critical Evidence
11:25 Crimes That Shook Britain
12:20 Cold Case Files
13:15 It Takes A Killer
13:45 It Takes A Killer
14:10 The First 48
15:05 Crimes That Shook Australia
16:00 Homicide Hunter
17:00 Secrets Of The Morgue
18:00 Secrets Of The Morgue
19:00 Secrets Of The Morgue
20:00 Homicide: Hours To Kill
21:00 Crimes That Shook Australia
22:00 It Takes A Killer
22:30 It Takes A Killer
23:00 The First 48



- 00:05 Tosh.0
00:27 Graves
00:55 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
01:20 Chappelle's Show
01:45 Chris Ramsey Stand Up Central
02:10 Tosh.0
02:31 Graves
03:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
03:25 Graves
03:50 Graves
04:15 Sweat Inc.
05:05 I Used To Be Fat
05:55 Disaster Date
06:25 Disaster Date
06:50 Disaster Date
07:15 Lip Sync Battle UK
07:40 Lip Sync Battle UK
08:05 I Used To Be Fat
08:55 Sweat Inc.
09:45 Snack Off
10:10 Snack Off
10:35 House Of Food
11:25 Lip Sync Battle UK
11:50 Disaster Date
12:15 Disaster Date
12:40 Disaster Date
13:05 Impractical Jokers
13:30 Impractical Jokers
13:55 Impractical Jokers
14:20 Impractical Jokers
14:45 Impractical Jokers
15:10 Impractical Jokers
15:35 House Of Food
16:30 Ridiculousness
16:55 Ridiculousness
17:20 Ridiculousness
17:45 Real Husbands Of Hollywood
18:10 Real Husbands Of Hollywood
18:35 Real Husbands Of Hollywood
19:00 Lip Sync Battle
19:50 Friends
20:12 Friends
20:35 Friends
21:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
21:30 Comedy Central Presents
22:00 Comedy 3alwagef
22:00 Kyle Kinane: Loose In Chicago
22:50 Another Period
23:15 Another Period
23:40 John Oliver's New York Stand Up Show



- 00:30 Destroyed In Seconds
00:55 Kids Do The Craziest Things
01:20 How It's Made
01:45 How It's Made
02:10 My Cat From Hell
03:00 Tanked
03:50 Bear Grylls Survival School
04:15 Bear Grylls Survival School
04:40 Space Dealers
05:30 NASA's Unexplained Files
06:20 How It's Made
06:40 How It's Made
07:00 Destroyed In Seconds

- 07:25 Kids Do The Craziest Things
07:50 My Cat From Hell
08:40 How It's Made
09:05 How It's Made
09:30 Tanked
10:20 Bear Grylls Survival School
10:45 Bear Grylls Survival School
11:10 Destroyed In Seconds
11:35 Kids Do The Craziest Things
12:00 How It's Made
12:25 How It's Made
12:50 Space Dealers
13:40 NASA's Unexplained Files
14:30 The Food Inspectors
14:55 The Food Inspectors
15:20 Rip Off Food
16:10 Country House Rescue
17:00 My Cat From Hell
17:50 Tanked
18:40 Destroyed In Seconds
19:05 Kids Do The Craziest Things
19:30 Ultimate Ninja Challenge
20:20 The Carbonaro Effect
20:45 The Carbonaro Effect
21:10 How It's Made
21:35 How It's Made
22:00 Bear Grylls Survival School
22:25 Bear Grylls Survival School
22:50 Ultimate Ninja Challenge
23:40 The Carbonaro Effect



- 00:45 Twisted Sisters
01:40 Evil Lives Here
02:35 The Killer Beside Me
03:30 Murder Comes To Town
04:25 Evil Stepmothers
05:20 Swamp Murders
06:10 I Almost Got Away With It
07:00 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
07:25 Married With Secrets
08:15 Disappeared
09:10 Murder Chose Me
10:05 Swamp Murders
11:00 Murder Calls
11:55 Married With Secrets
12:50 I Almost Got Away With It
13:45 Evil Stepmothers
14:40 Swamp Murders
15:35 Murder Comes To Town
16:30 Married With Secrets
17:25 Disappeared
18:20 I Almost Got Away With It
19:15 Evil Stepmothers
20:10 Swamp Murders
21:05 Evil Online
22:00 Murder Among Friends
22:55 Murder By Numbers
23:50 Twisted Sisters



- 00:00 Hank Zipzer
00:25 Alex & Co.
00:45 Disney Mickey Mouse
00:50 Evermoor Chronicles
01:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
01:40 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
02:05 Binny And The Ghost
02:30 Binny And The Ghost
02:55 Hank Zipzer
03:15 Disney Mickey Mouse
03:20 Hank Zipzer
03:45 Alex & Co.
04:10 Alex & Co.
04:35 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
05:00 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
05:25 Binny And The Ghost
05:45 Disney Mickey Mouse
05:50 Rolling With The Ronks
06:00 Jessie
06:25 Jessie
06:50 Liv And Maddie
07:15 Liv And Maddie
07:40 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug...
08:05 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug...
08:30 Raven's Home
08:55 K.C. Undercover
09:20 Raven's Home
09:45 K.C. Undercover

- 10:10 Teen Beach 2
11:50 K.C. Undercover
12:15 K.C. Undercover
12:40 Bizaardvark
13:05 Bizaardvark
13:30 Stuck In The Middle
13:55 Stuck In The Middle
14:20 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug...
14:45 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug...
15:10 Raven's Home
15:35 Raven's Home
16:00 Tangled
16:25 Tangled
16:50 Raven's Home
17:15 K.C. Undercover
17:40 Raven's Home
18:05 K.C. Undercover
18:30 Bunk'd
18:55 Descendants Wicked World
19:00 Raven's Home
19:25 Liv And Maddie
19:50 K.C. Undercover
20:15 Disney Mickey Mouse
20:20 A.N.T. Farm
20:45 Bizaardvark
21:10 Hotel Transylvania: The Series
21:35 Stuck In The Middle
22:00 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug...
22:25 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug...
22:50 Lolirock
23:10 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
23:35 Binny And The Ghost



- 00:15 Street Outlaws
01:05 Salvage Hunters
01:50 Running Wild With Bear Grylls
02:35 Fukushima: On The Frontline With Joel Lambert
03:20 Street Outlaws
04:05 Alaska Monsters
04:50 Dirty Jobs
05:35 Storage Hunters
06:00 Factory Line
06:23 Container Wars
06:45 Storage Hunters
07:10 How Do They Do It?
07:35 Alaska: Battle On The Bay
08:20 Factory Line
08:45 Container Wars
09:10 Dirty Jobs
09:55 Gold Rush
10:45 Gold Rush
11:30 Gold Rush
12:20 Gold Rush
13:05 Gold Rush
13:55 Gold Rush
15:30 Gold Rush
16:15 Gold Rush
17:05 Gold Rush: Remembering John Schnabel
17:50 Gold Rush
19:25 Street Outlaws
20:15 Street Outlaws
21:00 Diesel Brothers
21:50 Street Outlaws: No Prep Kings (Special)
22:40 Street Outlaws: No Prep Kings
23:30 Hell Road Russia



- 00:05 Model Squad
00:55 Model Squad
01:50 E! News
02:50 WAGs
03:40 WAGs
04:35 WAGs
05:30 Celebrity Style Story
06:00 Rob & Chyna
06:55 E! News Middle East
07:10 Rob & Chyna
08:10 E! News: Daily Pop
09:10 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
10:05 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
11:00 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
12:00 E! News Middle East
12:15 Keeping Up With The Kar-

- dashians
13:10 Keeping Up With The Kar-dashians
14:05 Keeping Up With The Kar-dashians
15:00 E! News Middle East
15:15 E! News: Daily Pop
16:15 Model Squad
17:10 Model Squad
18:05 Model Squad
19:00 E! News
20:00 Ashlee+evan
21:00 Ashlee+evan
21:30 Ashlee+evan
22:00 Life Of Kylie
22:30 Life Of Kylie
23:00 E! News Middle East
23:15 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry



- 00:20 The Curse Of Oak Island
01:05 Mountain Men
01:50 Alone
02:35 American Pickers
03:25 Swamp People
04:15 Alone
05:05 American Pickers
06:00 The Curse Of Oak Island
06:45 Mountain Men
07:25 Swamp People
08:10 Swamp People
08:55 Swamp People
09:40 Swamp People
10:25 Swamp People
11:10 The Curse Of Oak Island
11:55 The Curse Of Oak Island
12:40 The Curse Of Oak Island
13:25 The Curse Of Oak Island
14:10 The Curse Of Oak Island
14:55 American Pickers
15:40 American Pickers
16:25 American Pickers
17:10 American Pickers
18:00 American Pickers
18:45 Mountain Men
19:30 Alone
20:15 Ultimate Wheels
21:00 Truck Night In America
21:50 Swamp People
22:40 Swamp People
23:30 Swamp People



- 00:15 Andy And Ben Eat The World
00:45 Cesar's Recruit: Asia
01:10 Carnival Eats
01:40 Restoration Man
02:35 New Orleans: City Of Stories
03:30 Places We Go
03:55 Celebrity Chef: East vs West
04:25 Cesar's Recruit: Asia
04:50 A Is For Apple
05:20 A Is For Apple
05:45 Tom's Istanbul Delight
06:15 Tom's Istanbul Delight
06:40 Angelo's Outdoor Kitchen
07:10 Restoration Man
08:05 New Orleans: City Of Stories
09:00 Places We Go
09:25 Celebrity Chef: East vs West
09:55 Cesar's Recruit: Asia
10:20 A Is For Apple
10:50 A Is For Apple
11:15 Tom's Istanbul Delight
11:45 Tom's Istanbul Delight
12:10 Angelo's Outdoor Kitchen
12:40 Eat Street
13:05 Eat Street
13:35 Straight To The Source: Korean Food
14:00 Places We Go
14:30 Celebrity Chef: East vs West
15:25 Cesar's Recruit: Asia
15:50 A Is For Apple
16:20 A Is For Apple
16:45 Tom's Istanbul Delight
17:15 Tom's Istanbul Delight
17:40 United Plates Of America
18:10 Hotel India
19:05 Straight To The Source: Korean Food
19:30 Places We Go
20:00 Celebrity Chef: East vs West
21:00 Cesar's Recruit: Asia
21:30 A Is For Apple
22:00 A Is For Apple

- 22:25 Tom's Istanbul Delight
22:55 Tom's Istanbul Delight
23:20 United Plates Of America
23:50 Hotel India



- 00:10 Drain The Oceans
01:00 No Man Left Behind
02:00 Locked Up Abroad Compilations
03:00 Border Wars
04:00 Drain The Oceans
05:00 Salvage Code Red
06:00 Strippers: Cars For Cash
07:00 Seconds From Disaster
08:00 Beyond Magic With DMC
09:00 Street Genius
09:30 Street Genius
10:00 Border Wars
11:00 Locked Up Abroad Compilations
12:00 Lawless Island Alaska
13:00 Strippers: Cars For Cash
14:00 Beyond Magic With DMC
15:00 Seconds From Disaster (30-Min)
15:30 Seconds From Disaster (30-Min)
16:00 Inside
17:00 Taboo
18:00 Lawless Island Alaska
19:00 Primal Survivor
20:00 Inside
20:50 Taboo
21:40 Lawless Island Alaska
22:30 Primal Survivor
23:20 World's Toughest Fixes



- 01:15 The Wheelers
02:40 Gamba
04:30 Dinofroz - An Island In The Sky
06:00 The Apple & The Worm
07:25 Operation Arctic
09:05 Free Birds
10:35 The Happy Cricket
12:05 Gamba
13:50 Dinofroz - An Island In The Sky
15:10 Simba The King Lion
17:15 The Happy Cricket
18:45 The Emperor's Secret
20:15 A Town Called Panic
21:40 Operation Arctic
23:20 Free Birds



- 01:45 The Boss
03:40 The Salesman
05:55 Finding Altamira
07:40 The Horse Whisperer
10:35 Monster Trucks
12:30 Parental Guidance
14:20 The Cable Guy
16:10 The American President
18:10 Men At Work
19:55 Revolutionary Road
22:00 Scent Of A Woman



- 00:05 Food Factory USA
00:30 Man Made Marvels China
01:20 Mythbusters
02:10 Space Voyages
03:00 How It's Made
03:24 How It's Made
03:48 Superhuman Showdown
04:36 Man Made Marvels China
05:24 How Do They Do It?
05:48 Food Factory USA
06:12 Mythbusters
07:00 How Do They Do It?
07:26 How It's Made
07:50 How It's Made
08:14 Man Made Marvels China
09:02 Space Voyages
09:50 How Do They Do It?
10:14 Food Factory USA
10:38 How It's Made
11:02 How It's Made
11:26 Superhuman Showdown
12:14 Man Made Marvels China
13:02 Mythbusters



## Stars



### Aries (March 21-April 19)

This is a great time to step out of your comfort zone. Take risks and dare to be different. This could benefit you greatly. New insights could come your way. Take the path less traveled. You may find this leads to great things where your career is concerned. New approaches and being the oddball can lead to new and exciting adventures. Boredom will be far from anything you will be feeling today. Live life to the fullest and enjoy everything this world has to offer.



### Taurus (April 20-May 20)

This is a very nostalgic time for you. Maybe a talk with an older relative and just sitting down and learning more about your family history could be very satisfying to you. Learning of the struggles of others may make you more determined than ever to ensure your personal growth, not only on a personal level but also in the career place. Hearing this history brings a sense of mortality to you. You may realize it will your story that is being told one day and you want it to be a story of great success, Taurus. The way you handle very sensitive issues today can set the tone for your future. Take time to be analytical and do not act in haste.



### Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Today finds you yearning to surround yourself with all things beautiful. You may direct much of your energy on your marriage or partnership. This is a great time for you to spend that extra time with someone you love. This will bring great harmony and peace in to your world. Focus on turning your dreams into reality. You need a strong support system and your loved ones will be just the one for the job. Feed your relationship daily and you will reap great reward and support.



### Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You may feel as if you are the center of attention today. All eyes are on you. You have begun to excel in the workplace and your superiors have taken notice to this. You may find that this is the job you actually enjoy and that is the driving force behind your work performance. You are at your best creatively and able to excel on projects and thinking outside of the box is bringing much attention your way. Mysteries are easily solved, and problems easily conquered for your today. You may find much support from someone close to you that has much admirations for the eccentric approach you are taking in the workplace. Know that you are admired and looked to as a role model.



### Leo (July 23-August 22)

This is a time others may find you marching to the beat of your own drum. There are times you long to be surrounded by friends and family and times that the only thing that appeals to you is time alone. This is a time you crave independence. You seem drawn to everything that is unique and different. A great day for a new outfit, a new hair color, or even time to make some cool new additions to your home. A new you side of you is coming to light. This will be a time of happiness and today will find you with a constant smile on your face. Others may be drawn to your high energy and uniqueness.



### Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You have always been taught to treat others as you want to be treated. It seems as if this is beginning to pay off for you. You find yourself surrounded by some really caring and thoughtful friends. Being showered for your talents is a comforting feeling. You find this a time you not only are able to enjoy your life but truly love and appreciate the position you find yourself in.



### Libra (September 23-October 22)

You are always quick to gather all the information possible on new friends and new acquaintances. You have been known to be quite the detective. Today finds you fascinated with gaining all the information and insight you can. But, your focus today is on you! You desire to have a better self-understanding. What exactly led you down the path you took. You have put some thought into this before, but today you are determined to figure it out. Finding yourself is a mission you are on. You not only want to know who you really are but what exactly caused you to be this way, Libra? The answers are held in your heart. Today could be a great day to make amends.



### Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You have learned to appreciate and love yourself and all you stand for. It is rare that you are not your own worst critic but today, through clear eyes, you are able to appreciate who you are and what you have accomplished. You exude self-respect and self-confidence. Those around you sense this and are drawn to you today. You are able to truly identify all in your life that is important and of lasting value. You feel driven and motivated and can offer much assistance to friends and family today. You feel deep connections with your family today and place much value on these relationships. You may find that today is a great day to reach out to someone close to you that you have lost touch with. Reconnect with this someone special. Today is a great day to work towards accomplishing this goal.



### Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

You have begun to search for beauty in all that surrounds you. Life takes on a different meaning to you. You seem to see a new depth to the meaning of life. Your ability to analyze your situation and the situations of others are at high point. You are able to really get to the root of all problems that present themselves and provide those around you with solutions. You are able to express yourself and communicate with ease. A long deep conversation with someone may be just what you need to stay grounded and focused. This may be a great time to refrain from spending and beginning focusing your goals on a budget and organizing your finances.



### Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Reach for the stars. You feel as though you are invincible. Today that may be true. If it can go your way, it does. What a wonderful feeling! You are full of optimism and faith. Your self-confidence is at an all-time high. You may desire to make a change in your living situation. Leave this decision for a later date when your head comes down from the clouds.



### Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

You may be faced with a difficult decision this week. You may feel led to pass up a very profitable career opportunity because it truly conflicts with your morals and values. This is a road to success you may choose to take a detour around. The easy way is not always the right way. You may find in the long run you will reap great reward from doing the right thing.



### Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Expect to feel much admiration and recognition from those close to you today. You may feel support and able to relate to anyone and any situation. You may find yourself to be the center of attention in a social setting today. It seems everyone is able to relate to you and you may find that someone turns to you for help today. Feel flattered that you are trusted with such a delicate situation that your peer is experiencing. Through sharing life experiences of your own you may be able to assist this person and appreciated your own hardships as lessons learned. This is a great time of reflection in your life, Pisces, live, learn, and love.

## Country Codes

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

## Health

# On the road to zero carbon, Portland pinches off fossil fuels

**PORTLAND, Oregon:** Three years ago, a group of eighth graders came before Portland's City Council to ask for something unusual: a ban on new facilities to transport or store fossil fuels in the city.

Quoting Dr. Seuss, singing Bob Dylan's "The Times They Are A Changing" and performing a short play set 200 years in the future, they told the officials fossil fuels had no place in a world struggling with climate change - or in Portland's future. Later that day, city officials unanimously voted for the first-in-the-nation ban. "This is the first stone in a green wall of resistance against fossil fuel facilities on the West Coast," promised then-Mayor Charlie Hales, who heralded the ordinance as an example of how cities can take action against climate change.

Today, more than 70 cities around the world - including green-leaning Portland - have pledged to become "carbon neutral" by 2050, meaning they will eliminate nearly all fossil fuel emissions and offset what they cannot, through actions such as planting carbon-absorbing trees. Each city is pushing toward the goal in its own way, to help meet the emissions-cutting goals of the 2015 Paris climate agreement, which aim to hold off the worst impacts of global warming, from fiercer storms to more frequent crop failures. But the road to becoming a "zero carbon city" is rarely a simple or easy one, as Portland has discovered.

## Legal challenge

After passing its landmark policy, which

banned construction of new, large-scale fossil fuel facilities in the city, Portland was hit by a legal challenge from petroleum trade groups and a local business coalition. The groups argued the city had overstepped its constitutional bounds by effectively blocking interstate commerce, an argument the state land use court upheld in July 2017. The city then appealed and won - a decision ultimately upheld by the state Supreme Court in July.

"We are disappointed that the Oregon Supreme Court declined to review this case," said Kara Siepman, a spokeswoman for the Western States Petroleum Association, one of the original challengers. "This matter remains very important to our industry, the city of Portland, and all Oregonians who rely on terminals for safe and reliable access to fuel," she told the Thomson Reuters Foundation via e-mail. The Portland Business Alliance, another challenger, declined to comment. The ruling now clears the way for Portland to put its new law into effect - but only after years of delay.

"People in Portland fight to defend what we love from dirty fossil fuel projects like oil train terminals," said Dan Serres, conservation director for Columbia Riverkeeper, an environmental non-government organization that joined the city's court appeal.

"The city of Portland made history when it adopted the fossil fuel ordinance. With these challenges from the oil industry and the Portland Business Alliance out of the way, Portland can move forward toward putting this policy into practice," he said.

## Cutting risks

Turning the policy into day-to-day action in the city, however, will bring its own challenges. The ordinance calls for the city council to "actively oppose expansion of infrastructure whose primary purpose is transporting or storing fossil fuels in or through Portland or adjacent waterways".

Determining what projects do that is up to the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability. It has modified the city's zoning code to restrict what it calls "bulk fossil fuel terminals" - facilities with the capacity to hold more than 2 million gallons (7.5 million litres) of fuels such as oil, natural gas or propane.

Portland doesn't aim to phase out fossil fuels entirely just yet. While it pledged last year to aim for 100 percent renewable energy - on the day US President Donald Trump said he would withdraw the United States from the Paris agreement - Portland for now still needs existing oil and natural gas distribution networks to heat homes and fuel automobiles.

But "we have enough," Portland city planner Tom Armstrong, who worked on the zoning code, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation in an interview.

Banning new fossil fuel infrastructure supports the city's 100 percent renewable pledge and its climate action plan. But it's also aimed at reducing another risk - from earthquakes.

"Climate action issues aside, our port facilities are not located in the best place when it comes to seismic risk," Armstrong said. When the city studied existing riverfront oil and gas

terminals, researchers discovered they all sit on land susceptible to liquefaction - when saturated soil begins acting like a liquid - during an earthquake. With Portland situated near a major 600-mile-long fault zone off the US West Coast, "zoning is about ensuring public health and safety and that's what we're trying to do in Portland," Armstrong said.

"No one wants a fossil fuel terminal exploding in their backyard," Mia Reback of 350PDX, the local chapter of a climate activist organization, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

## Pinch point

The constellation of oil tanks, propane terminals and liquid natural gas plants along Portland's Willamette River lies just a few miles from the city's downtown, with its trendy food trucks and artisanal doughnut shops. Serres - and city planner Armstrong - say they have noticed an increase in oil trains moving through the city, some carrying fuel from Canada's Alberta tar sands bound for ships to Asia and elsewhere.

Serres believes Portland's geography at the confluence of the Willamette and Columbia rivers - along the flattest route between the Rocky Mountains and the Pacific Ocean - makes it uniquely positioned to slow down worldwide distribution of fossil fuels.

"We sit between large international markets overseas in Asia and globally significant fossil fuel reserves in the middle of the North American continent," he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. — Reuters

# CLINIC PAGE



Kuwait Times  
248 33 199

## DR. FAHAD AL-MUKHAIZEEM

Consultant Pediatrician

Consultant Pediatrician-Canadian & American Board in Pediatrics-Canadian Board in Pediatric Emergency



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## DR. WALEED S BUHAIMED

Consultant of General Surgery  
Laparoscopic 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.

- ◆ Bariatric surgeries.
- ◆ 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

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# CLINIC PAGE



Kuwait Times  
248 33 199

**DR. MOHAMMAD AL HAJRY**  
Canadian Board of Otolaryngology  
Head & Neck Surgery and Facial Plastics.  
Fellow of Royal College of Surgeons-Canada  
A rare Subspecialty in Microscopic Ear Surgery, Cochlear implant & Ear diseases

- ◆ Diagnosis/Treatment of General Ears, Nose, and Throat conditions in adults & pediatrics
- ◆ Minimally invasive Endoscopic sinus surgery including Balloon sinuplasty
- ◆ Minimally invasive Microscopic & Endoscopic Ear surgery
- ◆ Diagnosis & treatment of Otology and Audiology (Hearing loss, Tinnitus & balance disorders)
- ◆ Facial Plastic and reconstructive surgeries (Rhinoplasty, Otoplasty, Fillers & Botox injections)
- ◆ Diagnosis & treatment of snoring & obstructive sleep apnea in clinic without surgery
- ◆ Diagnosis & Treatment of voice and swallowing disorders.
- ◆ Diagnosis & Treatment of Head and Neck benign & malignant tumors.

**Salmiya, Belajat Street, Tel: 1881122**  
@Malhajry

**DR. FAHAD S BUHAIMED**  
Consultant Cosmetic Dermatologist & Hair Transplant, NY

**ACADAMIC CERTIFICATES:**

- o Dermatology board certified.
- o Fellowship training program in cosmetic dermatology and hair transplant, New York, USA.
- o Member of American cosmetic dermatology society.
- o Referee reviewer of International Journal of Dermatology.

**SPECIALIZED IN:**

- o Dermatology & Cosmetic Treatments.
- o Laser Treatments.
- o Hair Transplant & Restoration.
- o Body & Face Contouring.
- o Injectable Fillers & Botox.

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**DR KHALED ALMERRI**  
Consultant interventional Cardiology  
Department: Heart & Vascular Center

**Specialized in:**

- 1-Diagnostic and therapeutic cardiac catheterization (Angiography and Angioplasty). Aortic valve implantation.
- 2- Diagnosis and treatment of coronary artery diseases
- 3- Diagnosis and treatment of heart failure, cardiomyopathies and valvular diseases.
- 4-Diagnosis and treatment of high blood pressure and high cholesterol.
- 5- Diagnosis and treatment of syncope, palpitations and cardiac arrhythmias.
- 6- Non-invasive diagnostic procedures echocardiography, exercise stress test, and 24 hour blood pressure and Holter monitoring

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Otorhinolaryngology (E.N.T)  
**Dr Hamoud Abdullah Alarouj**  
ENT Specialist

- ◆ Laryngology Fellowship - Canada
- ◆ Fellow of the European Board Otolaryngology - Head & Neck Surgery
- ◆ Member of the American Academy of Otolaryngology Head & Neck Surgery
- ◆ Member of the British Laryngological Association
- ◆ Member of the Canadian Society of Otolaryngology Head & Neck Surgery
- ◆ Member of the European Laryngological Society

**Specialized in:**

- ◆ Management of benign and malignant vocal cord lesions.
- ◆ Vocal cord augmentation.
- ◆ Treatment of spasmodic dysphonia.
- ◆ Adenotonsillectomy using latest techniques.
- ◆ Thyroid surgery.
- ◆ Surgery for the deviated nasal septum.
- ◆ Endoscopic sinus surgery.
- ◆ Treatment of allergic rhinitis.
- ◆ Treatment of snoring.
- ◆ Treatment of vertigo.

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**Scope of Clinical Practice:**

- ◆ General & Laparoscopic Surgery
- ◆ Single Port Surgery
- ◆ Treatment of Colo-Rectal Diseases, Including Colorectal Cancer
- ◆ Surgical Treatment of Inflammatory Bowel Abscess
- ◆ Treatment of Perianal Fistula & Complex Perianal Fistula (complications)
- ◆ VAAFT Procedure (Treatment of Fistula through Fistuloscope)
- ◆ Treatment of Irritable Bowel Symptoms
- ◆ Colonoscopy & Gastrosocopy
- ◆ Stomach Balloon Insertion & removal
- ◆ Bariatric Surgery - Lap Sleeve Gastrectomy
- ◆ Gallstones & Abdominal Hernias Surgery
- ◆ Colonic Hydrotherapy & Fecal Incontinence Treatment
- ◆ Laparoscopic mitral bypass
- ◆ Transanal minimally Invasive surgery

**Academic Certificates, Trainings & Fellowships:**

- ◆ American Board of General Surgery
- ◆ 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. Ahmad Alaeddine**  
Head of Cardiology departmenta  
at Dar Al Shifa hospital

- Consultant Interventional and conventional cardiologist.
- Specialised in the Diagnosis and treatment of all adult cardiac diseases, including those cases that need urgent intervention in Cath lab (primary angioplasty).

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# Kuwait Times Classifieds

Friday, October 5, 2018

Kuwait Times  
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## Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

**BY DAY:** Hot with light to moderate freshening at times north westerly wind, with speed of 15 - 40 km/h with a chance for blowing dust over open areas.

**BY NIGHT:** Fair with light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 10 - 32 km/h .

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings		
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 04/10/2018 0000 UTC		
KUWAIT CITY	44 °C	27 °C			
KUWAIT AIRPORT	43 °C	24 °C			
ABDALY	43 °C	24 °C			
BUBYAN	-- °C	-- °C			
JAHRA	44 °C	26 °C			
FAILAKA ISLAND	42 °C	26 °C			
SALMIYAH	41 °C	33 °C			
AHMADI	38 °C	31 °C			
NUWAISIB	44 °C	24 °C			
WAFRA	44 °C	26 °C			
SALMY	42 °C	23 °C			

## 4 DAYS FORECAST

DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Friday	10/05	Hot	43 °C	23 °C	NW	12 - 32 km/h
Saturday	10/06	Hot and Relatively humid over coastal areas	42 °C	22 °C	NW-SE	06 - 26 km/h
Sunday	10/07	Hot and Relatively humid specially over coastal areas with a chance for mist forming at night	40 °C	21 °C	SE	08 - 32 km/h
Monday	10/08	Hot and Relatively humid over coastal areas and some scattered clouds will appear	40 °C	22 °C	VRB-SE	06 - 28 km/h

## PRAYER TIMES

Fajr	04:24
Sunrise	05:42
Zuhr	11:37
Asr	14:59
Sunset	17:31
Isha	18:47

## RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT

MAX. Temp.	44 °C
MIN. Temp.	23 °C
MAX. RH	50 %
MIN. RH	07 %
MAX. Wind	W 32 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

## REQUIRED

### Experienced Tailors needed

Can create designs from sketches. Required to have their own sewing machines and equipped.

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## CHANGE OF NAME

I, **Xaviker Fernandes**, holder of Indian Passport No: J5550444, Civil ID No: 258082100643, hereby change my name to **Xavier Fernandes**. (C 5425) 2-10-2018

N5195063, my name John Constance Peter Consalves to John Constance Gonsalves, father's name Peter Francis Consalves to Pedro Francisco Gonsalves, mother's name Annie Francis Consalves to Anna Francisca Consalves. (C 5424) 1-10-2018

Nationality Indian, P.P No.

## Hospitals

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

## Clinics

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

# Business

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**39** Toyota and Softbank unveil tie-up, eye autonomous vehicle services



**40** Wave of worries takes shine off Motor Show



**41** US weekly jobless claims drop to near 49-year low



**MUMBAI:** Shopkeepers sit outside closed shops at a market during a nationwide general strike against the petrol price hike in Mumbai. India is cutting prices of gasoline and diesel by 2.50 rupees (\$0.03) a liter, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley said yesterday. — AFP

## Under pressure India govt cuts fuel tax

### Marginal cut could ease pain of rising crude, weak rupee

**NEW DELHI:** India is cutting prices of gasoline and diesel by 2.50 rupees (\$0.03) a liter, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley said yesterday, the government's latest step to tackle the impact of a sharp rise in crude oil prices and a weak currency.

The cut includes a reduction in excise duty of 1.50 rupees per liter, which will reduce government revenue by 105 billion rupees, Jaitley said. State-run refiners will also cut the price they charge by 1 rupee per liter.

Jaitley also asked state governments to cut value added tax on fuel by a further 2.50 rupees per liter. Taxes on gasoline and diesel, which account for more than a third of retail fuel prices, are one of the biggest sources of income for the government, which is seeking to keep the country's budget deficit in check.

"It certainly has fiscal implications. If the government wishes to stick to its glidepath of fiscal consolidation, then it will have to cut its expenditures significantly," said Rupa Rege Nitsure, chief economist at L&T Finance Holdings.

Shares in Indian Oil Corp, the country's biggest oil refiner, dropped 11.4 percent in reaction to the news. The price cut is likely to result in a loss of margin of 70-72 billion Indian rupees on auto fuel sales, according to K Ravichandran, senior vice president, corporate ratings, at ratings agency ICRA Ltd.

Among other state-run companies, shares in Hindustan Petroleum Corp closed down 13.5 percent, and Bharat Petroleum Corp Ltd lost 12.4 percent. The Nifty Energy Index fell 6.14 percent. Global crude prices hit near 4-year highs

on Wednesday, and a weak rupee has added to the woes of Indians, who have been hit by record high fuel prices. India's fuel demand grew at its slowest pace in the last twelve months in August. India stopped controlling petrol prices in 2010 and diesel prices in 2014, linking them to global crude markets in a bid to ease pressure on government finances and improve the earnings of oil refiners. But analysts said the announcement on Thursday shows there is still a heavy government hand in the industry.

"By asking the oil marketing companies to absorb the price hike, the government is giving a signal that it can interfere at anytime in a deregulated market in the larger public interest," said Gagan Dixit, a senior analyst with Elara Capital. Rising gasoline and diesel fuel prices

have been a cause of public anger, with people in parts of the country blocking trains and vandalizing vehicles in protest.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party is facing a tough election in three key states this year, followed by a national election which is due by May.

Asked by a reporter about the economic implications of the move, Jaitley said the decision was "good economics" as it won't impact the fiscal deficit and will allow consumers to boost spending on other goods. Devendra Kumar Pant, chief economist at India Ratings and Research, said the move could act as a "minor comforting factor" for the central bank during its monetary policy meeting scheduled today, as a fuel price cut will ease retail inflation. — Reuters

## Business

# Saudis seek wide-ranging deals with South African arms firms

## Kingdom considers taking stake in state-owned Denel

**JOHANNESBURG:** Saudi Arabia is in talks with South Africa's major arms manufacturers and is considering taking an equity stake in the struggling state-owned defence firm Denel, the head of the Saudi state defense company told Reuters.

Saudi Arabian Military Industries' (SAMI) chief executive Andreas Schwer said he expected to conclude the first partnership deals with South African companies by the end of the year, though he would not identify those initial partners.

South Africa's Department of Public Enterprises, which oversees Denel, acknowledged the talks with SAMI but said it was too early to give details of any potential partnership arrangement.

The Paramount Group, a privately held South African company, has already said it is in talks with SAMI. "To make it clear, we are in discussions with all major South African companies, not only Paramount, not only Denel," Schwer said in a telephone interview on Wednesday. South Africa's defence industry once played a major role in the country's economy, but more recently it has suffered from the impact of a squeeze on defense spending globally and a weak home market.

Saudi Arabia is the world's third largest de-

fense spender behind the United States and China with an estimated military budget last year of nearly \$70 billion.

Since 2015, the Gulf state has been fighting a war against the armed Houthi movement in Yemen in support of the internationally recognized government there.

With little local manufacturing capacity, however, it has long been forced to import the bulk of its military hardware. The Saudi government is now seeking to develop its own domestic defense industry with the goal of localizing half of its military spending by 2030. Schwer said SAMI aimed to have all its foreign partnerships in place by the end of next year.

"We are in discussions with the South African government in order to identify opportunities to set up strategic partnerships which could include an equity investment from our side into Denel. It's not decided yet, but it's one option," Schwer said.

### Struggling industry

Over 60 percent of Denel's revenues come from exports. But the company has been grappling with a liquidity crunch after becoming embroiled in corruption scandals during the

presidency of Jacob Zuma.

"We hope to get access to their technology. They have to commit to transfer their technology to Saudi Arabia and to build up together with us local capabilities, not only manufacturing but also engineering," Schwer said.

He said those same conditions would apply to all of SAMI's partners, and in return Saudi Arabia would offer preferred or exclusive market access to companies.

Denel did not pay senior staff their salaries in full this month. Labor unions say it is critical that Denel receives financial support - either via additional government guarantees or a capital injection.

A Denel spokeswoman said she was not aware of the discussions with SAMI and the Saudi government.

"Denel would welcome any country that looks at South Africa for procurement of defense material," the spokeswoman Vuyelwa Qinga, wrote in an emailed response to Reuters' questions.

President Cyril Ramaphosa visited Saudi Arabia in July and subsequently announced that the Saudi government pledged to invest at least \$10 billion in South Africa. Department of

Public Enterprises spokesman Adrian Lackay said there had been discussions between SAMI and various state bodies about Saudi Arabia's interest in defense technology.

"But at this stage it would be premature and speculative for the DPE to attempt to provide details of any specific transactions," he said.

A United Nations arms embargo imposed on South Africa's apartheid government in 1977 forced the country to produce all its own military hardware. By 1994 when Nelson Mandela was elected president, the industry employed over 100,000 people. But defense spending has steadily declined and just 15,000 work in the sector today, a trade association official said earlier this year.

"In the beginning, we will pump in lots of additional capacity into South Africa to expand the capabilities and capacities in order to serve our needs and, yes, progressively we will build up capabilities here in the kingdom," Schwer said.

He said even though the Saudis were pursuing the partnership to build their own domestic industry, the end result for South Africa would be a much bigger defense industry. —Reuters

## Sudan to set daily exchange rate, cancel import curbs: CB

**KHARTOUM:** Sudan will begin using a body comprised of bankers and exchange bureaus to set its daily currency exchange rate as part of a package of measures designed to tackle an economic crisis, the central bank governor said. Sudan is also cancelling import restrictions imposed last year on 19 selected foods and other items, central bank Governor Mohamed Kheir al-Zubeir said.

The currency measures mean the Sudanese pound is likely to lose value against the dollar initially before later stabilising, Zubeir said. The new exchange body will also set purchase price of gold to counter smuggling, he said.

Sudan's economy has been struggling since the south of the sprawling northeast African country seceded in 2011, taking with it three-quarters of oil output and depriving Khartoum of a crucial source of foreign currency.

Worsening hard currency shortages have led to strict withdrawal limits and a booming foreign exchange black market, where dollars have been trading for a premium of about 40 percent. The official exchange rate on Thursday was around 29 pounds to the dollar.

Sudan's inflation climbed to a record 66 percent in August, one of the highest rates globally. Though gold mining has boomed, officials say most gold is smuggled out of the country. —Reuters

## Danske Bank says US probing money laundering claims

**COPENHAGEN:** Danske Bank said yesterday it was being investigated by the US Department of Justice over possible money laundering related to more than \$200 billion transferred through the Danish lender's Estonian branch. Denmark's largest lender is at the center of a storm of controversy and several inquiries after it said "a large part" of transactions totalling 200 billion euros (\$235 billion) at its Estonian branch between 2007 and 2015 were "suspicious".

"Danske Bank has also now received requests for information from the US Department of Justice (DOJ) in connection with a criminal investigation relating to the bank's Estonian branch conducted by the DOJ," the bank said. "We are cooperating with the authorities investigating us as a result of the case. However, it is too early to speculate on any outcome of the investigations," the lender's interim CEO Jesper Nielsen said in a statement.

Described as "the biggest money laundering scandal in Europe" by Denmark's business minister Rasmus Jarlov, the case shook the banking sector in the Nordic nation and forced Danske's chief executive to resign. "The US authorities have historically slapped heavy fines related to these types of cases so it's very likely that (Danske) is facing fines," Mikkel Emil Jensen, analyst at th Danish Sydbank, told Ritzau news agency.

The announcement comes nearly two weeks after the European Commission called on the EU's regulatory authority, the European Banking Authority (EBA), to probe what happened to the monitoring of Danske's Estonian office.

### Money from Russia

In early August, the Danish state prosecutor's office for serious economic and international crime said it too was probing allegations that money, mostly from Russia and other former



**COPENHAGEN:** This picture shows a general view of the 'Danske Bank' in Copenhagen, Denmark. —AFP

Soviet republics, which had flowed through the Estonian branch had been laundered.

The allegations are linked to a fraud case exposed by the Russian lawyer Sergei Magnitsky, who was jailed in Russia after he revealed the involvement of several high-ranking Russian officials in stealing massive tax payments from several companies, including the investment fund Hermitage Capital.

Magnitsky died in 2009 aged 37 after being held in a Russian jail for a year, where he was denied medical care. The whistleblower who unveiled alleged money laundering at Danske Bank's Estonian branch came forward last month: British national Howard Wilkinson, who headed the lender's market business in the Baltics between 2007 and 2014.

He described in a report how the Estonian branch handled customers associated with top Russian politicians and companies based in Denmark, according to Danish daily Berlingske, which broke the story last year. The bank was warned for the first time in 2007, but it only began to react in 2013, when Wilkinson wrote a report to the management to address the problems, the paper said.

Shares in Danske Bank were down by more than three percent on the Copenhagen Stock Exchange in late morning trading. —AFP

## Business

# Toyota and Softbank unveil tie-up, eye autonomous vehicle services

## ‘New mobility services’ include meal deliveries

**TOKYO:** Japanese car giant Toyota and conglomerate Softbank yesterday announced they would create a joint venture to provide “new mobility services” including autonomous vehicles for services such as meal deliveries.

The new company will be called “Monet”—short for “mobility network”—and will be 50.25 percent owned by Softbank, with the remainder held by Toyota. Monet would be created by April 2019 and would have an initial capital injection of 2.0 billion yen (\$17.5 million), rising eventually to 10 billion yen, said the new firm’s CEO Junichi Miyakawa.

By the second half of the next decade, the new firm would be rolling out autonomous services using Toyota’s battery electric vehicles.

“Possibilities include demand-focused just-in-time mobility services, such as meal delivery vehicles where food is prepared on the move, hospital shuttles where onboard medical examinations can be performed, mobile offices,” said

the two firms in a statement. Toyota’s president Akio Toyoda has pledged to transform the auto behemoth “from a car manufacturer to a mobility company” to face what he described as a “once-in-a-century challenge” to an industry undergoing “profound change”.

Under tycoon CEO Masayoshi Son, SoftBank, which started as a software firm, has increasingly been seen as an investment firm, ploughing funds into a broad range of companies and projects outside its core business. In recent years it has completed deals with the likes of French robotics firm Aldebaran and Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba.

“Softbank alone and Toyota alone cannot do everything so we should maybe team up,” said Miyakawa.

He acknowledged that rivals in the United States, China and Europe were “further down the road” but stressed: “We’re not giving up. We believe we can catch up.” —AFP



**TOKYO:** SoftBank Group head Masayoshi Son (second left) and Toyota Motor president Akio Toyoda (second right) shake hands as SoftBank representative director and chief technology officer Junichi Miyakawa (left) and Toyota Motor executive vice president Shigeki Tomoyama (right) stand alongside during their joint press conference in Tokyo yesterday. —AFP

## India bank chief Kochhar steps down amid probe

**MUMBAI:** The chief executive of one of India’s largest banks, and a rare woman at the top of male-dominated corporate India, resigned yesterday amid a favoritism probe.

ICICI-India’s second-largest private bank by assets-said in a statement that Chanda Kochhar was immediately stepping down as CEO. She has been the subject of an investigation over a conflict of interests, facing charges that she favored loans to a company linked to her husband.

“The board of directors... accepted the request of Ms Chanda Kochhar to seek early retirement from the Bank at the earliest. “The Board accepted this request with immediate effect,” ICICI said in a filing to the Bombay Stock Exchange. The bank announced that head of its in-

## Saudi agrees to invest in new oil refinery in Gwadar

**ISLAMABAD:** Saudi Arabia has agreed in principle to invest in a new oil refinery in Pakistan’s deep-water port of Gwadar, the

insurance operations, Sandeep Bakhshi, would become its new chief executive, sending shares rising by almost five percent.

ICICI added that its investigation into the conflict of interest allegations against Kochhar would be unaffected by her departure. Kochhar, 56, is accused of sanctioning a loan worth hundreds of millions of dollars to the Videocon Group conglomerate, which had investments in her husband’s renewables energy firm.

The ICICI board initially slammed the allegations, which were first made in the Indian Express newspaper as “malicious”, but later opened a probe against her.

Kochhar, who had headed ICICI since May 2009, went on leave in June as the investigation got underway. She is one of the few women to have headed up an Indian bank-Axis Bank’s Shikha Sharma is another, while Arundhati Bhattacharya retired last year as the head of the State Bank of India.

India’s public and private sector banks are grappling with ballooning bad loans and falling profitability as the government attempts to clean up their books. —AFP

South Asian nation’s petroleum minister said yesterday. State-owned Pakistan State Oil will partner with Saudi state oil giant Aramco on the project, Petroleum Minister Ghulam Sarwar Khan told reporters. “They showed an interest to immediately invest in the refinery,” Khan said, describing a visiting Saudi delegation.

“We sat down and held initial discussions with them and it was principally decided by both sides that it will be a government-to-government agreement.” Details of the refinery’s costs and scope are to be worked out later. —Reuters

## Stocks selloff grinds on as US bond yields surge

**LONDON:** Most major stock markets fell back yesterday as a global selloff persisted on mounting anxiety over rising US bond yields, dealers said. London and Paris stocks shed a little less than one percent in value while Frankfurt eked out a modest gain following a German holiday closure the day before. The Dow and Nasdaq indices were also in the red in early New York trading.

The dollar continued to brush aside other currencies except for the pound after more proof of the booming US economy sent Treasury yields surging, but Asian equities sank with

more Federal Reserve rate hikes looking certain. A forecast-busting private jobs report, a surge in activity in the services sector and optimism in the retail market were the latest evidence that the world’s top economy is firing on all cylinders, helping send the Dow to a record close for the second day in a row. However, the news also saw a sell-off in haven Treasuries — a sign of confidence — sending the cost of borrowing to its highest level in seven years, in turn fuelling a surge in the dollar, helping it hit an 11-month high against the yen.

“There’s a pretty broad based sell-off seen in stock indices this morning with markets in Europe and US futures both declining as investors grow increasingly concerned about the recent rise in yields,” said XTB analyst David Cheetham. “Solid (US) employment data and a 21-year high in a widely viewed service sector survey from across the Atlantic on Wednesday ... saw US bond yields rise to multi-year highs and this makes stocks relatively less attractive.” —AFP

## IMF chief urges ‘revamp’ of Japan’s economic policy

**TOKYO:** The head of the IMF yesterday called for an overhaul of Japan’s economic policy, as the world’s third-biggest economy battles stubborn low inflation, sluggish growth and a rapidly ageing population.

Christine Lagarde called for a “fresh look” at “Abenomics”, the economic policy of Prime Min-

ister Shinzo Abe, which combines ultra-loose monetary policy with fiscal stimulus and structural reforms.

“We believe that it will require a revamping of policies. The basic principles in our view are still valid but need to be broadened, sustained and accelerated,” said Lagarde.

She warned that the economic challenges facing Japan will “only grow as Japan’s population continues to age and shrink,” noting that both the size of the economy and the population would contract by a quarter over the next 40 years. The IMF predicted a growth rate of 1.1 percent this year, declining to 0.9 next year in the former Asian powerhouse. —AFP

## Business

# Wave of worries takes shine off Motor Show

## Cutting-edge concept cars, self-driving lounges paint bright future for industry

**PARIS:** Cutting-edge concept cars and promises of self-driving “lounges” painted the picture of a bright future as the Paris Motor Show got under way on Tuesday, but that’s not the message being sent by industry chiefs.

From Brexit and transatlantic trade tensions to the challenges posed by China and electric vehicles, executives see plenty of reasons to worry. “Making forecasts is becoming more and more difficult,” BMW’s chief Harald Kruger told journalists. “Profitability is obviously under pressure.”

It was enough to keep plenty of key players at home: Ford, Fiat-Chrysler, Nissan, VW and Mazda were among the notable absences at this year’s show. Faced with the reluctance of some industry giants to spend millions of euros on marketing, organizers responded by cutting back the show’s length to 11 days from 16.

And in a bid to attract crowds who can just as easily compare models on the internet, they set up test tracks where visitors can take electric scooters and bikes for a spin. The show also teamed up with CES Las Vegas, the huge consumer electronics fair, to host dozens of tech start-ups eager to turn cars into the internet-connected “mobility solutions” of tomorrow.

But some analysts say such changes aren’t enough, citing a similar absence of major carmakers at the industry’s other top shows in Detroit, Geneva or Frankfurt in recent years.

“The concept needs to be redone from scratch — up to now these shows were just for putting cars next to young girls,” said Ferdinand Dudenhoffer of Germany’s Centre for Automotive Research.

### ‘Frozen’

Such marketing costs have also become harder to justify as carmakers invest billions in

autonomous driving and electric motors, even as the outlook for sales darkens. Dudenhoffer is expecting global sales to fall 1.4 percent next year, with declines of 4 percent in the US and China.

But the more immediate worry for European manufacturers is Brexit and the possibility of new duties between Britain and the continent. “Today we’re in a situation where everybody’s frozen, we’re all waiting to see what’s going to happen,” said Carlos Ghosn, head of the Renault-Nissan-Mitsubishi alliance.

“I don’t think that there’s any carmaker who’s not prepared for the worst. We don’t like it but we’re prepared,” he added. BMW’s Kruger said Brexit’s effects were already being felt. “The market is shrinking, and we’re selling fewer cars,” he said, adding that he too was bracing for a “difficult situation.”

Yet executives still hope a last-minute breakthrough will avoid a “hard Brexit”, similar to the deal reached over a revised Nafta following US President Donald Trump’s threat to scrap the trade pact.

“Frankly, we’re very happy that we have an agreement. I can tell you that no agreement would have been much more devastating for the development of our operations in North America,” Ghosn said.

### ‘Stress tests’

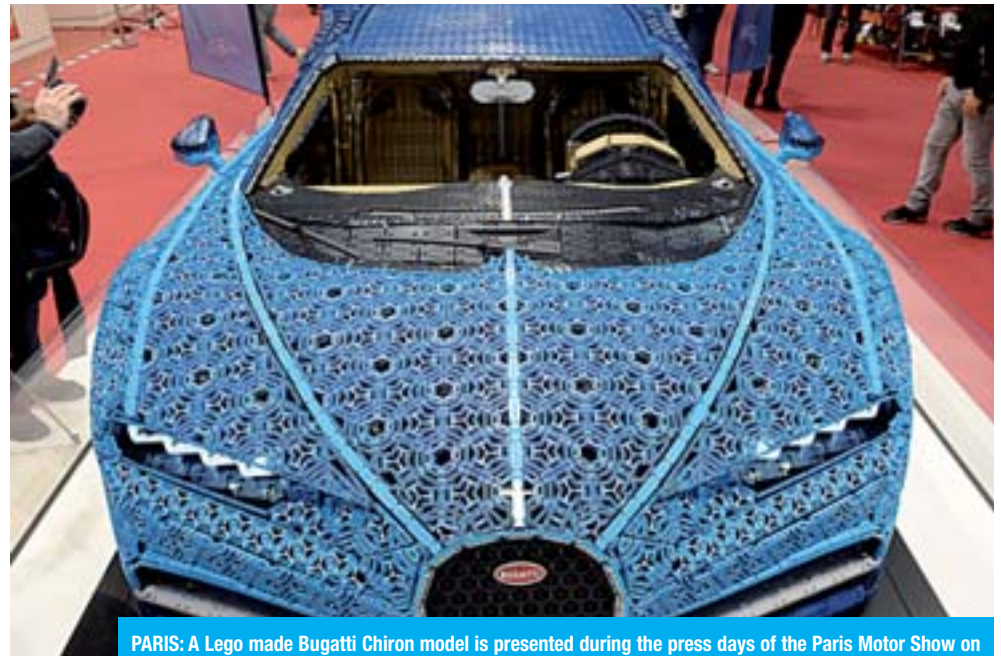
The threats haven’t stopped carmakers from investing: BMW “will spend more money than ever, seven billion euros (\$8.1 billion) on research and development this year,” mainly on electric and digital technologies, Kruger said. Both BMW and its German rival Daimler have trimmed profit forecasts for this year, not least because of charges associated with the “dieselgate” emissions cheating scandal.

Strict EU limits on CO2 emissions from

across Europe and beyond.

Nissan, which operates the country’s largest automotive factory, said leaving without a deal would have “serious implications” for Britain’s manufacturing industry. In the two years since the Brexit vote, Nissan has been restrained in public about the referendum. But its warning now shows the growing alarm among business executives. “Today we are among those companies with major investments in the UK who are still waiting for clarity on what the future trading relationship between the UK and the EU will look like,” Nissan said in a statement.

“We urge UK and EU negotiators to work collaboratively towards an orderly balanced Brexit that will continue to encourage mutually beneficial trade,” the company said. RBS Chief Executive Ross McEwan said Britain’s economy might fall into recession without a deal. McEwan said companies were scaling back investment due to the uncertainty and RBS was more cautious about lending to the retail and construction industries in particular as Brexit approached. —Reuters



PARIS: A Lego made Bugatti Chiron model is presented during the press days of the Paris Motor Show on Tuesday. —AFP

2020 have contributed to plunging diesel sales, as has the prospect that many cities could start banning their use to combat smog. That has accelerated the shift to electric, along with the prospect of supplying the huge Chinese market, where officials are strongly encouraging the use of zero-emission vehicles.

Renault announced this week a low-cost SUV, the K-ZE, specifically for the Chinese market.

But in developed markets electric cars are still a loss-making proposition. “The amount

of technology onboard is going to get bigger and bigger, and the costs higher and higher,” said PSA Group chief Carlos Tavares.

He suggested that developing car-sharing systems could be a way of making them more accessible. For Maxime Lemerle, an auto specialist at the risk insurance group Euler Hermes, the wave of challenges has carmakers facing “stress tests” like those applied to banks after the 2008 financial crisis.

“The question is whether they will be able to adapt to the deep changes in the automotive world,” he said. —AFP

## Nissan and RBS join chorus of warnings over disorderly Brexit

**LONDON:** Japanese carmaker Nissan and Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS) have become the latest companies to warn about damage to the economy if Britain fails to secure a trade deal before leaving the European Union. Less than six months before Britain is due to exit the bloc, Prime Minister Theresa May has yet to find a proposal for economic ties that pleases EU negotiators and both sides of her divided Conservative party.

The government has stepped up planning for a so-called no-deal Brexit when the world’s fifth-largest economy leaves the EU on March 29, 2019, a step that could spook financial markets and dislocate trade flows



PARIS: German automaker Daimler AG chairman of the Board of Management Dieter Zetsche (L) and chairman and CEO of Renault-Nissan-Mitsubishi Carlos Ghosn give a press conference during the press days of the Paris Motor Show. —AFP



## Business

# US weekly jobless claims drop to near 49-year low

## Continuing claims decline 13,000 to 1.65 million

**WASHINGTON:** The number of Americans filing for unemployment benefits fell to a near 49-year low last week, pointing to sustained labor market strength, which should continue to underpin economic growth.

The labor market, which is viewed as being near or at full employment, is steadily boosting wage growth, which could help to support consumer spending as the stimulus from the Trump administration's \$1.5 trillion tax cut package fades. Initial claims for state unemployment benefits dropped 8,000 to a seasonally adjusted 207,000 for the week ended Sept 29, the Labor

Department said yesterday.

Data for the prior week was revised to show 1,000 more applications received than previously reported. Claims fell to 202,000 during the week ended Sept. 15, which was the lowest level since November 1969.

Economists polled by Reuters had forecast claims slipping to 213,000 in the latest week. The Labor Department said claims for South and North Carolina were affected by Hurricane Florence, which lashed the region in mid-September. The four-week moving average of initial claims, considered a better measure of labor

market trends as it irons out week-to-week volatility, rose 500 to 207,000 last week. US financial markets were little moved by the report.

The claims data has no bearing on September's employment report, which is scheduled for release on Friday. According to a Reuters survey of economists, nonfarm payrolls likely increased by 185,000 in September after surging 201,000 in August. The unemployment rate is forecast falling one-tenth of a percentage point to 3.8 percent, an 18-year low first hit in May.

Payrolls growth could, however, surprise on the upside as data on Wednesday showed an in-

crease in hiring by private companies in September and a jump in private sector jobs. The Federal Reserve raised interest rates last week for the third time this year and removed the reference to monetary policy remaining "accommodative."

Thursday's claims report also showed the number of people receiving benefits after an initial week of aid fell 13,000 to 1.65 million for the week ended Sept. 22. The four-week moving average of the so-called continuing claims decreased 15,250 to 1.66 million, the lowest level since October 1973. — Reuters

## With tiny Russian pensions, work never ends

**ULAN-UDE, Russia:** From Siberia to central Russia and elsewhere, elderly people are often forced to work past retirement age to supplement their miserly state pensions. A new bill raising the state pension age by five years to 65 for men and 60 for women, which could be signed into law soon, has provoked a rare outburst of raw anger, as many Russian men do not live long enough to celebrate their sixtieth birthday. Here are portraits of two Russian retirees who told AFP about their living and working arrangements.

### Dancing through retirement

On Revolution Square in the eastern Siberian city of Ulan-Ude a Latin dance lesson is in full swing—Anastasia Aksayeva, a 61-year-old pensioner, is leading a dozen pupils as passers-by watch in amusement.

Twice a week the energetic retiree with a blonde bob teaches fellow pensioners dance routines. Her classes are very popular and one of her pupils has recently won a contest among seniors, she said. Aksayeva has a dream: one day she would like to throw a street party that would see a hundred people dance together in the city's main square.

"We would set this place on fire and show the young that we exist, that we don't live out our days sitting on the benches outside our homes," she said. Aksayeva, who also teaches gymnastics, is lucky to be able to do what she loves: before she retired she worked as a choreographer at a local arts college and travelled with her pupils abroad to take part in competitions.

"But today, with my income, that is no longer possible," she said. Aksayeva draws a monthly pension of 15,000 rubles (\$228) and her dance and gymnastics classes

bring her an additional 10,000 rubles. A widow, she lives alone in an apartment in the centre of the city. Her only son does not have children. "I think that if a person can continue working after retirement, they should do," she said. "Of course, it's easier for doctors and teachers." As the exuberant dance teacher sees it, the life of a retired woman in Russia should not resemble the old clichés. With her slender frame and painted lips, Aksayeva is anything but a traditional "babushka" who spends her days cooking, shopping and looking after her grandchildren.

"We live in the 21st century. With a positive attitude and some time on our hands, we can do anything," said Aksayeva. Her other dream is to travel to Paris to see the Eiffel Tower and dance with French seniors.

"I am sure there are like-minded people in France," she said. "I'd like to meet them, hug them and dance with them. I'd like that very much."

### From Arctic port to odd jobs

Around Igor Drovnikov's wooden cottage many houses have fallen into disrepair and weeds have invaded the gardens. The 70-year-old is one of a handful of permanent residents of the nearly deserted vil-

lage of Boboli some 150 kilometers (93 miles) southwest of Moscow.

There is no running water nor mains gas here and the nearest paved road is 12 kilometres away. Drovnikov, a tall, fit man who bought his house in 2005. His wife died three years later. A former mechanic at the Arctic port of Severodvinsk, home to nuclear submarine shipyards, Drovnikov ekes out a threadbare living on a monthly pension of 14,000 rubles (\$213). "That's awfully little," said the blue-eyed, mustachioed pensioner who buys gas cylinders for cooking.

He said pensioners like himself have "enough for food" but cannot afford to travel or buy expensive things.

He draws water from nearby wells and grows his own tomatoes, potatoes and garlic. "My neighbours also give me vegetables and fruit in exchange for odd jobs and a little money if I water their plants when they leave." Drovnikov does not complain. "I like to work the land. Where I lived before, this was not possible," he said. A year ago the pensioner suffered a stroke and the ambulance took four hours to arrive, with the nearest hospital some 30 kilometres away. — AFP

## RBS warns no-deal Brexit could spark UK recession

**LONDON:** A no-deal Brexit risks sending the British economy into recession in 2019, the head of the Royal Bank of Scotland warned yesterday. The lender's consensus economic forecast for "next year says about 1.0-1.5 growth in the economy if we get an okay Brexit scenario," chief executive Ross McEwan told the BBC. "But if we get a very hard Brexit scenario ... it actually will be less than that."

"And the economy may well go down to zero or negative growth next year if that Brexit relationship is very very harsh." This would hurt the bank's profitability and share price, he cautioned.

The technical definition of a recession is two successive quarters of negative economic growth.

"If we don't get the (economic) growth, that reflects into ... the growth of our business which may be zero or negative," the boss added. The Edinburgh-based bank remains 62.4-percent owned by the government after it received a vast bailout during the global financial crisis.

In the face of Brexit uncertainty, RBS lending was becoming more cautious—while companies were also delaying investment decisions, according to McEwan.

"We are seeing the very large corporates just pausing in their investment into the UK because they are sitting saying: Do we wait for another six months to see what the outcome is? And that is what they are doing. And they can say: In six months' time, we can come back and invest, or if things are really bad we will stay away from investing here."

"That is the reality of what is happening today," he warned. McEwan added that small businesses had "no impact on them whatsoever" and were continuing as normal because they are "very local businesses". He added: "It's the larger businesses that are just paused. Because—do I invest here, do I invest in Europe or do I invest somewhere else. That's the decision making process they are going through."

McEwan had already revealed last month that RBS was planning for the worst amid increasing worries that Britain will exit the European Union in March without a deal in place with Brussels.

The bank is meanwhile setting up a new European subsidiary in Amsterdam to serve customers on the continent, and awaiting approval of its licenses. — AFP



**LOS ANGELES:** Airport employees march in protest outside Terminal 4 at the Los Angeles International Airport as part of an international demonstration in airports worldwide calling for a safe workplace, fair wages and union rights in Los Angeles. — AFP

## Sports

# Fighters flock to Russia's Dagestan where wrestling is a way of life

## It is immensely popular with local children

**KAYAKENT, Russia:** Eyes focused on each other, boys in colorful singlets practice wrestling takedowns as others watch from the side of the modest studio, leaning against walls covered with peeling paint and splintering wood paneling. The sports hall in Kayakent, a small town in Russia's Dagestan region in the Caucasus, has seen better days. But it is immensely popular with local children, who come from humble origins and one day hope to repeat the triumphs of their older peers in bringing home world championship medals.

And in Dagestan, successful wrestlers can gain almost iconic status. Such was the excitement about homegrown celebrity Khabib Nurmagomedov when he became the first Muslim or Russian national to win a UFC (Ultimate Fighting Championship) title in April that he was mobbed by about 2,000 people at the airport and needed a police escort for him and his father.

The 30-year-old mixed martial arts (MMA) fighter is set to apply his wrestling techniques on Saturday when he defends his title against MMA star Irishman Conor McGregor in Las Vegas in the headline UFC fight, arguably the most anticipated in the sport's history. Nurmagomedov, known as The Eagle, grew up wrestling and was initially mostly coached by his father, before moving to Dagestan's main city, Makhachkala, to train with a coach there.

### Humble beginnings

With Dagestan becoming a steady supplier of world and Olympic champions, the mountainous

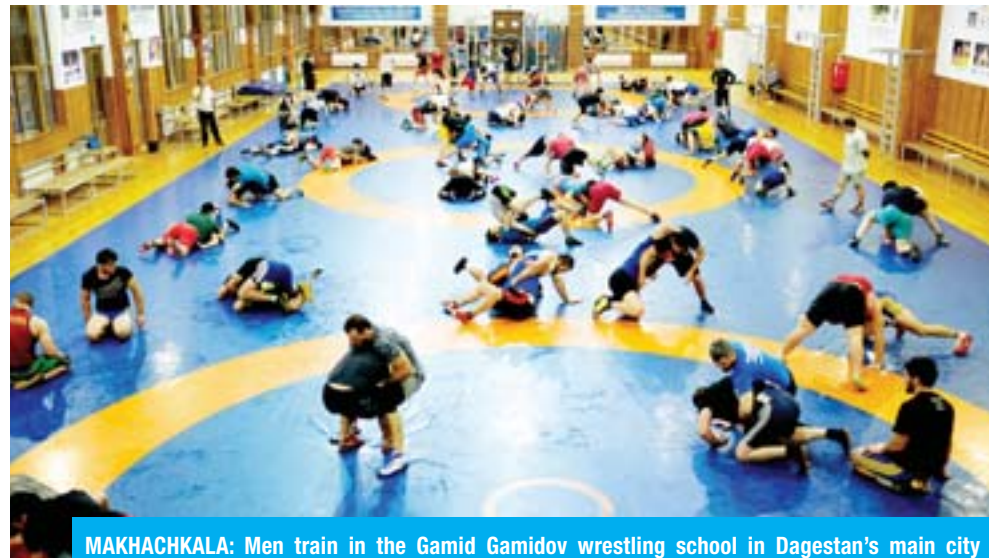
region's training grounds have even started attracting foreign athletes. "After we opened this school in 1996, we saw the first results already in four-five years," said Magomed Arangereyev, who coaches at the Kayakent sport school. "After six years... our boys started winning in Europe, then world championships." The facility initially didn't even have mats.

Arangereyev had to work on concrete floor until a fire wrecked a larger town's sports school, which closed down and gave him some equipment. Now, he says, the school is over capacity, with 60 young boys sometimes coming to practise, in the town of just 11,000 people. "We can no longer accommodate everyone since we have no space," he told AFP in an interview at his office, lined with dozens of trophies and photos of local wrestlers who have reached success internationally. In Dagestan, wrestling is the "number one sport", Arangereyev said, not football or hockey popular in the rest of Russia.

### 'Best in the world'

Different ethnic groups in the diverse region historically practiced traditional wrestling, making the area a fertile ground for the modern sport. "This tradition is over 100 years old. Our great grandparents wrestled, and we have national wrestling high in the mountains," said Gaidar Gaidarov, who coaches at a famous wrestling school in Makhachkala.

The success of wrestlers trained in Dagestan has now made the region a top draw for the



**MAKHACHKALA:** Men train in the Gamid Gamidov wrestling school in Dagestan's main city Makhachkala. — AFP photo

sport. Gaidarov no longer just trains local young men but also ambitious athletes from all over the world who are not afraid to move to Dagestan, a region that borders war-scarred Chechnya and has itself been a hotbed of Islamic extremism. One wrestler now training with Gaidarov and running trails in the surrounding hills is Cuban-born Italian national Frank Chamizo, who last year became a world champion in his category.

Training in the Gamid Gamidov school in Makhachkala where Gaidarov works, French national Saïfedine Alekma said he came to Dagestan after his progress stalled at home. "Here you find the best wrestlers in the world," he said, during practice in the large gym. "Even just in this room this evening you can find 20 or 30 world and European champions, junior or senior." —AFP

## Hamilton still split' about Russia win

**SUZUKA:** Formula One world champion Lewis Hamilton said yesterday he still had mixed feelings after being gift-wrapped a controversial win by Mercedes in Russia last weekend. The runaway championship leader stretched his advantage to Ferrari's Sebastian Vettel to 50 points with just five races left this season after Mercedes ordered Valtteri Bottas to allow Hamilton to pass, sacrificing a rare victory for the Finn.

"I don't think you get your mind around it," said Hamilton. "I am definitely split, just like all people have split opinions about it," added the Briton. "But it's happened, it's done and dusted. You have to accept it and move forwards." The decision by Mercedes to allow Hamilton to claim his eighth win of the season sparked fresh debate over team orders in Formula One, with many fans of the sport taking to social media to vent their anger.

Vettel called the move a "no-brainer" after finishing third in Sochi but Hamilton's 70th Formula One victory left Mercedes squirming with embarrassment. After the race, Hamilton described it as "the strangest day" of his career and he was clearly still torn after arriving in Japan. "But collectively as a team we've stayed quite united through the whole experience," he said. Bottas was left fuming in Russia but the Finn was in a more charitable mood yesterday. "I just need to accept it

now that I'm in this situation because of everything that has happened earlier in the season," he said. "I cannot fight for the championship anymore, Lewis is. I'm a team player and I'm willing to help."

### 'I feel like a winner'

Bottas insisted that he would not have to wait for Hamilton to wrap up his fifth Formula One title before being allowed to take the checkered flag. "I'm definitely still allowed to win but it will all depend on the situation," he shrugged. "I feel like a winner. Honestly I think last weekend, if Lewis didn't have the (tyre) blister, if he didn't have that much pressure from Sebastian, the team would have not done it. It will really be case by case."

Mercedes team boss Toto Wolff said he was "happy to be the baddie" in order to strengthen Hamilton's grip on the world championship. And former world champion Fernando Alonso backed the Austrian's decision yesterday. "All the bad stuff people are saying about Mercedes is just jealousy," said the Spaniard. "For them, what people say goes in one ear and out the other. They're not doing anything wrong."

Hamilton paid tribute to Bottas, pointing to the outpouring of love shown to his team mate on a visit to the Mercedes factory in Brackley, England, earlier this week. "I was at the factory on Monday and I am sure 50 percent of the guys have the same vibe, but generally the support was quite amazing and also the respect for Valtteri," he said. "We all did a toast to Valtteri — 900 people or whatever it is were standing there, it was pretty awesome!" —AFP

## All Blacks start Goodhue against S Africa

**JOHANNESBURG:** All Blacks coach Steve Hansen handed rising star Jack Goodhue a start in the centers for Saturday's Rugby Championship Test against South Africa, demoting veteran Ryan Crotty to the bench. Goodhue, 23, will partner Sonny Bill Williams as New Zealand look to avenge last month's shock 36-34 loss to the Springboks in Wellington.

Hansen, whose side has already won the southern hemisphere tournament, said he wanted to see how the Goodhue-Williams combination worked, no doubt with one eye on next year's Rugby World Cup defense in Japan. "We know a lot about Ryan and Jack but we don't know a lot about Sonny and Jack," he said. "All year we've been trying to work out what's our best combination in that area for the future and this is an opportunity to do that." The inclusion of Goodhue, Crotty's team-mate at the Crusaders, is one

of four changes to the starting XV that beat Argentina 35-17 to seal the title last week.

Captain Kieran Read, halfback Aaron Smith and prop Owen Franks all return after being rested against the Pumas. Hansen said New Zealand needed to maintain their intensity in front of a sold-out crowd of 52,000 in Pretoria, even though they had already won the tournament. With South Africa riding high after back-to-back wins over the All Blacks and Australia, Hansen admitted the New Zealanders had a point to prove.

"Nothing changes for us. It's a Test match that everyone in New Zealand expects us to win," he said. "South Africa are playing with a lot of confidence and after their two recent wins, their confidence levels will be even higher. "So we'll need to respond with real purpose, composure, belief and intensity." New Zealand (15-1): Ben Smith; Waisake Naholo, Jack Goodhue, Sonny Bill Williams, Rieko Ioane; Beauden Barrett, Aaron Smith; Kieran Read (capt), Sam Cane, Shannon Frizell; Scott Barrett, Sam Whitelock; Owen Franks, Codie Taylor, Karl Tu'inukuafu. Replacements: Nathan Harris, Tim Perry, Ofa Tu'ungafasi, Patrick Tuipulotu, Ardie Savea, TJ Perenara, Richie Mo'unga, Ryan Crotty. —AFP

# The army of tiny Tigers driving China's young golfing boom

## Budding interest in a game that was once banned



GUANGZHOU: This picture taken on September 23, 2018 shows Lai Yiyan teeing off during a children's golf tournament at the Dragon Lake Golf Club. —AFP



Lai Runci participating in a children's golf tournament at the Dragon Lake Golf Club.

GUANGZHOU: Lai Runci practices every day and looks very much the golfer as she pings the ball effortlessly off the tee. She is aged six. Lai Yiyan has won so many tournaments that she has lost count. She is nine. The two girls — who are not related — represent China's growing army of child golfers and the country's budding interest in a game that was banned under Mao Zedong because it was "for millionaires".

The sport was allowed to breathe again in the 1980s, but under current President Xi Jinping scrutiny has increased with authorities closing scores of golf courses in recent years after they became synonymous with corrupt officials and extravagant lifestyles. None of that appeared to matter when a gaggle of snazzily dressed boys and girls aged between six and 10 competed at Guangzhou's Dragon Lake Golf Club in southern Guangdong, a province that considers itself the home of golf in China.

### Star in the making?

As their parents and grandparents sipped tea

or lattes in the Spanish-themed clubhouse and discussed how to get into China's top universities, the children out on the 18-hole course displayed techniques that professionals would not be ashamed of. Yiyan, who also uses the name Yvonne, soared to victory in her category, negotiating nine holes in 42 shots to win by a handsome eight strokes.

Hidden beneath a red cap and sun glasses, Yiyan practises up to five times a week. "When I grow up I'd like to become a professional golfer," said Yiyan, who with her confidence, ability and golf attire already has the air of a star. Looking on approvingly is her grandmother Zong Jinyong, who also looks the part with her cap and golf top displaying the Chinese flag prominently. "When I was young I didn't know what golf was. I only knew what it was in 2002," says Zong, underlining how previous generations of Chinese grew up ignorant of the sport. The China Golf Association had just 400 registered junior golfers in 2013, but that exploded to 35,000 by the end of last year and the organi-

sation expects 100,000 within five years.

### Stiff competition

There are a growing number of Chinese on the professional men's and women's tours, and last year Feng Shanshan became the first player from her country to become a golf world number one. Charles Wu, general manager of Dragon Lake Golf Club, which opened in 2004 to adult and junior players, treads carefully in attempting to explain golf's ambiguous status in China, emphasizing that it is not about hobnobbing among the elite.

"We do youth golf here because our club has always regarded golf as a sport," he stresses, saying that the cost of playing is declining, though it remains the domain of the wealthy in China. Wu appreciates that pushing a child as young as six to play golf every day is unpalatable to many — even if little Runci, who like many her age is extremely shy, intimates that she enjoys it. "Just one reason — China has too many people," he says, asked why some parents push their children to play so often, so early. "You have a very

(great) challenge in the same age — one million, two million, 10 million (rivals). How can you play (to be) number one?"

### 'Be like Tiger'

Wu does question whether someone as young as Runci should be out on the golf course practicing every day. "Normally a six-year-old will go to bed about 8:30-9pm, but they don't, they go out to play golf until 11pm," he says. "For a Westerner that is a Chinese 'miracle' because you can't let your child keep playing golf until 11pm and not sleep. "Chinese kids can do this because they are both willing and made to be willing to accept this kind of education."

The last word should rightly go to Runci — it would, if she was not so quiet. Asked if she has any other hobbies aside from golf, she shakes her head. She is upset that — with her father looking on — she came only second of four in her group. Asked what she wants to be when she grows up, a woman's voice pipes up in the background. "Be a golf star like Tiger Woods." — AFP

## MotoGP riders praise first female superbike champ

BURIRAM: The world's top-ranked MotoGP riders hailed yesterday the barrier-breaking victory of Ana Carrasco, a week after the Spaniard earned glory by becoming the first woman to win a world motorcycling title. The 21-year-old entered the record books on September 30 when she won by a single point in the Superbike Supersport 300 division on the French circuit of Magny-Cours.

Riding a Kawasaki, Carrasco fought her way up from 25th to finish 13th at the season decider, calling her achievement "unbelievable". MotoGP's three leading riders were full of praise when quizzed about her win ahead of the inaugural Thailand Grand Prix. "I was very happy, it

was so important for the motorcycle world," said MotoGP frontrunner and fellow Spanish rider Marc Marquez. "It's not a man's world, women can be very fast on the bike. It's not only about the physical condition, also it's about skill and mentality," added Marquez.

His sentiments were shared by Italians Andrea Dovizioso and Valentino Rossi, who both trail Marquez on points going into Sunday's race. Dovizioso called it an "important result" while Rossi said it was a "great achievement" that could inspire other women. "I hope that for Ana it is good for the future of her career," Rossi said. "Maybe this result can push some other girl to race." When pressed if she could compete at the MotoGP level, Rossi said it was a big leap but that the difference had nothing to do with gender. "For me from the 300 (division) to the MotoGP is still a long way," she said. The riders also fielded questions about the hot weather and the new track, which was built only a few years ago in Buriram, a sleepy Thai town that is pouring investment into sports. —AFP

## 'Finally clicked': Osaka says better focus behind stellar run

BEIJING: Her chopstick skills might not be the best but Naomi Osaka says an improvement in her focus is behind a run of success that culminated in winning the US Open. The 20-year-old, who stunned Serena Williams to win her maiden Grand Slam last month, was devastating against 10th seed Julia Goerges of Germany on Thursday, winning 6-1, 6-2 in 65 minutes to speed into the China Open quarter-finals.

Osaka, the eighth seed in Beijing, similarly thrashed unseeded American Danielle Collins 6-1, 6-0 in the previous round and is showcasing the ruthlessness that saw her beat Williams in a controversial New York final. The Japanese will face home hope Zhang Shuai in the last eight in the Chinese capital after Zhang pulled off a shock in defeating three-time Grand Slam champion Angelique Kerber. China Open organisers have had the players competing in a "chopstick challenge" and Zhang and the German Kerber are currently winning. Told that she was well behind both with her score, Osaka joked: "We're not talking about that. "Come on, with Shuai, let's face it... But the thing is, I hold chopsticks in a weird way anyways." Turning more serious, the world number six, said: "On the court I have to think 'focus' because it's not something that's natural to me. — AFP

## Sports

# Young gun's debut century puts India on top in WI Test

## India's second-youngest century maker after Sachin Tendulkar

**RAJKOT:** Teenager Prithvi Shaw became the youngest Indian to score a century on Test debut as the hosts took opening day honors in the first match against the West Indies yesterday. Shaw, 18, also became India's second-youngest century maker after Sachin Tendulkar as he blasted his way to a century in 99 deliveries in Rajkot.

India were 364 for four at stumps after electing to bat first in Rajkot. Skipper Virat Kohli, on 72, and wicketkeeper-batsman Rishabh Pant, on 17, were batting at close of play. But the day belonged to Shaw, a diminutive right-handed opener and Indian Premier League star for the Delhi Daredevils, as he and Cheteshwar Pujara put on a 206-run second wicket partnership. He led India's fightback after they lost opener Lokesh Rahul for nought in the very first over off Shannon Gabriel.

Shaw was finally caught and bowled by leg-spinner Devendra Bishoo for 134 in the last over before tea. His knock came in 154 balls with 19 boundaries. The now-retired Tendulkar, India's most successful batsman, was aged 17 when he scored 119 not out against England in 1990, but that was in his ninth Test match.

Shaw reached the landmark with two runs off paceman Keemo Paul, punching his fist in the air as the home crowd gave him a standing ovation. Shaw

is the seventh-youngest international batsman to score his first Test century. He is also the third batsman after Shikhar Dhawan (85 balls) and Dwayne Smith (93) to hit his debut ton in under 100 balls.

Pujara also played an uncharacteristically quick knock as he brought up fifty off 67 deliveries, but missed out on his hundred after being caught behind off debutant paceman Sherman Lewis. Kraigg Brathwaite, standing in as captain after Jason Holder suffered a last-minute ankle injury, juggled his bowlers but the absence of the experienced Kemar Roach and Holder was painfully evident. Roach is back in Barbados to attend the funeral of his grandmother.

Kohli and Ajinkya Rahane, who made 41, took over from Shaw with a patient 105-run partnership despite West Indies bowlers keeping a tidy line and length to check the flow of runs in the final session of play. India, who had raced to 232-3 at tea, managed another 132 runs in 38 overs of the evening session with Kohli and Rahane batting cautiously. Kohli, who is the world's number one Test batsman, got to his half-century against Bishoo and was getting dangerous with each passing ball. Indian vice-captain Rahane though lost his cool against off-spinner Roston Chase to get caught behind in the final few overs of the day. —AFP



**RAJKOT:** India's Prithvi Shaw celebrates after scoring a century (100 runs) during the first Test cricket match between India and West Indies at the Saurashtra Cricket Association stadium. —AFP

## Shaw's debut ton underlines child prodigy status

**RAJKOT:** India's Prithvi Shaw has been compared to batting great Sachin Tendulkar since he was a 14-year-old schoolboy and the lofty parallels will intensify after the teenage prodigy made a sparkling hundred on his test debut yesterday. At 18 years and 329 days, Shaw became the youngest Indian and fourth-youngest overall to score a ton on his test debut during a knock of 134 off 154 balls against West Indies in Rajkot. His breezy knock received praise from Tendulkar, who was also known for dominating opposition bowlers as a young batsman.

"Lovely to see such an attacking knock in your first innings, @prithvishaw! Continue batting fearlessly," Tendulkar wrote on Twitter. Like compatriot Tendulkar, Shaw shot to prominence from inter-school cricket when he smashed 546 off 330 balls for Rizvi Springfield in a minors' cricket competition in Mumbai in 2013. He hit 85 fours and five sixes during that knock.

For his part, Tendulkar, who went on to become the most prolific run-scorer in an international career spanning 24 years, once held the record for the highest partnership of 664 in school cricket with former India batsman Vinod Kambli. Both Tendulkar and Shaw are short in

stature and baby-faced and have spent their formative years toiling on the pitches in Mumbai, known as the breeding ground for producing future India cricketers. The similarities do not end there. Shaw scored a hundred in his first-class debut in a Ranji Trophy semi-final for Mumbai in 2017 and then became the youngest player to score a century on his Duleep Trophy debut, a record previously held by Tendulkar.

### Shaw's chance

Murali Vijay and Shikhar Dhawan opened for India at the start of the recent five-test series in England but both were overlooked after the 4-1 defeat, handing a chance to Shaw, who was a non-playing squad member for the final two England tests.

He could not have been more impressive in his maiden test knock, scoring his first runs with a punch off the back foot through covers off his second delivery, reminding everyone why he had been tipped for a bright future in national colors. Shaw, who hit 19 fours, was often a tad flashy for an opening batsman with his shot selection but showed stunning fluency in scoring on both sides of the wicket.

"First I was a bit nervous but when I got in I was quite comfortable and I was just trying to play my natural game, what I do in first-class cricket and in India A, and I just kept on going," Shaw told broadcaster Star Sports. "I was not thinking about it as my first game, I was just thinking that it's another game and it just happened." —Reuters

## IOC warns boxing could be thrown out of Olympics

**LOS ANGELES:** Boxing risks being thrown out of the Olympics unless the sport's ruling body addresses "grave" concerns regarding its governance, the International Olympic Committee executive board said on Wednesday. A strongly worded IOC statement warned that the International Boxing Association (AIBA) must tackle governance issues at its upcoming congress or it could face sanctions.

"The Executive Board of the IOC today expressed its ongoing extreme concern with the grave situation within the International Boxing Association (AIBA) and its current governance," the board said in a statement. "These include the circumstances of the establishment of the election list and the misleading communication within the AIBA membership regarding the IOC's position." The executive board, meeting in Buenos Aires where the Youth Olympic Games begin on Saturday, said the troubles in the AIBA affect "not just the reputation of AIBA and boxing but of sport in general".

"Therefore, the IOC reiterates its clear position that if the governance issues are not properly addressed to the satisfaction of the IOC at the forthcoming AIBA Congress, the existence of boxing on the Olympic programme and even the recognition of AIBA as an International Federation recognised by the IOC are under threat." The IOC warned in July that boxing could still be axed from the 2020 Tokyo Olympics if the AIBA did not put its house in order. In February the IOC said they were worried by the nomination of Uzbek businessman Gafur Rakhimov for the AIBA's interim presidency. However Rakhimov, who has been linked to organized crime by the US Treasury Department, is now the only candidate for the presidency to be voted on at the AIBA congress in Moscow in November.

In attempting to force change at the AIBA this year, the IOC had already suspended financial contributions from the IOC to the AIBA. Even though the IOC believes sweeping change is needed at the AIBA, the governing body voiced support for boxers themselves. "At the same time we would like to reassure the athletes that the IOC will — as it has always done in such situations and is currently doing at the Youth Olympic Games Buenos Aires 2018 — do its utmost to ensure that the athletes do not have to suffer under these circumstances and that we will protect their Olympic dream." —AFP

## Sports

# Ronaldo denies allegations, calls rape 'abominable'

## 'I firmly deny the accusations being issued against me'

**LAS VEGAS:** Cristiano Ronaldo on Wednesday denied accusations by a former American model that he raped her in a Las Vegas hotel in 2009 and said his conscience is clear. Ronaldo's denial came as lawyers for his accuser said they had obtained damning correspondence between the footballer and his legal team. The case has threatened the reputation of the Portuguese superstar, arguably the world's best footballer, with Las Vegas police this week saying they would reopen their file on the matter.

"I firmly deny the accusations being issued against me," he tweeted in Portuguese and English. "Rape is an abominable crime that goes against everything that I am and believe in," said the 33-year-old Juventus forward. "My clear conscious (sic) will thereby allow me to await with tranquility the results of any and all investigations," he added on his Twitter feed @Cristiano, which has nearly 75 million followers. Mayorga, 34, of Las Vegas, accused Ronaldo, in a 32-page lawsuit filed last month with a district court in Nevada, of raping her on June 13, 2009.

Las Vegas police this week said they were reopening a case filed on that date but did not identify the victim or the alleged perpetrator by name. Complicating matters, Jacinto Rivera, a spokesman for the department, told AFP Mayorga did not identify Ronaldo by name at the time of her complaint and was "uncooperative." Mayorga's lawsuit, however, said she had named the footballer to police "within weeks of the initial report."

## Court set to rule on whether Benzema must stand trial

**PARIS:** The Paris Appeal Court said yesterday that it will rule next month on the validity of a blackmail case against Real Madrid star Karim Benzema and five other men. At a long-awaited hearing on Thursday, prosecutors asked the court confirm the validity of a police investigation into Benzema for his role in an alleged attempt to blackmail Mathieu Valbuena over a sex tape.

In July 2017, France's highest court, the Court of Cassation, annulled an earlier decision to send Benzema to trial and ordered the Paris court to review the original ruling. The affair began in June 2015, when Valbuena received a call from a blackmailer who threatened to release an intimate video. Valbuena contacted the police, who assigned an undercover officer to the case. Investigators accused Benzema of acting as an intermediary between the presumed blackmailers and Lyon midfielder Valbuena.

Benzema was dropped from the French side before Euro 2016 and has not been recalled. Benzema and three of the other suspects had asked for the case against them to be dropped. They say police used "dishonest" methods by posing as a friend of Valbuena in a telephone conversation with one of the accused, Younes Houass, and urging the payment of a ransom. Their appeal to the Court of Appeal in Versailles in December 2016 failed, but the Court of Cassation then annulled that decision and instructed the Paris Court of Appeal to hear the case again.

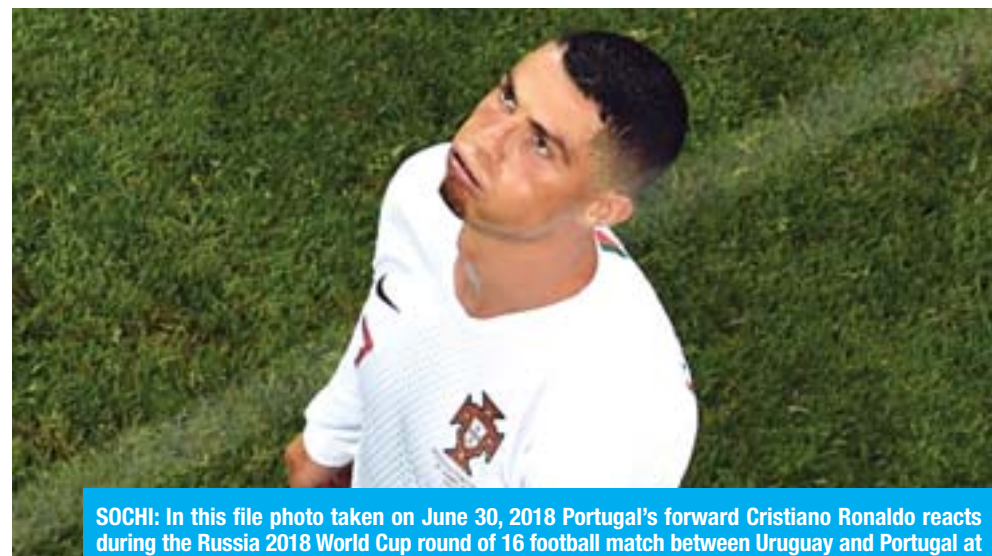
The Court of Cassation questioned the legal validity of the recordings of phone conversations which were central to the

### 'She said no'

Larissa Drohobycz, one of Mayorga's lawyers, told reporters that whistle-blowing website Football Leaks had provided documents that showed correspondence between Ronaldo and his team of fixers around the time of the incident, which they are considering making public. According to the alleged leak, Ronaldo told his fixers: "She said 'no' and 'stop' several times," in his written correspondence to them.

Mayorga alleges she was pressured into signing a nondisclosure agreement in 2010 to keep the alleged rape secret and is seeking at least \$200,000 in penalties and damages. The complaint was first reported by the German magazine Der Spiegel. Lawyers for Ronaldo have reportedly threatened to sue the magazine over the story. In the suit, Mayorga said she met Ronaldo, who was then 24 years old, on the evening of June 12, 2009 at the Rain Nightclub in the Palms Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas. It said she accepted an invitation to join Ronaldo and others in his penthouse suite to "enjoy the view of the Las Vegas strip."

"When Cristiano Ronaldo completed the sexual assault of the plaintiff, he allowed her to leave the bedroom stating he was sorry, he was usually a gentleman," it said. The lawsuit said Mayorga reported the alleged assault to police the same day and was examined at a local hospital. It said the assault left her with "severe emotional and bodily injuries including but not



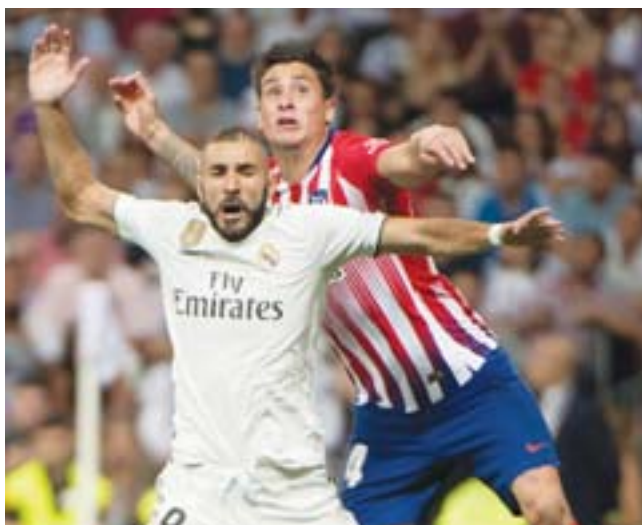
**SOCHI:** In this file photo taken on June 30, 2018 Portugal's forward Cristiano Ronaldo reacts during the Russia 2018 World Cup round of 16 football match between Uruguay and Portugal at the Fisht Stadium. — AFP

limited to anal contusions, post-traumatic stress disorder and major depression."

Under pressure from Ronaldo's "fixers," Mayorga settled the case "in exchange for a payment of \$375,000 and non-disclosure of the sexual assault," the lawsuit said. It claimed the agreement should be voided because she was "incompetent and lacked the mental capacity to participate in negotiations and settlement of her

claims due to the injuries suffered during the initial sexual assault."

Leslie Stovall, another lawyer for Mayorga, told reporters his client had suffered years of trauma as a result of the alleged attack, but had found the strength to speak out thanks to the #MeToo movement against sexual harassment and assault at the hands of powerful men. — AFP



**MADRID:** Real Madrid's French forward Karim Benzema (L) vies with Jose Atletico Madrid's Uruguayan defender Jose Gimenez during the Spanish league football match between Real Madrid CF and Club Atletico de Madrid at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium. — AFP

case against Benzema and the other suspects. "No financial quid-pro-quo and no threat, which are the elements constituting the offence of blackmail, were mentioned before the police got involved," said Samim Bolaky, Houass's lawyer, after Thursday's hearing. Valbuena's lawyer, Paul-Albert Iweins, said "the police officers behaved perfectly normally." In such blackmail cases, the lawyer said, "most often, it is a police officer who substitutes" as negotiator. — AFP

## Southgate rewarded for World Cup run with new contract

**LONDON:** Gareth Southgate has been rewarded for guiding England to this year's World Cup semi-finals with a new contract, the Football Association (FA) announced yesterday. The 48-year-old's new deal will see him through to the 2022 World Cup in Qatar and see his pay rise to a reported £3million (\$3.9million) per year.

"I am delighted to have the opportunity to lead the national team through the next two major tournaments," said Southgate, whose previous deal was due to expire after the Euro 2020 finals. "The job remains an incredible privilege and a true honour. Experiencing at first hand how the nation united behind the team this summer was something special and it will be great to see how far this young squad can go in the years to come."

Southgate, who ultimately saw England beaten 2-1 by Croatia in their first World Cup semi-final since 1990, said he was fortunate to have a great back-up team — his assistant Steve Holland was also awarded a new contract, and the players performing on the pitch. "I must acknowledge the hard work and commitment of my staff and the players over the last two years," said Southgate. "I have learned a great deal from them and their passion and professionalism in representing England has been an inspiration to my own work." — AFP

## Sports

# Barcelona outgun Spurs as Insigne scores winner

**PARIS:** Lionel Messi struck twice as Barcelona inflicted more Champions League pain on Tottenham with a 4-2 win at Wembley on Wednesday, while Neymar hit a brilliant hat-trick in Paris Saint-Germain's 6-1 rout of Red Star Belgrade. Philippe Coutinho scored after just two minutes for Barcelona, who arrived in London winless in three La Liga matches, with Ivan Rakitic drilling in a magnificent second.

Messi, who had earlier twice hit the post, then got on the scoresheet in between goals from Harry Kane and Erik Lamela, before the Argentina superstar grabbed his second late on to seal victory. "After a few bad results it was important to do well today. Our response was very good," said Barca coach Ernesto Valverde. Barca head Group B on six points alongside Inter Milan, but Mauricio Pochettino's side face a vital double-header against PSV Eindhoven after failing to collect a point from their opening two matches.

The Tottenham boss admitted Spurs had few answers for Messi as his team was left with an uphill struggle to reach the knockout stages. "He's a fantastic player," said Pochettino. "His average performance is this type of game. He's always above everything." Inter, the last Italian club to win the Champions League in 2010, again recovered from a goal down to beat PSV 2-1 in the Netherlands.

A cracking Pablo Rosario strike put PSV ahead, but Inter levelled through Radja Nainggolan moments after visiting goalkeeper Samir Handanovic somehow escaped a red card for handling outside his area. Mauro Icardi, whose late goal stunned Spurs a fortnight ago, was the hero again for Luciano Spalletti's men as he

pounced on hesitant defending to net the winner on the hour.

PSG rebounded from their 3-2 defeat by Liverpool with an attacking masterclass against 1991 European Cup winners Red Star at the Parc des Princes. Neymar curled in a sublime free-kick to open the scoring on 20 minutes, quickly doubling his tally before Edinson Cavani, Angel di Maria and Kylian Mbappe also found the target. Former Germany international Marko Marin popped up with a consolation for Red Star, with Neymar completing his hat-trick from another stunning free-kick. "I really liked the effort made by the whole team, but Neymar was sensational," said PSG coach Thomas Tuchel. "He is one of the best players in Europe and that is very, very important for us."

## Insigne sinks Liverpool

Carlo Ancelotti's Napoli top Group C on four points after Lorenzo Insigne delivered a 90th-minute winner at home to Liverpool, who are level on three alongside PSG. Dries Mertens hit the bar for Napoli late on, but there was still time for Insigne to nick all three points at the death as he slid to poke in a cross from Jose Callejon.

"Tonight we showed this group won't just be hard for Napoli, but for everyone involved," said Ancelotti. "It means a lot to us to have won against the finalists from last year." Antoine Griezmann scored two goals to lift Atletico Madrid, last season's Europa League winners, to a 3-1 victory over Club Brugge in Spain. Arnaut Groeneveld cancelled out Griezmann's opener with a thunderous strike from the left wing, but the France international restored Atletico's lead before Koke made the points safe in stoppage time.



**LONDON:** Barcelona's Argentinean striker Lionel Messi is tackled by Tottenham Hotspur's English midfielder Harry Winks (R) during the Champions League group B football match between Tottenham Hotspur and Barcelona at Wembley Stadium. —AFP

"I said it last season and I'll say it again — Griezmann is the best player in the world," said Atletico coach Diego Simeone. Borussia Dortmund lead Atletico at the top of Group A on goal difference following their 3-0 defeat of a struggling Monaco outfit. Jacob Bruun Larsen broke the deadlock in Germany shortly after his introduction as a half-time substitute, with Paco Alcacer finding the net just minutes after smacking a penalty against the bar.

Marco Reus fired in a third from a Bruun Larsen cross, leaving Dortmund and Atletico on six points apiece ahead of their upcoming home-and-away meetings. In Group D, American international midfielder Weston McKennie hit an 88th-minute winner as struggling Schalke edged Lokomotiv Moscow 1-0. Porto are joint-top with Schalke following a 1-0 win over Galatasaray courtesy of Moussa Marega's second-half goal in Portugal. —AFP

## No one to blame but ourselves, says Klopp

**NAPLES:** Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp said his side could only blame themselves after the last year's Champions League runners-up were overrun by Napoli before Lorenzo Insigne's late winner gave the Italians a 1-0 win to go top of Group C on Wednesday. "We were not good enough and if you are not good enough, you'll lose and that happened to us tonight. That's it," said Klopp. "Napoli made a really good game, we didn't, and that's why they deserve the three points."

Lorenzo Insigne scored after 90 minutes in a game Napoli dominated from the start with substitute Dries Mertens also rattling the crossbar. The hosts had the better chances throughout as Insigne, Jose Callejon, Fabian Ruiz and Arkadiusz Milik all threatened under-pressure Liverpool goalkeeper Alisson. Napoli owner Aurelio De Laurentiis—who hired three-time Champions League winning coach Carlo Ancelotti this season in

place of Maurizio Sarri—hailed the success at their Stadio San Paolo.

"Big win against a great team! Ancelotti worthy of his fame," wrote De Laurentiis on Twitter. Last season Napoli's style of football under Sarri impressed against Manchester City but the team lost 4-2 at home before exiting the competition in the group stage. Insigne's winner ensures they are top of Group C with four points, one more than Liverpool and Paris Saint-Germain.

"I think we timed it well," said former Chelsea and Real Madrid coach Ancelotti. "If Mertens had scored a few minutes earlier, it would've been more time suffering. We interpreted the game well. We had an extra central defender and were able to build the game from the back. There was a perfect balance." Napoli needed a win on Wednesday after their opening match ended 0-0 at Red Star Belgrade.

Liverpool, meanwhile, played as if they would settle for a point after they beat Paris Saint-Germain 3-2. The Reds' strike force of Roberto Firmino, Mohamed Salah and Sadio Mane were a shadow of the trio who terrorised Europe last season, with Napoli goalkeeper David Ospina not called upon for a single save. Liverpool's best effort came when Egyptian Salah shot wide after the break. —AFP

## Napoli striker Milik robbed at gunpoint after Liverpool win

**NAPLES:** Napoli's Polish striker Arkadiusz Milik was robbed at gunpoint on his way home after his team's Champions League win over Liverpool, Italian police said yesterday. The 24-year-old was in his car heading towards his home at Varcaturu on the Domitian Coast 20km west of Naples at around 2am when his car was stopped by a high-powered motorcycle blocking the road. The two assailants — whose faces were entirely covered by helmets — approached the footballer's car and pointed a gun at him, ordering him to hand over his Rolex Daytona watch worth 7,000 euros (\$8,000).

The robbers then sped into the countryside towards Licola, police said according to the AGI news agency. As soon as he recovered from the shock, Milik went to the nearest police station to report the crime. Attacks on professional players in the southern Italian city are frequent. Italian international Lorenzo Insigne was robbed of jewelry, cash and a luxury watch

in 2016 and the club's Slovakian captain, Marek Hamsik, was held up at gunpoint in the centre of the city four years ago. Napoli beat last year's Champions League finalists 1-0 with a 90th-minute Insigne goal to go top of Group C. —AFP



## Matches on TV (Local Timings)

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE		
Brighton & Hove Albion v West Ham United	22:00	beIN SPORTS HD 2
SPANISH LEAGUE PRIMERA		
Athletic de Bilbao v Real Sociedad	22:00	beIN SPORTS HD 3
ITALIAN CALCIO LEAGUE		
Torino v Frosinone Calcio	21:30	beIN SPORTS HD 4
GERMAN BUNDESLIGA		
Werder Bremen v Wolfsburg	21:30	beIN SPORTS HD 5
FRENCH LEAGUE		
Toulouse v OGC Nice	21:45	beIN SPORTS HD 6

# Griezmann is best in the world: Simeone

## ‘I said it last season and I’ll say it again’

**MADRID:** Diego Simeone hailed Antoine Griezmann as the best player in the world after the Frenchman’s double fired Atletico Madrid to victory over Club Brugge on Wednesday. Griezmann scored twice and set up a third for Koke as Atletico won 3-1 in the stadium they hope to return to for the Champions League final next year.

Arnaut Groeneveld’s stunning long-range effort had pulled Brugge level shortly before half-time but Atleti, and Griezmann, were too good. “I said it last season and I’ll say it again—Griezmann is the best player in the world,” Simeone said afterwards. “He won the Europa League, World Cup, Super Cup and finished second in a league with Barcelona and Real Madrid.”

Lionel Messi, who was simultaneously tearing Tottenham apart at Wembley, may have something to say about that but there is no doubting Griezmann’s importance to Atletico. He has now been involved in 17 of their last 19 Champions League goals scored at home, chipping in with 12 goals and five assists. Those performances can only boost the French star’s hopes of winning the Ballon d’Or.

“It’s not me who votes but I had a big season,” he said. “I’m very happy and proud of my season, there are still a few months to go so we’ll see.” This was Atletico’s first match at the Wanda Metropolitano in this season’s tournament, 241 days before they hope to walk out

here again for the final on June 1. Simeone admitted the prospect of winning the cup on their own patch is a source of inspiration for his side, and they could not have made a better start. Atletico boast six points in Group A, the same as Borussia Dortmund, whom they now play twice in succession, starting with a trip to Germany later this month. A successful night was blighted only by injury, with both Diego Costa and Jose Gimenez forced off.

Costa sat out the last international round with Spain for personal reasons and he may be set to miss another. Atletico are now unbeaten in six games and they started like a team with their tails up as Costa and Koke almost pulled off a neat one-two in the box while Griezmann strayed just offside before a superb lifted finish. Thomas Lemar might have scored had Stefano Denswil not made a last-ditch tackle but it was the winger’s cross that found Griezmann at the back post soon after. Griezmann chested, controlled and steered the ball inside the far post.

Atleti looked almost too comfortable and Brugge seemed as surprised as anyone to equalise shortly before half-time. Groeneveld rolled his studs over the ball 30 yards out and with no obvious option, whipped it, bending and dipping into the corner. Filipe Luis came on for Gimenez at the interval and Atletico gradually turned the screw, Griezmann, Costa and Lemar all causing problems for the weary Brugge defence.



**MADRID:** Club Brugge’s Belgian defender Brandon Mechele (L) vies with Atletico Madrid’s French forward Antoine Griezmann during the UEFA Champions League group A football match between Club Atletico de Madrid and Club Brugge at the Wanda Metropolitano stadium in Madrid yesterday. —AFP

Another smooth combination created the goal as Griezmann played in Costa, who could have shot but instead turned back and returned to Griezmann. He made no mistake. It was Costa’s last contribution. Denswil could

have snatched Brugge a point but headed over from six yards and instead, Griezmann added a final flourish. He stormed down the left flank and teed up Koke to slot home from close range. —AFP

## Keane opens fire on Man United ‘cry babies’

**MANCHESTER:** Former Manchester United captain Roy Keane has called some of the club’s current players “cry babies”, saying they should put aside any differences with under-fire manager Jose Mourinho and improve their own performances.

Mourinho’s man-management has come under scrutiny amid a reported rift with record signing Paul Pogba, while the club have been dismal on the pitch this season, collecting 10 points from seven league matches to sit 10th in the Premier League. Keane, who won seven league titles with United, said the players had to start taking responsibility for the club’s worst start to a season since 1989-90.

“There’s a lot of cry babies out there. When you walk out on that pitch you’re playing for your pride, you are playing for your family, you’re playing for your city,” Keane was quoted in the Irish Independent as telling Notts TV. “I’m not talking about Pogba. I’m talking about players in general. Players who get upset with a manager or coaching staff and think ‘I’m not going to train properly because somebody upset me.’”

Ireland assistant manager Keane, who famously fell out with former United boss Alex Fer-



**MANCHESTER:** Manchester United’s French midfielder Paul Pogba (L) and Manchester United’s Portuguese manager Jose Mourinho (R) attend a training session at the Carrington Training complex. —AFP

guson before leaving the club in 2005, said clashes with the club’s authority figures should not influence what a player does on the pitch. “I don’t care what fallout you’ve had with your manager, I don’t care if you’ve been at each other’s throats. That is part of the industry. People do fall out,” Keane added.

“Don’t get that worried about what the manager’s said about you... you get out there and play. You can follow it up after the match but when the game’s going on live up. Play with pride, play with energy, play with spirit. “Hopefully play with a bit of skill. On your bad days you roll your sleeves up and you fight for that jersey. Don’t get distracted by the balloons out there.” —Reuters

## VAR once again causing debate in Serie A

**MILAN:** The use of video replay technology to help referees has again become a contentious issue in Serie A following a series of incidents in the opening few weeks of the season. Referees and the pitchside monitors are again likely to be in the spotlight as Serie A resumes at the weekend with leaders Juventus visiting Udinese on Saturday and second-placed Napoli hosting Sassuolo on Sunday.

Juventus, already six points clear, have a 100 percent record this season with seven wins in Serie A and two in the Champions League. The debate is centering not so much on whether the VAR (video assistant referees) system should be used, but how often. The use of VAR was authorized in March by soccer’s law-making body IFAB after a series of trials around the world, including in Serie A last season.

It was adopted and used by FIFA at the World Cup and was generally hailed as a success, especially in objective decisions such as

offsides. The World Cup largely managed to avoid some of the issues which plagued Serie A last season, such as long delays in referees making decisions which were often reversed two or three minutes after a goal had been awarded.

Italian media say Serie A referees have been told to make less use of the system this season and follow the IFAB protocol that it should only be used to correct “clear and obvious mistakes”. Yet they now find themselves under fire from clubs for failing to review incidents frequently enough. “I have always considered it a very positive innovation for football,” said Torino president Urbano Cairo. “But I have started thinking that VAR is not the right tool if it’s only used partially.”

“The VAR was used much more last season,” added Cairo, who also suggested that coaches be allowed to challenge a certain number of decisions as in tennis. “We should use it more often, not just for serious mistakes.” Torino were involved in one of the biggest VAR disputes of the season when Alejandro Berenguer had a goal disallowed for offside at Udinese last month. Their complaints were two-fold — that Berenguer was not offside and that referee Paolo Valeri blew for the infringement before the ball had entered the net, preventing the incident from being reviewed. —Reuters



LONDON: Barcelona's Argentinian striker Lionel Messi celebrates after scoring their third goal during the Champions League group B football match between Tottenham Hotspur and Barcelona at Wembley Stadium. — AFP

# Messi rocks sloppy Spurs

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