



**2** Romanian PM visits Kuwait; number of agreements signed



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## Govt moves to employ more citizens, limit expat numbers

99,500 work permits issued to expats, 38,500 cancelled in 2018



KUWAIT: National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem and other lawmakers meet HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah yesterday. — KUNA

### Ghanem optimistic over next Assembly term

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem said yesterday he was optimistic that the next Assembly term, which opens next week, will witness constructive cooperation and production. Ghanem said that he and members of two parliamentary delegations that returned from travels abroad met yesterday with HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and heard his directives, becoming "even more optimistic" after the meeting. The lawmakers also met HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

"With His Highness the Amir in command, we will brave through the mounting waves," Ghanem underlined. In response to a question over developments in the country's political scene, he emphasized that the "voice

of reason will prevail". The speaker said he was confident that there is a strong majority in the Assembly that will ensure smooth running of the next term despite many threats of grillings by lawmakers. Ghanem said the Assembly will open on Tuesday next week and following the opening ceremony, it will discuss grillings against ministers and the issue of the two lawmakers who have been handed jail terms.

So far, opposition MP Riyadh Al-Adasani has filed to grill Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs Adel Al-Khorafi over alleged misuse of power and other violations. Opposition lawmakers have however threatened to grill several ministers including Minister of Commerce and Industry Khaled Al-Roudhan, Minister of Oil Bakheet Al-Rasheed and others. Leading opposition MPs Mohammad Al-Mutair and

Shuaib Al-Muwaizri have also vowed to grill the prime minister over alleged violations.

Ghanem said that on the opening day, the Assembly will also discuss the membership of MPs Waleed Al-Tabtabaei and Jamaan Al-Harbash who were handed jail terms, among a dozen ex-MPs and activists for storming the Assembly building in Nov 2011. The Assembly legal and legislative committee will meet early next week to prepare its report on whether their membership should be revoked amid a campaign by opposition lawmakers that the two MPs and the activists should be pardoned under a general amnesty law. Ghanem said these issues will be taken up in the first session of the Assembly, in addition to electing Assembly panels if the time is sufficient, otherwise the elections will be postponed until the next session.

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: The Manpower and Government Restructuring Program's deputy director for national labor affairs Iman Al-Ansari announced that the program managed to employ 4,775 citizens in the private sector during the first quarter of this year, adding that a new bill has been submitted to the Cabinet requesting increasing the mandatory percentage of citizens in the private sector to create over 10,000 jobs during 2018-2019.

Deputy chairman of the Manpower Authority for expat labor affairs Hassan Al-Khadher said 99,508 work permits have been issued since the start of the year, adding 38,442 work permits were permanently cancelled. He said his department has cancelled tens of thousands of invalid work permits after making sure about the data with the interior ministry. He said the action taken is based on the rules of issuing work permits that allow automatic cancellation if six months elapse while the worker is outside Kuwait.

In an effort to make more citizens work for the private sector, the government plans to conduct a survey about 'temporary jobs' in Kuwait with the aim of remapping the local labor market in the foreseeable future. Informed sources said the Supreme Council for Planning and Development offered a new tender for bidding to consultancy firms requesting the preparation of a full study, survey and data lists about temporary jobs in the market so that expats in those jobs could be replaced by citizens.

The sources added that such a measure will help the government employ around 17,000 citizens in the private sector, especially since latest Civil Service Commission statistics show that around 13,500 citizens are unemployed. Notably, CSC statistics also show that 72 percent of government employees are citizens and 28 percent expats, while 96 percent of private sector employees are non-Kuwaitis versus only four percent citizens.

Meanwhile, Minister of Commerce and Industry Khaled Al-Roudhan urged all bodies subjected to the

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### Kuwait praises King Salman's decisions on Khashoggi case

KUWAIT/WASHINGTON/ISTANBUL: Kuwait hailed yesterday decisions taken by Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz of Saudi Arabia regarding the case of Saudi citizen Jamal Khashoggi. An official source at the foreign ministry said in a statement that Kuwait has followed with concern the death of Khashoggi, may Allah bless his soul. The source added that Kuwait "greeted the decisions that have been taken by the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud with respect of the case, which depicts the kingdom's keenness and commitment to establish the truth and its respect for legal principles to bring to account those behind this regretful event".

Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister Adel Al-Jubeir said yesterday the kingdom did not know where the body of Khashoggi was, despite admitting to the killing and calling it a "tremendous mistake". Speaking in an interview on Fox News, Jubeir said the Saudi leadership initially believed Khashoggi had left its diplomatic mission in Istanbul, where he was last seen on Oct 2. But following "reports we were getting from Turkey", Saudi authorities began an investigation, which discovered "he was killed in the consulate".

"We don't know, in terms of details, how. We don't know where the body is," Jubeir said, adding that the Saudi public prosecutor had ordered the detention of 18 individuals, "the first step in a long journey". He termed the killing a "tremendous mistake" but one which the US-Saudi relationship would eventually overcome. "The individuals who did this, did this outside the scope of their authority. There obviously was a tremendous mistake made, and what compounded the mistake was the attempt to try to cover up," Jubeir said.

"That is unacceptable in any government. These things unfortunately happen. We want to make sure that those who are responsible are punished, and we want to make sure we have procedures in place to prevent it from happening again."

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### Jordan wants Israel to return lands leased under '94 deal

AMMAN: King Abdullah II announced yesterday that Jordan has notified Israel it wants to reclaim two small plots of territory leased under their 1994 peace deal. "We have informed Israel (that we are putting) an end to the application of the peace treaty annexes regarding Baqura and Ghumar," said the king, quoted by official news agency Petra. But Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said he wanted to open negotiations to keep the current arrangement in place.

The land was leased to Israel for a 25-year renewable

period under annexes of the 1994 peace treaty that lay down a one-year notice period, with Jordan retaining sovereignty. "Israel was informed today of the Jordanian decision," the monarch said, stressing that "Baqura and Ghumar are Jordanian land and will remain Jordanian". "Baqura and Ghumar have always been at the top of our priorities, and we have decided to put an end to the application of the peace treaty annexes regarding Baqura and Ghumar," he added.

Netanyahu confirmed yesterday that he had been informed of Jordan's request. "As part of the agreement between our two countries, Jordan kept the right to take back the two areas at the end of the 25-year period," the premier said. "We will open negotiations on the possibility of prolonging the existing agreement," he added, as Israel marked the anniversary of the Jewish calendar of former prime minister Yitzhak Rabin's assassination.

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### Year's rain falls in one day in Qatar

DOHA: Qatar was hit by widespread flash flooding on Saturday as the desert state received almost a year's worth of rainfall in one day. Roads became impassable, air traffic was disrupted and homes were flooded, while shops and universities closed. Qatar broadcaster Al Jazeera's senior meteorologist, Steff Gaultier, tweeted that one part of the capital Doha had experienced almost a year's worth of rain yesterday. "Abu Hamor (a suburb) now reporting 59.8mm. (Doha average annual rainfall is 77mm)," she wrote. By early evening it was estimated that 61mm of rain had fallen.

Qatar Airways was forced to divert some flights, creating logistical headaches, as neighbors Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain are among states that do not allow Doha to use their airspace, due to an ongoing diplomatic rift. Some Qatar-bound flights were forced to divert to Kuwait and Iran and the airline warned



DOHA: Motorists drive through a flooded tunnel in the Qatari capital following heavy rainfall on Saturday. — AFP

its passengers to expect further problems. "Due to weather conditions over Doha, flights are subject to delays for departure and arrivals," Qatar Airways said on Twitter.

Qatar's public works authority issued a warning to drivers to avoid tunnels because of the flooding. Social media in Qatar showed cars almost completely submerged under water, after thunderstorms over Doha. Other footage showed rainwater running downstairs inside buildings as workers desperately tried to mop up.

Qatar's National Library, not yet a year old, was forced to close and said

it would remain shut yesterday to ensure the "safety of our users". The US embassy also said it would be closed yesterday "due to weather conditions". The extent of the flooding may cause concern for the authorities who have spent billions on major infrastructure projects ahead of hosting the World Cup in 2022. Some sought to downplay the disruption, joking online there was now no need for Saudi Arabia to dig a canal around Qatar - an apparent threat made by Riyadh as part of the continuing political tensions - because the flooding had done the neighboring power's job for it. — AFP



AMMAN: Jordanian King Abdullah II speaks during a meeting with local political figures yesterday. — AFP

### Israel freezes demolition of village, arrests Jerusalem gov

KHAN AL-AHMAR: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has frozen plans to demolish a strategically located Bedouin village in the occupied West Bank that have drawn international concern, his office said yesterday. The surprise move, which came as Israeli forces were completing preparations for the evictions and demolition of Khan Al-Ahmar, raised the ire of Netanyahu's rightwing coalition partners, while the village's Palestinian residents remained skeptical that an amicable solution was possible. "The intention is to give a chance to the negotiations and the offers we received from different bodies, including in recent days," a statement from Netanyahu's office said about Khan Al-Ahmar.

But speaking later ahead of a meeting with US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, Netanyahu appeared to play down the latest move and insisted the village would still be razed. "It's our policy and it will take place," he said. "I have no intention on delaying it indefinitely, but for a short, limited period." Netanyahu said the length of the delay would be determined by Israel's security cabinet, which was due to convene later yesterday.

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## Local

# Amir receives visiting Romanian Prime Minister; meets MPs' delegations

## Premier, Speaker meet Romanian Prime Minister



**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Prime Minister of Romania Viorica Dancila, in presence of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. — Amiri Diwan and KUNA photos



**His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem.**



**His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem, accompanied by the delegations that took part in the third Meeting of Speakers of Eurasian Countries' Parliaments in Antalya, Turkey, and the Inter-Parliamentary Union meeting in Geneva, Switzerland.**



**National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem receives Prime Minister of Romania Viorica Dancila at the National Assembly yesterday. — Photo by Fouad Al-Shaikh**

**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah met yesterday at Seif Palace with Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, accompanied by Prime Minister of Romania Viorica Dancila and an official delegation accompanying her, on the occasion of her visit to Kuwait. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah attended the meeting, which was also attended by Minister of the Amiri Diwan Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah.

His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak had received his Romanian counterpart at Seif Palace earlier yesterday. Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Ministry of Interior Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, head of the honorary delegation Sheikh Dr Salem Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and other senior officials attended the

meeting. His Highness the Prime Minister then held a lunch banquet at Kuwait Towers in honor of the visiting official



### Amir sends condolences to Afghan president

and the official delegation accompanying her. Meanwhile, Kuwait's National Assembly Speaker

Marzouq Al-Ghanem held official talks with Dancila and her accompanying delegation on the occasion of her official visit to the country. The talks revolved around promoting bilateral relations and issues of common concern. Al-Dustoor network said in a press release. The meeting was attended by a number of MPs in addition to Kuwait's Ambassador to Romania Talal Al-Hajri and Romanian Ambassador to Kuwait Daniel Tanase.

#### Lawmakers' delegations

In other news, His Highness the Amir and His Highness the Crown Prince separately received Speaker Ghanem, escorting the delegations that took part in the third Meeting of Speakers of Eurasian Countries' Parliaments (MSEAP) in Antalya, Turkey, and the Inter-Parliamentary Union meeting (IPU) in Geneva, Switzerland. His Highness the Amir also received His Highness the Crown Prince and

His Highness the Prime Minister, while His Highness Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad received His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak, Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh.

Separately, His Highness the Amir sent yesterday a cable of condolences to Afghan President Ashraf Ghani over the victims of the attacks that targeted a number of electoral polls in various areas in Afghanistan. In the cable, His Highness expressed sincere sentiments and prayed to Allah Almighty to bestow mercy on the dead and swift recovery for the injured. His Highness the Crown Prince and His Highness the Prime Minister sent similar cables to the Afghan president. Meanwhile, Speaker Ghanem sent cables of condolences to Chairman of Afghanistan's Senate, Fazal Hadi Musliymar and Afghanistan's Parliament Speaker, Abdul Rauf Ibrahim. — KUNA

## Kuwait, Romania hold talks, sign agreements

**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah held an official meeting with his Romanian counterpart Viorica Dancila at Bayan Palace yesterday. A number of agreements were sealed after the talks, including a memorandum of understanding for regular negotiations involving both countries' respective foreign ministries, as well as a tourism cooperation deal. Amid a sense of amity that pervaded the talks, both premiers discussed how much progress has been made in bilateral relations, particularly in the economic sector, where trade ties have shown marked improvement. Matters of mutual concern, in addition to global happenings were also among the topics of discussion in a meeting that brought together a number of officials from across the Kuwaiti political spectrum.

Dancila also visited the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) and met with KCCI's chair Ali Al-Ghanem, who stated that the trade volume between Kuwait and Romania came to \$111 million last year. Kuwait and Romania have shown a mutual desire to take bilateral ties to new levels. Ghanem noted, adding that there is untapped potential for greater bilateral trade. In the meantime, Dancila acknowledged the private sector's increasingly significant contributions towards economic growth, saying that Romania offers bountiful opportunities for foreign investment.

Also yesterday, Romania's Prime Minister paid a visit to the Grand Mosque in Kuwait City, where she toured around its courtyard and facilities. Dancila also visited Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Cultural Center in Salmiya, where she, and her accompanying delegation, checked out its luxurious showrooms and reviewed its most recent activities targeting various age groups and interests. Furthermore, the Romanian top official paid a visit to Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Center on the Arabian Gulf Road, where she attended some of its shows. Dancila was accompanied by head of the mission of honor Sheikh Dr Salem Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. — KUNA



**KCCI's chair Ali Al-Ghanem presents a memento to Romania's Prime Minister Viorica Dancila.**



**Romania's Prime Minister Viorica Dancila is seen during her visit to the Grand Mosque in Kuwait City.**



**Romania's Prime Minister Viorica Dancila signs the guestbook during her visit to the Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Cultural Center.**



**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and his Romanian counterpart Viorica Dancila hold official talks at Bayan Palace yesterday. — KUNA photos



**Romania's Prime Minister Viorica Dancila visits the Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Center.**

## Local

# Man arrested after stabbing his mother; causing four-way accident

## Citizen scammed Asian company with fake oil sale deal

By A Saleh and Agencies

**KUWAIT:** A citizen who stabbed his mother and kicked her out of their house was arrested following a marathon chase that ended with a four-way traffic accident. Police received a call from the victim, so they responded along with paramedics as the suspect fled. The injured woman was taken to Amiri Hospital. Hours later, police spotted the suspect but he ignored their calls to pull over and drove recklessly, causing the traffic accident which left several people injured. He was arrested and faces legal action.

### Fraud cases

The Ministry of Interior yesterday issued a warrant to arrest a citizen wanted by an Asian country over accusations of selling oil to it on behalf of Kuwait and receiving KD 200,000 as a down payment for the supply contract signed with it. The Asian company's lawyer Howra Al-Habib said a contract had been signed with the defendant to provide the company with Kuwaiti oil and that he vanished after receiving the down payment. "How far are we going with regards to fraud cases? Can fraud go as far as selling our 'black gold'?" Habib asked in the brief she submitted to the public prosecution.

In another case, a stateless person was arrested on arrival from Ukraine, where he was studying, to face a 30-month prison sentence handed in absentia over fraud charges. Case papers indicate that the defendant met an expat girl whose father works as a consultant in a ministry, and promised to get married to her. Through such a trick, he managed to get over KD 10,000 from the girl,

who was clever enough not to give him the money in cash, but gave him an ATM card so that whenever he used it, he was caught on the bank's surveillance cameras to provide solid evidence against him.

Separately, criminal detectives busted a network that



## Girl tricked into paying lover KD 10,000

conned citizens and expats by calling them to divulge details of their bank cards, then stealing their money. A Pakistani woman who worked with the gang was arrested, while the rest of members are being sought. A police source said a Pakistani woman was making deposits daily and the account had ballooned to a point that made detectives act, until they found she is a member of a gang that stole from people's accounts. The gang used to call victims informing them they won a monthly draw and asked for account information, then transferred the money to the suspect account. The Pakistani woman said she made the deposits in favor of a man who has accounts in Kuwait, but is not in the country. She said they used to

steal up to KD 2,000 only because it is the allowed transfer limit. Investigations continue.

### Wanted citizens

Concerned authorities are working on bringing wanted Kuwaitis back to Kuwait, especially those who face final sentences and must serve it. Al-Rai reported yesterday quoting informed sources. The sources said there is "a judicial and security coordination to make procedural arrangements to arrest wanted people and inform Interpol of their names." They said several citizens who were sentenced in the case of storming the National Assembly have gone to Turkey and settled there, including Musallam Al-Barrak, Faisal Al-Mislem, Mubarak Al-Waalan, Salem Al-Namlan and MPs Jamaan Al-Harbash and Waleed Al-Tabtabaei. The sources said the coming weeks will see important developments, especially after secret communications between Kuwait, British and Turkish authorities, resulting in positive signs in this regard.

### Youth attacked

Umm Al-Haiman police station investigator ordered the detention of three youngsters for questioning, after a fourth was able to escape. A security source said an accident took place between a citizen in his 50s and a youth, and both were asked to go to the police station for formalities. The source said policemen were surprised by three men entering the station and beating the youth, prompting policemen to break up the attack.

### Cigarette butts

The Environment Public Authority issued a citation to

the chairman of a sports club after officers went in to check on smokers but did not find them, although they found cigarette butts. So a citation was issued and the fine may reach KD 1,000.

### Companies' law

Recent statistics showed that around 630 companies had violated the companies' law by failure to submit their financial information within the deadline set by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI), said informed sources, noting that the number is likely to increase. Notably, according to article 11 of the trade licenses law, MoCI has the right to cancel a license when the company gets liquidated upon the licensee's request, if the company does not practice any activity for six months without informing the ministry, if the license is not renewed within a year of expiry, if it is proved that the license was issued using fake documents, if the licensee violates license conditions, health conditions, sells foul food items or if the license is subleased.

### Integrated study

Minister of Social Affairs and Labor and State Minister for Economic Affairs Hind Al-Sabeeh said the most notable recommendation by the board of directors of the Arab Labor Organization which held a meeting in Kuwait recently is conducting an integrated study to link graduates with market needs. She said Kuwait gives this issue special attention and it was included in the development projects of the development plan, Al-Anbaa reported yesterday.

## Court fines 'reckless' motorist KD 20,000 over fatal crash

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

**KUWAIT:** The civil court yesterday sentenced a citizen to pay the heirs of his deceased friend KD 20,000 in compensation for causing his death in an accident due to his reckless driving. Another court ordered a travel agency to pay a former employee KD 36,000 in indemnity,

annual leave allowance, commission and for not giving him a warning notice prior to terminating his contract.

### Rain forecast

MP Mohammed Al-Mutair yesterday urged the ministers of interior, public works and education to coordinate on how to deal with the heavy rain forecast for today. "We do not want to see citizens suffer from road blockage and emergency cases during the rain," he said, adding that all possibilities should be taken into consideration after Qatar and Bahrain closed schools. Kuwait Meteorological Center (KMC) had warned yesterday of sporadic rain showers that could be caused by winds with the speed of 60 kilometers per hour that had already caused dust and decreased visibility to under 1,000 in some areas yesterday.

## Ahmadi house evacuated after fire; no injuries

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

**KUWAIT:** Fire broke out in an Ahmadi house, prompting Ahmadi and Fahaheel fire stations to respond. The fire was on the second floor of a four-storey building, which was evacuated as the fire was put out. Firemen found the second and third floors were used by bachelors and many safety violations were found. Meanwhile, the fire department said a fire engulfed four vehicles parked in a sandy open area in Fahaheel, prompting Fahaheel center to respond and put out the blaze. No injuries were reported.

### Absent investigators

The interior ministry's relations and security information department commented on a video that went viral on social media and showed the absence of investigators at the forensics department in Dajeej during the weekend. It rebutted the allegations mentioned in the clip, explaining that work at the department on Friday and Saturday is on the basis of the "on duty" system, where an investigator will be available in every investigation department at police stations. It said when asked about the death mentioned in the clip, it was found to be the result of a vehicle that flipped over in Mutlaa, and Jahra police station investigator went to the scene. Meanwhile, the second case was a natural death of a citizen in Ishhelia in Farwaniya governorate, and it was registered at the investigation department after a call was received. The investigation department urged citizens and expat to call the hotline 25730551 if no investigators are available.

### Grave violations

The traffic specialized training center gave a lecture on Saturday to detainees on grave traffic violations in the presence of Acting Assistant Undersecretary for Traffic Affairs Maj Gen Jamal Al-Sayegh, who spoke about the dangers of committing traffic violations, adding that the aim is to safeguard lives of road users. He said the idea of community service will be studied so that violators will be made to perform social services in areas to be determined later in order to shorten the period of impounding



Vehicles damaged by a fire reported in Fahaheel yesterday.



KUWAIT: Heavy damage left by a fire reported at an Ahmadi house yesterday.

the vehicle. Meanwhile head of the trauma surgery department at Al-Razi Hospital Dr Omar Mandani spoke about many accidents result-

ing from violations and not respecting laws. He said injuries may result in permanent or temporary disability or death.

## US official praises Manpower Authority's work

**KUWAIT:** Deputy Director of the Office of Monitoring and Control of Human Trafficking at the US Department of State Joel Mayberry appreciated yesterday the work of Kuwait's Public Authority for Manpower. Mayberry praised the authority's cooperation with foreigners with prob-

lems related to their accommodation and sponsors. He also appreciated Kuwait's role in having such authority to deal with these kinds of problems.

Mayberry, after visiting the authority, said that the cooperation between Kuwait and the United States had always been active in regards to human trafficking, pointing at the same time to mutual keenness to continue coordination.

Meanwhile, Head of Public Relations and Media Department Aseel Al-Mazyad briefed the US delegation with a number of awareness campaigns launched by the Authority in the field of electronic services through its website. Mazyad indicated that many decisions have been made to limit 'masked' labor, as well as having a plan to deal with such problem in the future. — KUNA

## Deputy FM meets GCC Secretary General

**KUWAIT:** Kuwaiti Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah met yesterday with Secretary General of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Dr. Abdullah Al-Zayani. Zayani is visiting the country to attend the 71st meeting of the

Committee of GCC Governors' of Monetary Authorities and Central Banks, which is currently held in Kuwait. The meeting reviewed activities and venues to be held within the GCC framework in this regard. — KUNA

## Amir keen on encouraging youth pursue education: Envoy

**PARIS:** Kuwait's Ambassador to France Sami Al-Sulaiman said Saturday that His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah was keen on encouraging youth pursue education to eventually serve their country. Sulaiman, addressing the first conference of the National Union of Kuwait Students (NUKS) in France, said that His Highness the Amir has always emphasized that investing in human beings was "the best investment ever" which would contribute to development, security and prosperity of Kuwait.

He said Kuwait's 2035 development plan, based on His Highness the Amir's

vision to transform the Gulf country into a regional commercial and financial hub, was primarily based on investments in quality education to achieve development and advancement.

Kuwait, added Sulaiman, has been encouraging students to apply for scholarships abroad for more than seven decades. The Ministry of Higher Education is coordinating with Kuwait Embassy in Paris and the Cultural Office to create suitable environment for the students in France, he said. Speaking in a statement to the press afterwards, Sulaiman said the Embassy and Cultural Office were exerting every effort to support Kuwaiti students in France. He called on the students to be dedicated during their studies so they would return to Kuwait to contribute to its development.

Kuwaiti MP Dr Abdulkareem Al-Kandari said in a similar statement that the political seminar that was held during the NUKS conference dealt with "fake certificates, quality of education in Kuwait and cheating." MP Mubarak Al-Hajraf called for expanding educational cooperation with France in order to ultimately exchange cultural values. — KUNA

## Consumer Price Index in Kuwait rises

**KUWAIT:** The annual Consumer Price Index (CPI) increased by 0.27 percent in September 2018 compared with the same month last year, according to the monthly report by the Central Statistical Bureau, released yesterday. The CPI dropped, monthly, to 113.1, by 0.09 percent, in September, as a result of high prices of major (commodities) groups. Prices of cigarette and tobacco increased by 0.08 percent, clothing and footwear decreased 0.19 percent, rates of housing services were stable, those of furnishing equipment and household maintenance rose 0.17 percent, those of health group increased by 0.19 percent but costs of transportation were stable.

Costs of communications rose 0.57 percent, recreation and cultural group by 0.19 percent, those of education dropped 0.08 percent, but those of restaurants and hotels steadied. Prices of miscellaneous goods and services group decreased by 0.09 percent. The CPI is a key economic indicator to follow-up on business and economic conditions in Kuwait. It is also an essential element to follow up on the overall price movements in retail markets. — KUNA



The Palace of Justice

## Local

# Arab Woman Awards Kuwait 2018 winners announced

## 19 women awarded by Sheikh Mubarak Fahad Al-Salem Al-Sabah

**KUWAIT:** The Arab Woman Awards held its sixth annual ceremony recently at Sheraton Kuwait luxury collection hotel under the patronage of Sheikh Mubarak Al-Salem Al-Sabah. The awards were presented by Harper's Bazaar Al-Arabiya and were used to support the Hayatt Breast Cancer Association.

The ceremony honored 19 inspiring Arab women who were chosen to win in the award's various categories in recognition of their outstanding contributions across fields including business, education, medicine, and literature. Amongst the winners were Mona K Al-Daas who was acknowledged for her role as General Manager in the government's statistical bureau, Noor Boodai, founder and CEO at Dars, a start-up company working on advancing education in the Arab world and Mariam Alraghim who was given the Lifetime Achievement Award for her services to nursing with an accomplished career spanning across 35 years.

Arab Woman Awards founder and Managing Director of ITP Media Group, Sue Holt, said: "Everyone has such busy lives now that we often forget to stop and reflect on how much progress has been made so far. The awards are our chance to do just that and to take a moment to celebrate individuals who are really driving change and achieving great success in their respective fields."

The winners were selected by an independent board of judges who this year was honorary chair, Sheikh Mubarak Fahad Al-Salem Al-Sabah, Kuwait Undersecretary of State, along with Professor Moudhi Al-Humoud, previous Kuwait Minister of Education; leading fashion designer and founder of Sirdab6, Sheikhha Souad J A Al-Sabah, and Dr Labiba Temmim, co-founder of the Arab Woman Awards Kuwait and Managing Director of Hayatt Breast Cancer Association.

Mozah Rashed Al-Sheredah, winner of the Media category, commented: "I considered myself very lucky when I was selected to be an Arab Women Award winner this year. I dedicate this award to all listeners and readers who have listened and enjoyed my stories through Kuwait radio. I am thankful to my family and friends and everyone who worked with me in swall mozah."

Arab Women Awards Sheikh Mubarak Fahad Al-Salem Al-Sabah, honorary chair and head of judges, said: "Our Arab Women Awards winners made us proud to be Kuwaitis with their relentless support, achievements, and efforts to make our beloved country an outstanding nation."

The awards were held as a private dinner at the Sheraton Kuwait Luxury Collection Hotel, with over 180 guests in attendance including the judging board, winners, their families, and Hayatt breast cancer survivors. Attendees were treated to music from Dubai-based vocalist Leanna Kerry who flew over especially for the evening and an inspirational speech from Rasha Al-Akhras. Partners of the event were Roche and Co, The Flower Room, Views Dentsu, Tanagra, the Sheraton Kuwait and Hello! magazine.



**KUWAIT:** Sheikh Mubarak Al-Salem Al-Sabah delivers a speech during the event.



**Rasha Al-Akhras, a breast cancer survivor, delivers a speech during the ceremony.**



**Arab Woman Awards founder and Managing Director of ITP Media Group, Sue Holt, addresses the gathering.**



**Alia Madouh**



**Board members of Hayatt, Muna Alghanim and Fawziyah Alamim, present a bouquet to Rasha Al-Akhras.**



**Noor Boodai**



**Ameena Rajab Saleh**



**Tamara Qaddoumi**

## Mexican embassy presents books to National Library

By Faten Omar

**KUWAIT:** The Embassy of Mexico in Kuwait gave Mexican books to the National Library of Kuwait yesterday. The handover is part of the library's Mexican cultural week, and includes a display of cultural and literary publications and a photo exhibition. Kamel Al-Abduljalil, General Manager of the library, said the Mexican cultural week is held from Oct 21 to 25, including an exhibition of the 256 donated Mexican books. The library will receive more Mexican books soon, whose total will reach 1,000, along with 20 documentaries about Mexico.

"We are pleased to cooperate with the Embassy of Mexico, which will sign a memorandum of understanding and cooperation between the Mexican Ministry of Culture and the National Council for Culture, Arts and Literature in Kuwait in the field of libraries and information," Abduljalil said. "We will continue to cooperate with embassies and diplomats to strengthen the mission of the National Library in educating and enlightening the community and informing it about the cultures of the world and enabling it to know the human tenderness of thought, science and culture," Abduljalil said.

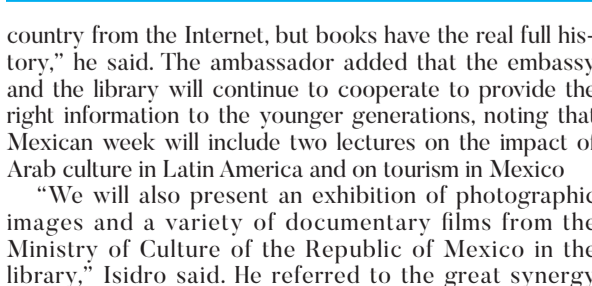
Mexican Ambassador to Kuwait Miguel Angel Isidro thanked the Kuwait National Library for promoting the culture of Mexico. "Many of our generations are confused that they can learn about the culture and history of the



**KUWAIT:** The Mexican Ambassador to Kuwait Miguel Angel Isidro (left) and Kamel Al-Abduljalil, General Manager of the Kuwait National Library. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



**Mexican Ambassador to Kuwait Miguel Angel Isidro (left) and Kamel Al-Abduljalil, General Manager of the Kuwait National Library, inaugurate the Mexican cultural week.**



**Ambassador Miguel Angel Isidro and Kamel Al-Abduljalil, view Mexican books presented to the library.**



**A number of Mexican books presented to the Kuwait National Library.**

country from the Internet, but books have the real full history," he said. The ambassador added that the embassy and the library will continue to cooperate to provide the right information to the younger generations, noting that Mexican week will include two lectures on the impact of Arab culture in Latin America and on tourism in Mexico. "We will also present an exhibition of photographic images and a variety of documentary films from the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Mexico in the library," Isidro said. He referred to the great synergy between Arab and Mexican cultures and the importance of the role of the Arab community in the development and prosperity of Mexico.

Local

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: A general view of Al-Shaheed Park in Kuwait City. — Photo by Hatim Al-Sheikh (KUNA)



### Dasman Institute organizes awareness campaigns at school

KUWAIT: Dasman Diabetes Institute organized an outreach campaign at Dasman Bilingual School to promote diabetes and health awareness, in collaboration with Zain Telecommunication. The Institute used its mobile clinic which is equipped with essential medical equipment to offer the students medical consultations, blood

glucose checkups and give out medical information. Organizing such awareness campaigns stems from the institute's mission to promote health awareness in general and address the diabetes epidemic in Kuwait through focused diabetes research, integrated prevention, training and education.



### Chinese corporation lauds partnership with Kuwait

BEIJING: China State Construction and Engineering Corporation (CSCEC) lauded yesterday the level of cooperation with the State of Kuwait, expressing desire to expand on this valuable partnership at any given possibility. A senior executive at CSCEC told a visiting Kuwaiti media delegation that both countries were eager to bolster cooperation and ties to contribute to their respective development plans, the Kuwait Vision 2035 and China's Belt and Road initiative.

Meanwhile, head of the Kuwaiti media delegation, Deputy Director General for Editorial Affairs and Editor-In-Chief of Kuwait News Agency

(KUNA), Saad Al-Ali stressed that Chinese entities, namely the CSCEC, played an integral role in aiding Kuwait to realize its development vision under the supervision of the Kuwaiti leadership. He added that CSCEC was in charge of various construction projects in Kuwait, which in turn adds to the success of Kuwaiti-Chinese partnership.

Another CSCEC executive Kuwait said meanwhile that the corporation was present in Kuwait since 1979; however, actual contractual obligations began in 2006 with the construction of the Central Bank of Kuwait's (CBK) headquarter. The executive added that there were various projects, which CSCEC was involved in namely the Kuwait University Shadadiya campus and other endeavors within the infrastructure and housing domains. After the recent visit by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to China, the CSCEC was registered at Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA), a step that gave the Chinese corporation the 'green light' to operate directly in Kuwait. The CSCEC, founded in 1998, has over 100 bureaus globally. It has a capital of \$2.45 billion. — KUNA

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At least 14 dead in Kashmir violence

## Thailand immigrant crackdown targeting 'dark-skinned people'

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RAFAH: Palestinians wait to travel to Egypt through the Rafah border crossing in the southern Gaza Strip. Since mid-May, after five long years in which the frontier was largely closed, Egyptian authorities have opened the crossing several days a week. —AFP

# Gazans seek to escape blockade

## Israel maintains a crippling blockade amid tight restrictions

RAFAH: Separated from the impatient crowd by a flimsy barrier, Palestinian policemen read out names, their voices barely audible above the din. Those called file forward, relieved to finally be leaving the crowded and ramshackle Gaza Strip for neighboring Egypt, some for the first time. Many have a single large suitcase or holdall as they sit on benches in the gymnasium which serves as a waiting room in the southern Gazan town of Khan Yunis. From there, they board a bus for the Rafah border crossing to Egypt, about 20 minutes away.

Since mid-May, after five long years in which the frontier was largely closed, Egyptian authorities have opened the crossing several days a week. About 200 people make the trip in a day, a small number compared to the nearly two million people crammed into Gaza. Yet it represents one of only two routes out of the strip and the only one not controlled by Israel. Since Islamists Hamas seized control of the 360 square kilometre territory in 2007, Israel has maintained a crippling blockade and imposes tight restrictions on its sole people crossing.

For much of that time Egypt has opened its Rafah border only intermittently, meaning those leaving didn't know if and

when they may be able to return. Mosleh Derby, 21, waits in the sunshine, watching the tea and cigarette peddlers calling out their wares. A medical student in Cairo, he had not been home to Gaza for three years until June for fear of getting stuck. Despite registering for his return journey with the Gazan authorities in advance, Derby said he has been so delayed that he has already missed the first two weeks of class. Some students who paid extra fees travelled earlier, he claimed.

### Thousands waiting

Inside the gymnasium, many travelers reluctantly admit having paid between \$1,500 and \$2,000 for what they call "coordination" to travel. Hamas interior ministry spokesman Iyad Al-Bozum denied that Palestinian border officials took payments. "But some citizens can get in touch with officials on the Egyptian side of the crossing and make it easier for them to leave," he said. Bozum said there is currently a list of thousands of Gazans waiting to exit the strip, who are notified online when their turn comes. Since Islamist president Mohamed Morsi was overthrown in 2013 and his Muslim Brotherhood movement

quashed, Egypt has kept its Gaza border largely closed. Cairo accuses Hamas, which began as an offshoot of the Brotherhood, of supporting militants fighting its security forces in the largely uninhabited Sinai region bordering Gaza. Hundreds of soldiers and police have been killed. Egypt destroyed many tunnels for smuggling under the border, exacerbating Gaza's isolation.

But relations between Hamas and Egypt have thawed somewhat, allowing Rafah to be opened regularly since May. Only students, those in need of medical treatment, Muslim pilgrims or people with foreign citizenship or residence papers are allowed through. The flow of travelers remains a trickle compared to the past, said Abdallah Shahin, 32, who has been a porter at the crossing for 15 years. Under Morsi, he said, "every day, 30 buses crossed the border, it was about 1,800 people." Nowadays, he says, "those who leave do not come back, they emigrate."

### 'No return'

Such is the dream of an architecture student who gives his name only as Khalil. He wants to go back to Germany, where he was born but never obtained citizenship. "One way, no return," he

said. "Abroad it's different... someone creative can succeed." Two of his friends have already left, he said, calculating the cost for himself at more than \$3,000, including at least \$2,000 to get across the Rafah border. At the departure point the bus starts its engine to a cacophony of farewells.

"On the Egyptian side, if all goes well, you wait for around six hours. Otherwise you spend the night there and sleep at the border post," said Derby, the medical student. The forced overnight stay is because of Sinai curfew regulations preventing travel at night, an Egyptian border official said. The remaining trip to Cairo is a long one, because of repeated stops at security checkpoints. "Before 2007 I used to arrive in Cairo in six hours, now it takes at least 48 hours," said Hosam Al-Ajuri, 35, heading to complete his history studies in Egypt. Left behind in Khan Yunis is Aida Baraka, 52, who since June has been waiting for permission to visit her sick niece in Jordan. Although her name was not once of those posted online she came to try her luck anyway. "Where is the humanity?" she asked, her niqab revealing only her dark eyes. She accused Egypt of not doing enough to help. "The nearest ones to us are the Egyptians," she said. "I want them to be human!" —AFP

## Doing time in 'Hell': Life in Sierra Leone rundown prisons

FREETOWN: A shaft of light penetrates the foul air through a fist-sized vent. It reveals naked, sweating bodies packed side-by-side like sardines, lying in darkness on a greasy concrete floor. The stench of urine and excreta from a brimming plastic bucket - just one for a cell containing perhaps 20 people - claws at the throat. This was the scene at the Bo Correctional Facility in southern Sierra Leone. It was one of eight prisons that this reporter visited last week to assess the state of penitentiaries that independent voices say are a national scandal. The tableau that emerged was tropical Dickens - crammed, poorly-lit cells, whose inmates said they were suffering with disease, rotten food, cockroaches and super-sized bedbugs, and a climate of jungle-like violence.

"I was caught with two parcels of marijuana. I have spent three years on remand - it's like living in Hell," one inmate said. "Lack of space is so bad that people have to take turns" to lie down, said another, who like many other inmates asked not to be named, explaining they feared reprisals by guards. "Blankets and mats are a luxury in our cell. Even some of the food we eat has an offensive smell," added another prisoner. A convict with crutches in a jail at Kenema, the West African country's third largest city, said "violence among inmates for food, water and space is common." "This is a jungle - it's survival of the fittest," he declared. In 2016, Sierra Leone's Human Rights Commission denounced the squalor and lack of rehabilitative or educational programs in the country's prisons as "inhumane." Walter-Neba Chenwi, a specialist in the rule of law at the UN Development Program (UNDP), which has a project to improve Sierra Leone's jails, said the conditions "fall far below international standards of human rights." "We treat people in detention as if they don't exist," said Ahmed Jalloh, an activist with a local watchdog group, Prison Watch.

### Packed

"Out of 4,525 inmates across Sierra Leone jails, we have an excess of 2,659 people in detention, forced into overcrowded cell blocks," the director of human resources at the Sierra Leone Correctional Services, Dennis Herman, said.



KENEMA: Blankets belonging to inmates of the Kenema Prison are left to dry in the prison's courtyard in Kenema. —AFP

Kenema prison, a stone-walled jail built in 1826 during British colonial rule, has a regulation capacity of 75 inmates, but accommodates around 300, prison director Lamin Sesay said. At Bo penitentiary, intended for 80 prisoners but housing 300, guard Mohamed Opinto Jimmy said between 15 and 20 people were being packed into cells that, according to regulations, should have a maximum of four.

### Disease

Prison workers also point to disease which is rife and poor access to healthcare. In Bo, there is a single healthcare worker for 300 inmates, many of whom suffer from chronic illnesses such as TB, AIDS and malaria. "Some inmates are too weak from anaemia to walk around the cell blocks - they wedge themselves into little corners for food, water and space," the healthcare worker said. The skin disease scabies is commonplace, but inmates often can only shower once a week because water is rationed. Prisoners

at Bo are tasked with trekking kilometers to polluted streams or hand-dug wells to fill jerricans and haul them back to the jail. "Given the risk of escape, we usually assign many guards to escort inmates," said a prison guard, Jimmy. "But inmates are usually stigmatized by locals seeing detainees walking the streets in prison outfits."

### Reform

Still within this grim picture, chinks of light are starting to emerge. Sierra Leone's Department of Justice has just completed a "From Prison to Corrections" program, supported by UNDP and the United States, to train 30 prisoner officers and promote higher welfare standards. And UNDP is doing construction and rehabilitation work, mainly in water and sanitation, in eight out of the country's 19 jails. But appeals court Judge Nicholas Browne-Marke told AFP that help was also badly needed for Sierra Leone's under-funded, chronically-clogged judicial system. —AFP

## Russia airs video of school gunman in 'Hate' T-shirt

MOSCOW: Russian television yesterday aired footage of the teenage gunman who killed 20 at his college in Moscow-annexed Crimea calmly mowing down victims while wearing a T-shirt emblazoned with the word "Hate." A reporter said the security camera footage was broadcast because of widespread speculation about the official account of the massacre on the peninsula annexed by Ukraine in 2014. The footage confirms that the 18-year-old gunman, Vladislav Roslyakov, dressed to imitate the Columbine high school shooting in the United States, after Russian President Vladimir Putin blamed the crime on "globalization."

In an apparently new development, Roslyakov is shown talking to another boy, who could be an "accomplice", a television reporter suggested, while investigators said he acted alone. Officials have questioned how Roslyakov mounted a massive killing spree without outside help. "After the tragedy there have been so many rumors and so much speculation and conjecture and it's so important to know the truth," a television reporter said. The footage, aired on Rossiya-1 television, shows the teenager wearing a white T-shirt with the slogan "Hate" as he enters the technical college carrying a sports bag and bypassing security.

At one point he is shown talking to another pupil, who could be an accomplice keeping watch for him, Russian television suggested. However, a law enforcement official speaking anonymously told RIA Novosti state news agency on Saturday that Roslyakov "prepared alone" and "had planned this since January 2017." Roslyakov is seen going into the school's canteen with a rucksack and then leaving without it. Then he is seen going up to the school's first floor empty-handed just before a fire ball and a massive explosion blows out windows and doors on the ground floor. —AFP

## International

# Delhi holds breath as burning farms herald pollution season

## Thousands of runners compete in smoggy Delhi half marathon

**ISHARGARH:** Harpal Singh struck a match and watched his fields burn, the acrid smoke drifting toward New Delhi where a lethal smog cocktail is once again intensifying over the world's most polluted megacity. Every November, air pollution in northern India reaches levels unimaginable in most parts of the world, forcing schools shut and filling hospital wards with wheezing patients.

As winter descends, cooler air traps car fumes, factory emissions and construction dust close to the ground, fomenting a toxic brew of harmful pollutants that regularly exceed 30 times the World Health Organization safe limit. The scourge is compounded as farmers like Singh - rushing to ready their fields for next season's wheat crop - use fire to quickly and cheaply clear their land.

He knows slash-and-burn farming is illegal and that doing so, year after year, helps sicken millions in the Indian capital and beyond. But local authorities appear powerless to stop it and - looming health crisis or not in Delhi - the narrow window to plant for the winter harvest is closing. "We have no other choice but to burn the straw," Singh told AFP in Ishargarh, a village in Haryana state, about 120 kilometers (75 miles) northwest of Delhi. "We know the smoke pollutes the air. But it is the cheapest and easiest way to get rid of the (crop) residue," the 65-year-old farmer told AFP, as burning straw crackled and popped behind him.



The world's most polluted megacity

### Deaf ears

This smoke is already reaching Delhi, bringing a familiar sepia haze and a bad omen for officials wanting to avoid a third straight year of record-setting smog. Deterrents, such as fines of up to \$200 for farmers flouting the law, appear to have limited effect. Satellite imagery shows countless spot fires already burning in Haryana and Punjab, two breadbasket states bordering Delhi. S Narayanan, from Haryana's State Pollution Control Board, said 300,000 rupees (\$4100) in fines had been issued and fires were down 40 percent in some areas. "But our intention is not only to take punitive action, but to educate the farmers," he said.

Farmers represent powerful voting blocs in rural states like Haryana and Punjab, and local authorities are reluctant to upset them. Efforts to persuade farmers, many living below the poverty line, to adopt alternative methods

of land clearance have fallen on deaf ears. Many have balked at suggestions of buying "Happy Seeders" - expensive machines which according to media reports cost at least 150,000 rupees - that sow wheat without needing to dispose of the leftover straw. The government is offering a subsidy of 50 percent to individuals and 80 percent to groups of farmers to encourage them to use the machines.

"We are already in debt... and we can't afford even the subsidized machines," said Karnail Singh, a 60-year-old farmer. He suggested the government pay farmers by the acre not to burn their fields. Television ads, social media campaigns and meetings at the village level have also had limited success. Powerful farmers unions say many of the government's ideas - such as encouraging farmers to sell straw to factories - overlook extra costs imposed on poor rural families. "Who will bear the cost of transporting the straw?"

Farmers are also concerned about the pollution, but they are helpless," said Sucha Singh from Bhartiya Kisan Union, a farmers' rights group.

### Gas chamber

Many farmers feel scapegoated for the modern-day problems of India's fast-growing, chaotic cities. The WHO in May listed 14 Indian cities in the world's top 15 with the dirtiest air, with Delhi dubbed the most polluted major centre. "Farmers are blamed for the pollution, but nobody talks about the factories and cars and buses which are the main culprits," Singh said.

Others are more defiant. "We are always the soft targets. We will continue to burn stubble. Let the government do what it can," said another farmer Harbans Singh. With smoke on the horizon, the Delhi government is squaring off for a fight with its neighbors. It recently closed its last coal-fired power plant but the city's chief minister Arvind Kejriwal warned of another smog crisis if Punjab and Haryana failed to take "concrete steps" on crop fires. "The entire region including Delhi will again become (a) gas chamber," he said on October 12. "People will again face difficulty in breathing. This is criminal."

### Smoggy New Delhi

In another development, thousands of runners brushed off health warnings yesterday to compete in the New



NEW DELHI: An Indian runner wears a face mask as he participates in the New Delhi half marathon in the Indian capital yesterday. — AFP

Delhi half marathon, even as smog reached unhealthy levels in the world's most polluted major city. More than 34,000 runners hit the streets of the Indian capital for the 13.1 mile race that doctors wanted postponed because of Delhi's atrocious winter smog. The US embassy website yesterday showed levels of the smallest and most harmful airborne pollutants reached 199 at race time—eight times the World Health Organization's safe maximum.

At such readings, outdoor exertion is strongly inadvisable and doctors warn prolonged exposure can trigger asthma attacks, worsen lung conditions and increase the risk of heart attacks and strokes. Some competitors wore face masks in yesterday's race but others said conditions appeared better than last year, despite virtually identical pollution readings across the capital on both race days. Ethiopian teenager Andamalak Belihu won the men's title, after coming in second in last year's fixture.

"Last year was the first time for me (running in India) and the weather was difficult," the 19-year-old told

reporters after the race. "But this time it was good and I was really happy. No problems for me during the run." It was a one-two finish for Ethiopia, with Amdework Walegn coming in behind Belihu, who improved on his personal best timing to clock 59:17 seconds. Ethiopia's Tsehay Gemechu won the women's event, smashing the course record after clocking 1:06:50.

Amateur runner Pranav Patil said the air appeared clearer than last year, when competitors complained of burning eyes and sore throats. "Today was better. My friends and I were happy, we ran hard and enjoyed the run," 26-year-old competitor Pranav Patil told AFP. Others were more cautious. "Pollution is always there in Delhi. I think everybody should wear a mask," said Neeraj Chhibba, who jogged along in a protective face mask. Every winter, air pollution in Delhi soars as cooler air traps harmful particles from crop fires, exhaust fumes, construction dust and industrial emissions close to the ground. — Agencies

### News in brief

#### 18 die after train slips

**YILAN:** At least 18 people have died after an express train derailed and flipped over on a popular coastal route in Taiwan yesterday. The Taiwan Railways Administration confirmed 18 people had been killed and said 132 people had also been injured in the accident in northeastern Yilan county. Authorities have not confirmed if any passengers remain trapped alive inside the train. An AFP reporter at the scene said that more bodies were being brought out of the wrecked carriages. Images from the site showed the Puyuma Express train completely derailed and lying zig-zagged across the track. All of the train's eight carriages had derailed and five had flipped onto their side at Xinma station, the railways administration said. One passenger told Apple Daily Taiwan that the train had been shaking during the journey. — AFP

#### Four Americans dead

**SAN JOSE:** Four American tourists were killed and a fifth Costa Rican tourist is missing after a river rafting accident in the Central American country on Saturday, the Red Cross said. The alarm was raised Saturday afternoon following the accident in a swollen river on Costa Rica's Pacific Coast, Alexander Morales of the Red Cross said. "Fourteen tourists and three guides on board three rafts, and a kayaker, were on the Naranjito river in Quepos, Puntarenas when the accident occurred," Alexander Morales said. Another spokesman, Johnny Zamora, confirmed the American tourists had yet to be identified. Costa Rica's President Carlos Alvarado expressed his "dismay" at the incident and said in a statement that he had instructed authorities to provide all necessary support to the victims' families. — AFP

#### Remains of Catholic priest

**DHAKA:** Bangladesh yesterday repatriated the remains of a Catholic priest who died in Italy last year but asked to be buried in the Muslim-majority country where he spent most of his life. Father Marino Rigon will be interred at a village south of Mongla, a church official said, where the Italian missionary first settled in Bangladesh in the early 1950s. Rigon had been bestowed citizenship - a rarity in Bangladesh - and decorated with war honors for treated wounded freedom fighters during the 1971 independence war. He was also recognized for translating major works of Bengali literature into Italian. His remains arrived yesterday at the port of Mongla where a crowd turned out to pay their respects, a Catholic priest in Mongla, Sarapin Sarker said. — AFP

#### Yameen's defeat upheld

**COLOMBO:** The Maldives' top court yesterday ended weeks of uncertainty by rejecting President Abdulla Yameen's controversial bid to annul last month's election results, upholding his landslide defeat to an opposition candidate. The five-judge Supreme Court bench unanimously ruled that Yameen had failed to prove his claim that the election was rigged and a fresh poll was necessary in the Indian Ocean archipelago. Under international pressure, Yameen initially conceded defeat after Ibrahim Mohamed Solih emerged the winner in the September 23 poll. — AFP

## Comoros inches back to life after a six-day siege

**MUTSAMUDU:** Residents on the Comoros island of Anjouan slowly returned to their daily lives yesterday after a six-day siege in the old quarter of Mutsamudu city where soldiers had fought with rebels in the narrow lanes. The military said it had re-gained control of the medina quarter on Saturday after the latest bout of instability on the coup-prone Indian Ocean archipelago claimed at least three lives. Anjouan's port reopened after being closed for several days, and soldiers patrolled the streets as local people emerged from their homes.

Some expressed scepticism over whether the armed rebels, who are opposed to President Azali Assoumani, had been vanquished by the military in an apparently peaceful operation on Saturday. Supermarket owner Mohamed Adinane said he had come "to check the condition of my store, to see if there were any break-ages." "I found expired products because of the power cuts," he said, explaining he had lost a lot of money. "It's a shame but what can we do?" he added. Military checkpoints were still in place around the medina, and most streets were deserted. Stones and teargas canisters littered some areas after the week of clashes.

Residents, who had been cut off without power or water during the stand-off, emerged on balconies on Boulevard Mohamed Ahmed seeking updates on the security situation. A senior officer advised people to avoid the medina's main square, saying "You never know until you are 100 percent sure that there is no risk from rebels." One elderly man, who declined to be named, asked "how were these rebels able to melt away with their weapons and luggage when the medina was completely surrounded?" "The government was tricked," he said before closing his door.

### President challenges limits

Tensions in Comoros have mounted in recent months as Assoumani bids to extend term limits through constitutional changes that could see him rule for 11 more years. Assoumani won a widely-criticized referendum in July allowing him to scrap the rotation of the presidency between Comoros' three main islands, disadvantaging opposition-leaning Anjouan, which was next in line. The government had sent in reinforcements after about 40 rebels erected barricades in the old quarter of Mutsamudu. The president, who came to power in a military coup and was elected in 2016, has indicated that he plans to stage polls next year which would allow him to reset his term limits and theoretically rule until 2029. The Comoros islands - Anjouan, Grande Comore and Moheli - are located between Mozambique and Madagascar.

They have endured years of grinding poverty and political turmoil, including about 20 coups or attempted coups, since independence from France in 1975. The last coup was in 1999 when Assoumani, then the head of the army, seized power for the first time. He gave up power in 2006 before being elected two years ago. The fourth Comoros island, Mayotte, remains French. Assoumani's government accuses the opposition Juwa party of being behind the unrest on Anjouan. Former president Ahmed Abdallah Sambi who leads Juwa, is from Anjouan. He has been under house arrest since May. — AFP

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## International

# Thailand immigrant crackdown targeting 'dark-skinned people'

## Operation 'X-Ray Outlaw Foreigner' sparks fear

**BANGKOK:** Allegedly aimed at busting visa abusers and illegal migrants, a Thai police operation called "X-Ray Outlaw Foreigner" has raised questions about racial profiling and fears for asylum-seekers caught in its web. Tens of millions of tourists come to Thailand each year for the cheap living and postcard-perfect beaches, with some seeking out the seedier thrills of a bustling sex industry. But as weak law enforcement, porous borders and corruption help make the country a hub for transnational crime, Thai authorities are intensifying Operation X-Ray—a program that started about a year ago—with more than 1,000 people arrested in recent weeks, most for overstaying their visa.

Although the vast majority caught in the dragnet are migrants from nearby countries, the racial overtones of the campaign have sparked concerns about profiling based on skin color. "Our job is to classify who are the good dark-skinned people and who are the ones likely to commit crimes," said immigration bureau chief Surachate Hakpam. He told AFP that the operation was aimed at weeding out visa overstayers and nabbing criminals—especially "romance scammers" who lure lonely locals online to defraud them of cash. He insisted that the romance scammers are often Nigerian or Ugandan.

### 'Suspicious targets'

At the start of one night time operation witnessed by AFP in Bangkok's rowdy Nana district earlier this month, about 75 Thai police officers stood in rows at a briefing. "The suspicious targets are the dark-skinned people," shouted an officer. "First, we search their bod-

ies, then we search their passports." Soon they began stopping suspects, including three people from Mali who were tested for drugs on the spot. By 11:55 pm, almost 30 individuals—about half of whom were black—had been rounded up. Only one was Caucasian, a Frenchman caught smoking marijuana. Surachate's staff said details on the breakdown of nationalities was "confidential". But in the first two weeks of October, police arrested a Korean citizen wanted by Interpol for sexual assault, and busted a team of four Nigerians and 16 Thais allegedly involved in romance scams, according to authorities. They also found a Laos national who had overstayed his visa by more than 11 years.

**More than 1,000 people arrested**

### Escaping persecution

Thailand's reputation as a place to disappear and reinvent yourself combined with lax visa rules can be a headache for law enforcement. The junta that seized power in 2014 justified its power grab by promising stability amid street protests and political upheaval. But rights groups warn that refugees and asylum seekers who transit through Bangkok en route to a third country for resettlement are also being ensnared in the latest police operation as they lack legal protections.

According to rough estimates from the non-profit Fortify Rights, there are about 100 adults and 30 children who fit this description, mainly from Pakistan but also from Syria and Somalia. "Thailand's immigration crackdown has swept up refugees and asylum seekers, sent young children into horrid, prison-like conditions, and appears to have clear aspects of racial profiling against South Asians and Africans," said Brad Adams,



**BANGKOK:** Police inspect passports of foreigners on the street of Bangkok's Nana district during a police operation called 'X-Ray Outlaw Foreigner'. —AFP

Asia director at Human Rights Watch. Thailand is not a party to the UN convention recognizing refugees and made headlines in 2015 for deporting more than 100 Uighurs back to China.

More than 70 Pakistani Christians were rounded up and detained this month by police under charges of illegal entry and overstay even though they were assumed to be in transit and escaping religious per-

secution in their Muslim-majority homeland. But the authorities remain unapologetic. According to immigration chief Surachate's count, Thailand is home to more than 6,000 people who ought to have left the country already. "In order to clean house, we need to bring in the good people and deport the bad people so that the country will have sustained stability," he said. —AFP

### News in brief

#### Rebels kill 11, abduct 15

**BENI:** Rebels killed at least 11 people and abducted 15 others, including 10 children, in an overnight raid near Beni, near DR Congo's eastern border with Uganda, security sources said yesterday. Police recovered the bodies of 11 civilians killed in the town of Matete north of Beni, he said, adding that the missing children were from five to 10 years old. Beni police chief Colonel Safari Kazingufu said. The attack, thought to have been carried out by members of the Ugandan Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), had targeted Beni, the regional army spokesman Captain Mak Hazukay said. "We repulsed the attack but unfortunately, there were deaths among the civilians and soldiers," he said, without specifying how many soldiers had been killed. One local resident told AFP he had seen the bodies of two uniformed men at the site of the fighting. —AFP

#### 55 killed in Nigeria

**KADUNA:** Communal violence in the northern Nigerian state of Kaduna over the last few days has killed 55 people, the local police commissioner said yesterday. Ahmad Abdur-Rahman, in a telephone interview, said the clashes between two communities in the Kasuwan Magani area of southern Kaduna had led to 22 arrests. He did not give details on the cause of the conflict but tension and clashes along ethnic lines have plagued that part of the state in the last few years. "Anybody that has a hand in this crisis must face the full wrath of law," said Abdur-Rahman. He said a curfew in Kasuwan Magani imposed by the state government on Thursday had helped to calm the situation. Hundreds of people have been killed this year in outbreaks of communal violence across Nigeria. Security has become a key campaign issue ahead of the February 2019 election in which President Muhammadu Buhari will seek a second term. —AFP

#### Top Chinese official dies

**HONG KONG:** China's top representative in Macau has fallen to his death from the building where he lived, authorities said yesterday. Zheng Xiaosong, 59, the Chinese government's liaison officer in the semi-autonomous former Portuguese colony, had been suffering from depression, Beijing said in a statement. Zheng "fell to his death from his Macau residence on the evening of October 20, 2018 due to depression", the Hong Kong and Macau Affairs Office of the State Council said. The statement gave no more details but the wording suggested Zheng had killed himself. Mainland officials were to travel to Macau on Sunday to express their "condolences to comrade Zheng Xiaosong's family" on behalf of the Chinese government, it added. The director of Macau's judiciary police said they were investigating Zheng's death, Hong Kong media reported. —AFP

#### White-collar crimes

**SYDNEY:** Australia said yesterday jail terms for white-collar crimes would be doubled and penalties against misbehaving companies sharply increased in a further fallout from a scathing inquiry into the finance sector. A Royal Commission was called by Canberra late last year as public anger against Australian banks grew following a string of scandals involving allegations of misconduct and fraud. Treasurer Josh Frydenberg said his government would introduce the legislation into parliament next week to protect consumers. "These significantly strengthened sanctions overhaul Australia's penalties for white-collar crime," Frydenberg said in a statement, adding that some sanctions had not changed in more than two decades. "It will bring our penalties closer to those in other leading international jurisdictions." —AFP

## 'Fatigue, frustration, confusion': Belfast's Brexit hangover

**BELFAST:** Of all the roadblocks on the way to a Brexit deal Northern Ireland is the biggest, and nobody feels more uneasy about the deadlock than the people who actually live in this British province with its troubled history. Around 56 percent of people there voted to remain in the EU in the 2016 referendum, in stark contrast to 52 percent of voters who backed leaving the bloc across Britain as a whole. After the failure of last Thursday's EU summit in Brussels to overcome an impasse in negotiations, Northern Ireland's entire population is suffering from "fatigue, frustration and confusion," according to local Lyn Sheridan.

Fellow resident Jim Wilson, 72, said people are growing impatient ahead of Britain's planned departure from the bloc next March. "They're just fed up with all the talking and they want people to get on with the negotiating and come up with a sensible solution", the retiree told AFP in Belfast.

### Sink a deal? 'Yes'

European Council President Donald Tusk said that any Brexit divorce deal required resolving issues around Northern Ireland. And the EU's chief Brexit negotiator Michel Barnier, asked if the Irish border question could sink

negotiations, replied that "the answer is yes". Talks have stalled over how to stop its land frontier with the Republic of Ireland, an EU member, becoming a hard border again. London believes customs and other checks can be avoided through a new trade agreement with Brussels, but accepts the need for a fall-back plan until that deal is agreed.

However, the two sides have so far been unable to settle the terms of this so-called backstop. "Like a lot of situations like this it involves compromise and a bit of give and take," said Wilson. Before becoming largely invisible thanks to the 1998 Good Friday Agreement, the 310-mile Irish border was a flashpoint for violence during three decades of "The Troubles". It is seen as a key factor in Northern Ireland's vote in favor of remaining in the EU.

Britain and the bloc both say there should be no return to a manned border in any Brexit scenario, but locals are not certain what to believe. Mostly, they feel ignored, John Garry, a professor of political behavior at Queen's University Belfast said. "They're being talked about rather than being talked with," he said, adding they feel a "grim lack of agency over what might happen". Surveys conducted by Garry reveal a majority of people would still prefer to stay in the EU or, failing that, a soft Brexit with the country remaining in the customs union and single market.

### 'People are scared'

These preferences cut across the traditionally divided communities of union-



**BELFAST:** Students hold up Sinn Féin anti-Brexit placards during a rally against Brexit and any hard border between Ireland and northern Ireland outside Queens University Belfast, northern Ireland. —AFP

ists-Protestants who favor the province remaining part of Britain—and republican Catholics, who typically want reunification with Ireland, Garry said. Fears are growing that people may retreat back to sectarian grievances as Brexit becomes intertwined with broader historical issues on the island. The situation is further complicated by political realities in London. Prime Minister Theresa May is backed by Northern Ireland's Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), which provides her with a slim majority to govern.

It has steadfastly opposed any Brexit deal that could create customs or regu-

latory barriers between mainland Britain and the province, and has hinted it could pull its support for May. "The strong DUP line isn't represented among the general population, or even amongst DUP voters," added Garry. On the streets of the Northern Irish capital Sorchá Eastwood, 33, who works for a local politician, handed out leaflets this week for a pro-Remain rally outside City Hall on Saturday. "People are scared", she said, adding the polarization between communities was worsening amid a sense of "anxiety and fear". "People are uncertain about their future." —AFP

## Bolsonaro verses Haddad: Brazilian voters face deep contrasts

**RIO DE JANEIRO:** One is a far-right populist who wants to clean up Brazil, the other a leftist political heir to popular - but imprisoned - ex-president Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva. Come October 28, Brazil's 147 million voters will have to decide which one will be their next president.

### Jair Bolsonaro

Sometimes called a tropical Trump for his pro-gun stance, rhetorical swagger and a canny use of social media akin to the US president's approach, far-right Jair Bolsonaro has built an image as a political outsider ready to rough up the establishment. That's quite a feat, for unlike Donald Trump, Bolsonaro is a long-term politician. This seven-term congressman has few legislative initiatives to his record but has made enemies with his intolerant comments putting down women, gays and blacks, while talking fondly of the 1964-1985 military dictatorship he served as an army captain.

"The dictatorship's mistake," he said two years ago, "was to torture and not kill." Bolsonaro has promised, however, that if elected he would govern "with authority, but not authoritarianism." Born 63 years ago to a Catholic family with Italian roots, Bolsonaro served in the military before starting his political career in 1988 as a Rio municipal councilor. Two years later, he was elected to the federal Chamber of Deputies, where he has been since. Over one relationship and two mar-

riages he has fathered five children: four sons (three of them politicians) and - in what he called a moment of "weakness" - a daughter.

### Fernando Haddad

The leftist Workers Party tapped Haddad late in the game to replace its preferred candidate, Lula, who is serving a 12-year prison term for graft. Initially, Haddad sold himself as "Lula's man" to tap into the former president's broad popularity. That helped boost him in the polls and out of relative obscurity as a former mayor of Sao Paulo and, before that, education minister in Lula's government. But after Brazil's first-round election this year - and amid incessant attacks by Bolsonaro highlighting past corruption in the Workers Party - Haddad has tried to carve out his own profile while reducing Lula's image in his campaign.

More recently, he began emphasizing what he says is the threat Bolsonaro poses to Brazilian democracy. An academic with degrees in law, economics and philosophy, Haddad, 53, had hoped to make up ground by publicly debating Bolsonaro. But his far-right rival has spurned that idea, preferring to duel over Twitter and Facebook. Haddad, a keen guitar player, is married to a dentist; they have two children. He told the daily El Pais two years ago he saw himself as a "political being," steeped in public life since his university days. "I'm not an anxious person," he said. "I wait for things to happen to make decisions."

### Runningmates

Bolsonaro, perhaps unsurprisingly, has chosen a recently retired general, Hamilton Mourao, 65, as his vice presidential pick. Perhaps also unsurprisingly, Mourao himself has a history of making controversial comments while extolling the righteousness of the military. He has made racist remarks about Brazil's indigenous population - from which he is



**RIO DE JANEIRO:** This combination of pictures shows Brazilian presidential candidates Jair Bolsonaro (left) (PSL) and Fernando Haddad (PT). Bolsonaro and Haddad will compete in Brazil's runoff election on October 28, 2018. —AFP

partly descended - and blacks.

And last month, he caused an uproar when he said children brought up by single mothers tended to join drug gangs. Haddad's runningmate couldn't be more different. Manuela d'Avila, 37, studied journalism and is a state lawmaker in the Communist Party of Brazil. A self-styled "feminist and revolutionary," she sharply defended herself from critics when she was photographed two years ago breastfeeding her baby daughter in her state legislature. D'Avila, too, was endorsed by Lula, who called her a representative of the new generation on the political left. She was a federal deputy from 2007 to 2015, winning election to a second term with the most votes of anyone in the chamber. —AFP



International

# Afghan polling centers plagued by problems as casualties surge

## Voters brave the threat of militant attacks

**KABUL:** Problems plagued hundreds of Afghan polling centers yesterday in the shambling legislative election's second day of voting, fuelling criticism of organizers and eroding hopes for credible results after a ballot marred by deadly violence. As voters once again braved the threat of militant attacks in more than 20 provinces, an AFP tally of casualty figures from across the war-torn country showed the number of civilians and security forces killed or wounded in polling-related violence on Saturday was nearly 300.

That is more than four times the latest figures released by the interior ministry. The huge discrepancy supports speculation that officials have deliberately downplayed the violence, adding to concerns about the lack of transparency and credibility of the long-delayed election that is seen as a dry run for next year's presidential vote. At some of the 253 polling centers opened for voting yesterday, election workers still struggled to use biometric verification devices and voter rolls were "either incomplete or non-existent", Electoral Complaints Commission spokesman Ali Reza Rohani told reporters.

"Most of the problems we had yesterday still exist today," said Rohani, adding some polling sites again opened late and had insufficient ballot papers. Another 148 polling sites that were supposed to open remained closed for security reasons, the Independent Election Commission (IEC) told AFP. The IEC's chronic mishandling of the parliamentary election, which is the third since the fall of the Taliban in 2001, has all but dashed hopes it can competently organize the presidential ballot, scheduled for April.

"This does not bode well for next year," Afghanistan Analysts Network co-director Thomas Ruttig told AFP. "The IEC has clearly shown its lack of capacity to run acceptable and transparent elections, instead publishing doctored figures." A Western official, who had monitored the months-long preparations, told AFP they had no confidence left in the IEC. "None at all," they said on the condition of anonymity. "With the current IEC leadership there are

a lot of doubts that they would be able to handle the presidential election properly," political analyst Haroun Mir said.

Initial IEC figures show around three million Afghans risked their lives to vote on Saturday—many waiting hours for polling centers to open—despite scores of militant attacks. Nearly nine million voters registered for the parliamentary election, but many suspect a significant number of those were based on fake identification documents that fraudsters planned to use to stuff ballot boxes. But the fact any Afghans turned out to vote was an achievement in itself, some observers noted. "The people of Afghanistan showed that they are still hopeful for their future," Mir said.

Despite the shortcomings in the voting process, that was "undoubtedly a great achievement", he said. Turnout was likely affected after the Taliban issued several warnings in the days leading up to the poll demanding the more than 2,500 candidates for the lower house withdraw from the race and for voters to stay home. The militant group on Saturday claimed it carried out more than 400 attacks on the "fake election". There were no reports of poll-related violence yesterday, but officials said a roadside bomb killed 11 members of a family driving in the eastern province of Nangarhar.

### A roadside bomb kills 11 family members

#### 'Important milestone'

Official observers described disorder and chaos at polling centers on Saturday where election workers did not know how to use biometric devices that the IEC had rolled out at the eleventh hour to appease political leaders and said were required for votes to be counted. Many voters who had registered their names months ago were not on the roll, and the Taliban commandeered some polling centers and refused to let people cast their ballots.

There are concerns that extending voting by a day could "impact transparency of the process" and provide "opportunity for fraud", Election and Transparency Watch Organization of Afghanistan said. Some 44 people already have been charged with "illegal interference in the election



HERAT: Afghan women wait in line to vote at a polling centre for the country's legislative election in Herat province. —AFP

and fraud", the interior ministry said. As vote counting continued and officials began the process of transferring ballot boxes to Kabul, Afghan voters took to social media to vent their frustration at the debacle. "Shame on the IEC," Hosai Mangal wrote on the IEC's official Facebook page. "There was no order at all, I could not find my name at the polling centre where I registered."

Another angry voter wrote: "The worst elections ever." But embattled IEC chief Abdul Badi Sayyad yesterday defended

the organization's handling of the election, saying the problems were not due to "weak management". Despite the chaos, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), which has spearheaded international efforts to advise the IEC, said the election was "an important milestone in Afghanistan's transition to self-reliance". UNAMA urged observers, political parties, candidates and voters to play a "constructive role in the days ahead to safeguard the integrity of the electoral process as votes are tallied". —AFP

## North Korea's box of bones: Mythical king and dream of Korea unification

**SEOUL:** It's the stuff of an Indiana Jones movie: supernatural kings, ancient tombs, and government-backed archaeologists striving to harness the power of legend for a greater cause. On a divided Korean peninsula, tales of King Dangun - the mythical founder of the first Korean kingdom more than 4,350 years ago - play a quiet but persistent role in keeping the dream of reunification alive. This mythology made an appearance in September when North Korean leader Kim Jong Un took South Korean President Moon Jae-in to the top of Mount Paektu, the supposed birthplace of Dangun.

Moon also invoked the legend in an unprecedented speech in Pyongyang, calling for Korea to be reunited. "We had lived together for 5,000 years but apart for just 70 years," said Moon, whose parents came from what is now North Korea. For many South Koreans, the idea of unification has become increasingly unrealistic amid a widening gulf between the two Koreas more than 70 years after they were partitioned in the wake of World War II.

The legend of Dangun, however, plays a lasting role in promoting unification because it portrays Koreans as a homogenous group destined to live together, said Jeong Young-Hun, a professor at Seoul's Academy of Korean Studies. "Dangun is a basis for Koreans to feel the necessity for pursuing harmony and unification," he said. "Dangun is a basis for seeing unification as something possible." There's little evidence for the glorious king or the thousands of years of Korean unity Dangun is said to have founded.

Still, that hasn't stopped North Korea from claiming to have found his tomb

and South Korea from eulogizing the unity of a kingdom that once challenged the might of China's dynasties. "In both Koreas, (Dangun) has been used to emphasize the uniqueness, the singularity, homogeneity and antiquity of the Korean people," said Michael Seth, a professor of Korean history at James Madison University in Virginia. "Whether a real person or not, he is used by both Koreas to emphasize the unity as well as the uniqueness of the Korean people."

#### North Korea box of bones

Scholars say the chances that Dangun actually existed are close to zero. According to Korean legend, Dangun was the son of a god who wanted to be a man, and a bear who wanted to be a woman. "Dangun is a myth," said Yeungnam University archaeologist Lee Chung Kyu. North Korea's founders originally disdained the story of Dangun as superstition incompatible with their ostensibly socialist ideology. However, officials have since gone to great lengths to capitalize on the mythology and cement the ruling Kim family's claim to Dangun's legacy. Official North Korean narratives have claimed Mount Paektu as the "sacred mountain of revolution" and assert that Kim Jong Un's father, Kim Jong Il, was born on its slopes. Many historians place his actual birthplace in the former Soviet Union. In the mid-1990s, North Korean authorities announced they had discovered the tomb of Dangun and his wife just outside Pyongyang, going so far as to "reconstruct" a white stone pyramid flanked by rough-hewn obelisks and statues of ancient princes and snarling beasts. At the time, North Korean leader Kim Il Sung said constructing the mausoleum was designed to demonstrate "that Korea has a history spanning 5,000 years, that the Koreans are a homogeneous nation of the same blood since their emergence," according to a state media article from 2015.

For 100 euros each, or about \$115, tourists can peek inside a glass box containing what the North Koreans say are the bones of Dangun and his wife. The high price and a reputation as an underwhelming experience mean few visitors pay to see the bones, Western tour guides say. Amid a previous temporary thaw in relations between the two Koreas in 2007, a delegation led by South Korea's defense minister visited Dangun's royal tomb, and Pyongyang gave permission for South Korean tourists to visit Mount Paektu. —Reuters

## At least 14 dead in Kashmir violence

**SRINAGAR:** Violence across Kashmir left at least 14 people dead yesterday, police and military officials said, including six civilians killed when an explosion detonated among a crowd protesting against Indian rule. Thousands of demonstrators, some hurling stones, marched on a village in southern Kulgam town where Indian government forces were battling an unknown number of armed fighters. Three alleged rebels were shot dead in the exchange but a subsequent explosion at the scene killed five demonstrators, said inspector-general of police Swayam Prakash Pani.

"Protestors ignored warnings and soon overwhelmed the site, where five died after being hit when leftover explosives went off," he said. A sixth civilian injured in the explosion later died in a hospital in Srinagar, the main city in Indian-administered Kashmir. At least 30 others were wounded in clashes with police, some seriously. Mobile telephone services were suspended in the area as

protests spread, including to Srinagar where police used tear gas to disperse angry crowds.

Elsewhere, fighting near the de facto border dividing the contested Himalayan region between India and Pakistan also left three soldiers and two unknown fighters dead. The troops died in "a fierce encounter with heavily armed Pakistani intruders", said Indian defense spokesman Lieutenant Colonel Devender Anand. Many in Kashmir support rebels who have been fighting for decades for independence or a merger with Pakistan, which like India also claims the territory in full.

India has some 500,000 troops deployed in Kashmir. Popular unrest has been rising since 2016 when a charismatic young rebel leader was shot dead by Indian forces. More than 100 civilians died in subsequent weeks of protest. India accuses Pakistan of arming and training militants to attack Indian forces. Pakistan says it only provides diplomatic support for Kashmir's right to self-determination. Tens of thousands, mostly civilians, have died in the decades of fighting across Indian Kashmir. This year at least 186 militants, 80 civilians and 75 government forces personnel have died in clashes across the Indian controlled part of the territory. —AFP

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## Democrats remain favored but Trump has pushed back

With key US elections just over two weeks away, polls suggest the anticipated "blue wave" of Democratic voters might not be as powerful as it had seemed just a few months ago. Democrats, while still favored overall, have been unable to build a decisive edge over Donald Trump's Republicans, meaning that the president might avoid the severe electoral slap-down the opposition party had hoped to inflict.

Republicans have controlled Washington politics since the 2016 election. In addition to the White House, they hold a comfortable majority in the House of Representatives and a narrow but important edge in the Senate (51-to-49). This could change on Nov 6, when the 435 seats in the House and one-third of those in the Senate (35) will be in play, along with numerous state and local positions.

After a multitude of marches, demonstrations and angry protests that followed Trump's surprise presidential victory, this will be the first chance for US voters angered by the real estate billionaire's policies and personal behavior to express themselves at the ballot box. But it will also be the first chance for those thrilled by the nation's strong economy and full employment, as well as Trump's conservative court appointments, to show support for the president.

"The Democrats seem less and less likely to win the Senate," said David Lublin, a professor of government at American University in Washington. If Republicans maintain control of the Senate, the chances that Trump might be impeached drop sharply - barring any major new scandal - because senators have the final word in these rare efforts to depose a president. Trump could also continue pushing through his conservative judicial nominees, especially if there is another opening in the powerful Supreme Court, the final legal arbiter on the country's biggest and most socially sensitive questions.

"Democrats have lots of opportunities in the House, but not really the Senate," said Kyle Kondik, managing editor of a nonpartisan political newsletter at the University of Virginia Center for Politics. "The House and the Senate always seemed likely to produce somewhat differing outcomes, which complicates a 'blue wave' narrative." If Democrats do take control of the House they will be in a position to launch vigorous inquiries into the Trump administration's policies and behavior, and to block Republican-backed laws from passing, including a vote on the federal budget - essentially giving them the leverage to paralyze Washington.

### Urban vs rural voters

With an avalanche of Democratic candidates at all levels, including a historic number of women, and millions of dollars flowing into their coffers, the Democrats have aroused their base. For months this and expectations of a high voter turnout has led many to believe the party will at least retake the House. This summer Democrats let themselves dream that their charismatic young senate candidate in Texas, Beto O'Rourke, might be able to knock Republican Ted Cruz off his senate seat in that large, deeply conservative state.

But polls have tightened in recent weeks, especially after the bitter fight in early October over conservative judge Brett Kavanaugh's confirmation to the US Supreme Court. Still, history is on the Democrats' side. The first midterm election in a president's term traditionally favors the party out of power. And Trump, for all the boisterous support he gets at his frequent rallies, is among the least popular modern presidents at this point in his time in office, polls show.

In the House, Democrats need to pick up 23 seats if they are to regain the majority, which analysts say is quite likely. The FiveThirtyEight political website, widely respected for its statistical analyses, gives the Democrats five chances in six to retake the House. But some 30 House races are still deemed too close to allow confident predictions. The luck of the electoral calendar means Democrats face a much greater challenge in the Senate: they have to defend 26 of the 35 seats at stake, several of them in states that voted for Trump in 2016.

FiveThirtyEight gives the Democrats only one chance in five of retaking the Senate. Republicans might even add to their lead there, pollsters say. Even if Democrats are expected to pick up votes - especially in the residential suburbs where political centrists oppose many of the White House's policies - they still face a structural disadvantage. The Democrats are "heavily concentrated in cities and urban areas ... (while) the Republicans are spread more evenly," said Lublin. And the tightest Senate races are taking place in more rural states.

With the stakes high, Trump has been holding almost daily rallies in key states. Before seemingly galvanized crowds, the president hammers away at key election themes: The threat of "radical Democrats", the influx of immigrants that will "infest our country" and the strength of the vibrant US economy. So even if Trump's name is not on ballots on Nov 6, there is no question his shadow will loom over the vote.

"Come Election Day, Americans will remember Kavanaugh," Trump bellowed at a recent rally in Montana, pointing to signs that Republican voters were mobilized by the judge's rocky confirmation process that included allegations of sexual misconduct. It's unclear if this "Kavanaugh effect" will last until the election - and whether it will be enough to overcome the Democratic voters outraged that the allegations against the judge were dismissed with little investigation. — AFP



## Toxic debate over trans rights engulfs UK

It was supposed to be a simple consultation process. Yet just three months later, the British government's review of the 2004 Gender Recognition Act (GRA), which ends on Friday, has descended into a bitterly fought battle over language, culture and the meaning of what it is to be a woman. At the heart of the matter is how to simplify the law, ensure it keeps pace with changing times, and how best to recognize transgender and non-binary people in their new gender.

The result has been a war of words over gender and the wider society. "What the whole kerfuffle has revealed is a massive confusion about what the hell gender is, what sex is - why they're different, why they need to be to be different," writer and broadcaster Beatrix Campbell told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. "It has revealed a kind of crisis in the ways that boys and girls inhabit our hugely polarized gendered culture."

According to a British charity, the Gender Identity Research and Education Society, about 1 percent of the 66 million-strong British population is "gender non-conforming to some degree". However, just 4,910 people have legally changed their gender since the act was implemented. Announcing the review in July, the British government said it recognized many had deemed the process "too bureaucratic, expensive and intrusive" to bother applying.

Under the current terms, trans people need a medical diagnosis of gender dysphoria and proof of having lived in their new gender for at least two years, as well as meeting a slew of other conditions. An anonymous panel then assesses the application. Yet while the consultation, which has received more than 36,000 responses, set out to streamline the legal process, the debate has morphed into a series of questions on the very nature of being a woman in today's society. Are trans women's rights compatible with those of other women? Do they impact hard-fought-for women-only spaces and services?

Or is this, conversely, a straightforward human rights issue?

### Every woman

From the outset, leading British LGBT+ rights group Stonewall has been clear: "Trans women are women". Yet many feminists believe hard-won rights for women should remain ring-fenced for those born into that gender. The strength of feeling on both sides soon hijacked what might have been an arcane legal discussion and pitted former allies against each other in the battle for rights. "Much of the current debate is based on inaccurate information and issues irrelevant to Gender Recognition Act reform and this has an impact," said a Stonewall spokeswoman.

According to the organization, one in eight trans people has been physically attacked by colleagues or customers at work. "All trans people should be respected for who they are," she said. "History has shown us, time and time again, that extending equality to others doesn't take away from anyone else."

For others, the debate over what constitutes a woman should have been conducted before any review of the GRA. Stonewall was criticized in a letter to Britain's Times newspaper two weeks ago by a group of prominent LGBT+ campaigners for "demonizing as transphobic" those who dissented from its line. Campbell, who was among the letter's 17 signatories, believes there is probably a case for streamlining some of the procedures involved in changing gender. Yet she remains opposed to self-identification - one of the main tenets for many trans people and LGBT+ organizations - and said the debate touched issues far removed from the legal system. Campbell called it "a wider debate about our culture".

### Leading change

Other countries have already changed their legal

process. Ireland and Malta, for example, allow trans people to self-identify through a statutory declaration. In Norway, people are able to change their gender by applying to the local tax office. In Britain, the process "can take a very long time. It really has an impact on people who have quite chaotic lives," said Jamie Pallas at Gendered Intelligence, a trans community organization.

"If you haven't been in employment, and there's no paper trail that can prove you've lived in your gender for two years - and there are high unemployment rates for transgender people - it can be really difficult for some people to prove that. "You can get your application rejected many times."

A further wrinkle in the debate is that some trans people themselves do not want a review of the GRA. "The government seems to be misleading the public over the GRA," said writer and journalist Jenny Randles. "They have moved the goalposts to re-define who should qualify, from 5,000 transsexuals to an estimated 500,000 transgender - meaning many things including cross dressers. Transsexuals feel the law (as it stands) is working for us," she added.

Randles cited the example of "encountering fully intact males in a woman's locker room", which, she said, could possibly cause "distress to women and transsexuals". Many others have raised the specter of a predatory man who can pose as a woman to gain access to women-only spaces. Last week, inmate Karen White - who identifies as a woman - was sentenced to life imprisonment for sexually assaulting women in her jail after being transferred from a men's prison. Yet this misses the point, said Susie Green, chief executive of Mermaids, a charity that supports transgender children and their families. "There seems to be a particular type of feminist who seems to be conflating trans women with sexual predators," she said. "I don't have to go through a process to declare I am a woman," she said. "Why do trans people have to?" — Reuters

## At Jordan border, Damascus seeks to revive trade

By reopening a key land crossing with Jordan this month, the Syrian regime is inching towards a return to trade with the wider region as it looks to boost its war-ravaged economy. The government of President Bashar Al-Assad took back control of the Nassib border post in July from rebels as part of a military offensive that reclaimed swathes of the south of the country. Syria's international trade has plummeted during the seven-year civil war, and its foreign reserves have been almost depleted.

The reopening of Nassib after a three-year hiatus, on Oct 15, is a political victory for the Damascus regime, said Sam Heller of the International Crisis Group. It is "a step towards reintegrating with Syria's surroundings economically and recapturing the country's traditional role as a conduit for regional trade," he said. The Nassib crossing reopens a direct land route between Syria and Jordan, but also a passage via its southern neighbour to Iraq to the east, and the Gulf to the south.

"For the Syrian government, reopening Nassib is a step towards normalization with Jordan and the broader region, and a blow to US-led attempts to isolate Damascus," Heller said. International pressure and numerous rounds of peace talks have failed to stem the fighting in Syria, and seven years in the regime has gained the military upper hand in the conflict. Assad's forces now control nearly two-thirds of the country, after a series of Russia-backed offensives against rebels and jihadists.

### 'Important market'

Syria faces a mammoth task to revive its battered economy. The country's exports plummeted by more than 90 percent in the first four years of the conflict alone, from \$7.9 billion to \$631 million, according to a World Bank report last year. The Syria Report, an economic weekly, said Nassib's reopening would reconnect Syria with an "important market" in the Gulf. But, it warned, "it is unlikely Syrian exports will recover anywhere close to the 2011 levels in the short and medium terms because the country's production capacity has been largely destroyed".



In this photo taken on Oct 15, 2018, a vehicle arrives at the Jaber border crossing between Jordan and Syria (Nassib crossing on the Syrian side) on the day of its reopening in Mafraq governorate. — AFP

For now, at least, Nassib's reopening is good news for Syrian tradesmen forced into costlier, lengthier maritime shipping since 2015. Among them, Syrian businessman Farouk Joud was looking forward to being able to finally import goods from Jordan and the United Arab Emirates via land. Before 2015, "it would take maximum three days for us to receive goods, but via the sea it takes a whole month," he told AFP. Importing goods until recently has involved a circuitous maritime route from the Jordanian port of Aqaba via the Suez Canal, and up to a regime-held port in the northwest of the country. "It costs twice as much as land transport via Nassib," Joud said.

Syrian parliament member Hadi Sharaf was equally enthusiastic about fresh opportunities for Syrian exports. "Exporting (fruit and) vegetables will have a positive economic impact, especially for much-demanded citrus fruit to Iraq," he told AFP. Before Syria's war broke out in 2011, neighboring Iraq was the first destination of Syria's non-oil exports.

### Customs fees

The parliamentarian also hoped the revived trade route on Syria's southern border would swell state coffers with much-needed dollars. Before the conflict, the Nassib crossing raked in \$2 million in customs fees, Sharaf said.

Last month, Syria's Prime Minister Imad Khamis said fees at Nassib for a four-tonne truck had been increased from \$10 to \$62. Syria's foreign reserves have been almost depleted due to the drop in oil exports, loss of tourism revenues and sanctions, the World Bank says. And the local currency has lost around 90 percent of its value since the start of the war.

Lebanese businessmen are also delighted, as they can now reach other countries in the region by sending lorries through Syria and its southern border crossing. Lebanon's farmers "used to export more than 70 percent of their produce to Arab countries via this strategic crossing," said Bechara al-Asmar, head of Lebanon's labor union. Despite recent victories, Damascus still controls only half of the 19 crossings along Syria's lengthy borders with Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Turkey.

Damascus and Baghdad have said the Albukamal crossing with Iraq in eastern Syria will open soon, but did not give a specific date. Beyond trade, there is even hope that the Nassib crossing reopening might bring some tourists back to Syria. A Jordanian travel agency recently posted on Facebook that it was organizing daily trips to the Syrian capital by "safe and air-conditioned" bus from today. "Who among us doesn't miss the good old days in Syria?" it said. — AFP

# Business

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MOSCOW: A woman talks to a carpet vendor at the Izmailovo market yesterday. — AFP

## Zain launches BEAM high-speed Internet

First telecom company to offer this wireless service in Kuwait

**KUWAIT:** Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, announced the launch of BEAM, an all-new high-speed wireless Internet service that uses advanced wireless broadband technology. Zain is the first telecom company to offer this revolutionary technology in Kuwait, which offers high Internet speeds that match fiber optics speeds, moving forward towards 5G network adoption.

Zain launched this all-new service as part of its strategic vision towards transforming into a fully integrated digital telecommunications provider, which represents a quantum leap in the portfolio of technologies and solutions the company offers to its individual and enterprise customers, considered the largest customer base in the Kuwaiti market.

BEAM uses the latest advanced wireless broadband technology, which offers high Internet speeds that match fiber optics speeds,

reaching up to 40 Mbps (Megabits per second). This ensures reliable and consistent speeds, enabling customers to enjoy Internet services like 4K streaming, virtual reality (VR), online gaming, and downloading heavy files easily at home.

Zain offers BEAM through two flexible postpaid plans to meet customers' different needs. The first plan includes speeds of up to 20 Mbps with unlimited capacity for KD 25 monthly (24-month commitment), while the second plan includes speeds of up to 40 Mbps with unlimited capacity for KD 40 monthly (24-month commitment).

By subscribing to any of the two

- BEAM is a new home internet solution that offers fiber-like speeds
- Zain offers two postpaid plans starting at KD 25 with unlimited capacity
- Primary coverage includes areas between first and fifth ring roads
- More areas to be added soon
- BEAM first of innovative applications moving forward towards 5G adoption

plans, customers will get a FREE BEAM Router and a complementary LTE Hotspot device with FREE 50 GBs monthly. Once subscribed to the service, BEAM technicians will visit the customer's home to install the router for FREE. The primary coverage for the service includes areas between the first and fifth ring roads, and more areas will be included soon.

Zain has always been one of the first companies interested in acquiring the latest technological applications, and attaches great interest to the convenience of the customer by providing its services to suit their different needs on personal and professional levels.



## France awaits results from Macron's pro-business push

**PARIS:** Emmanuel Macron has watched his approval ratings plunge as voters wait for his pro-business reforms to pay off—but for company leaders like Pierre Loustric, that's not a problem.

"I'm not disappointed because I know what it takes to move France," says Loustric, who expects the lower taxes and eased employment rules pushed through by Macron to eventually help his fragrance start-up hire more people.

"It's the same for a business manager: When you want to change your strategy, it takes a while to see the results," he adds. When Macron swept into the presidency in May 2017 vowing to shake France out of its economic torpor, the jobless rate was stuck at 9.4 percent, well above the EU average and more than double the rate

in Germany. Nearly 18 months and a series of labor reforms later, unemployment has eased only marginally to 9.1 percent—while Macron's approval ratings have sunk to their lowest to date. The former investment banker is clearly taking his cue from Germany, where painful overhauls in the early 2000s paved the way for an economic revival which led to a huge wave of hiring.

But he has admitted his changes, aimed at freeing companies from a labyrinth of legal obligations, might not bear results for "about five years".

"Lots of companies haven't yet applied the changes voted through last spring," said Jean-Louis Mourier, an economist at Aurel BGC. Those measures were passed by decree, and parliament is currently pushing through a host of new changes aimed at simplifying life for business owners even further. Key elements include exemptions from audits, work councils and dozens of other requirements for small firms, and caps on severance pay in case of contested layoffs—making it less risky for firms to take on workers. The rules also make it easier for smaller businesses to implement profit-sharing and grant stock schemes.

"That would have been interesting for us," said Loustric, whose company has developed a technology for diffusing perfumes in homes and offices without rely-

ing on solvents or alcohol. Since its creation in 2004 Scentys has won over dozens of clients both in France and abroad, but it only started turning a profit last year. "It's not right that the only ones to share the benefits of created value are executives and investors," he said.

Yet despite the business community's backing, Macron may find it harder to maintain wider support for his pro-business agenda unless French voters start to see either higher income or more plentiful job offers. Already his approval ratings have plunged to record lows, with about 30 percent of respondents saying they have a positive view of his presidency.

He faces the added difficulty of pushing through his liberalizing business reforms while also taking often unpopular steps to reduce public spending. He has promised to cut 120,000 public sector jobs before his term ends in 2022 — but so far he has announced fewer than 10,000.

And unless growth picks up markedly from the 1.6 percent expected this year, analysts say it's unlikely he'll be able to meet his campaign pledge of a balanced budget—the projected gap between state outlays and income for 2019 still stands at around 100 billion euros.

"They've said they will cut the deficit while also cutting spending, but that hasn't really been the case," said



BRUSSELS: France's President Emmanuel Macron gestures as he addresses a press conference on the sidelines of a EU summit at the European Council on Oct 18, 2018. — AFP

Mourier, calling Macron's program so far "a bit less revolutionary than we were told".

Complicating the economic calculus are looming European Parliament elections next May, where Macron hopes to lead the charge against a populist surge that rails against further cutbacks.— AFP

## Business

## NBK Money Market Report

# Dollar rallies after FOMC meeting as Fed asserts its independence

## Weakening economic outlook hits global markets

KUWAIT: Nervousness around the globe has intensified recently in an era of elevated US debt costs, a weakening economic outlook around the globe and escalating geopolitical tensions has equity markets embracing the red zone. Brexit vagueness, frailer GDP data out of China and tensions between Italy and the EU over the Italian budget are amongst the issues at present concerning investors. Despite rising treasury yields, the yellow metal performed relatively well as investors demand for safe haven assets increased. Last week, the price of gold rose \$7 to \$1,225.86.

In regards to the FOMC's latest meeting minutes, central bankers depicted the continuous recurring theme of gradual interest rate hikes and nearly all members claimed minimal changes in their valuations of the outlook for economic growth. As for the Bank's main benchmark interest rate, forecasts indicated an increased agreement among the members of the policy committee to elevate rates for a fourth time this year in December. Most members on the committee still foresee three additional hikes in 2019 and one more surge in 2020, ending at a key level of 3.375 percent. Overall, the minutes showed two participants asserting disapproval towards moving monetary policy into restrictive mode (interest rate greater than about 3 percent). The minutes did not register any debate among officials about President Trump's condemnation of elevated debt costs, indicating that policy setters are not fazed by it.

The greenback appreciated as the two and 10-year treasury yields moved higher after the release of the meeting minutes. Hence, one might have expected a hawkish tone to be the content of the report. However, that wasn't really the case with nearly all members noting minimal adjustments in their valuations of the outlook for economic growth. Possibly what attracted the market's attention was that a few participants had seen data that indicated the economy was sturdier than previously projected. The central bank's forecast for growth this year was increased from 2.8 percent to 3.1 percent, although this really isn't fresh news. What is worth noting is that in spite of the robust growth, the FED upheld its assessment of growth at 2.0 percent in 2020. So, the Federal Reserve in fact expects a sharper slowdown over the forecast period.

### US Retail Sales

Retail sales disappointed to the down-

side for the month of September as headline sales edged up by 0.1 percent m/m versus an expected forecast of 0.6 percent. The latest figure matched August's surprisingly soft 0.1 percent rise, which was the weakest expansion for the gauge in six months. The main factor that attributed to the frail reading was from the biggest drop in spending at restaurants and bars in nearly two years. Transactions at restaurants and drinking establishments fell by -1.8 percent m/m, compared to a monthly average rate of 0.8 percent over the past year. Despite weaker than expected sales, core sales expanded 0.5 percent m/m, higher than the 0.4 percent anticipated by economists.

The robust core number suggests that consumer spending remains firm, which may offset anticipated drags on economic growth from a widening trade deficit and persistent weakness in the housing market. The latest estimate for Q3 retail sales is 3.5 percent annualized, slightly below the 3.8 percent pace registered in the April-June period. Annualized GDP projection for the third quarter is currently above 3 percent, while the economy grew at a 4.2 percent pace in the second quarter. Overall, the largest economy in the world continues to defy the global speed of growth recorded in other developed nations. The unemployment rate in the US is at 3.7 percent, the lowest since 1969 and the FED is the first central bank to win the race of achieving its price stability objective compared to its peers.

Looking at the FX market, the US dollar was trading in a weak manner at the start of the week as retail sales data disappointed to the downside. However, the downward momentum was short lived after the FOMC reaffirmed its hawkish stance on interest rates. Higher US Treasury yields fortified investors' preference to purchase the greenback. Markets are becoming more bullish on USD short-term outlook, especially against emerging market currencies as US debt costs are expected to rise, while global trade tensions show no sign of exhaustion. The DXY gained 0.34 percent over the past 5 trading sessions.

### Italy budget

It was an extremely light week in terms of economic indicators for the euro, however last week was loaded with political tensions in Europe. The outcome from the German election has caught some market attention although the impact on the euro was limited. The Christian Social Union,

the conservative sister party of German Chancellor Angela Merkel's Christian Democrats managed to secure the election with only 35.6 percent of the vote, their worst result since 1950. Five years ago, the party had 48 percent of the votes. Moreover, the latest EU summit was a nonevent as both the UK and the EU failed to conclude a Brexit deal. The single currency was further subdued towards the end of the week when the European Commission claimed that Italy's 2019 budget draft is in severe breach of EU budget guidelines. The EUR lost 37 basis points to the USD last week.

### UK's household income

As the Bank of England prepares itself for the Inflation Report on November the first, the most recent wage growth may add to the already relatively hawkish sentiment on the committee. In details, wage growth excluding bonuses inflated to the highest level since January 2009, coming in 3.1 percent higher than a year earlier in the three months to August. Wages including bonuses also followed the upward momentum, rising from 2.6 percent to 2.7 percent. BoE member Dave Ramsden stated that 3 percent pay growth is consistent with a 2 percent CPI inflation target, hence the British economy is running above its inflation target. In addition, the surprisingly strong GDP number in the three months to August rose better than expected to 0.7 percent, this could lead the MPC to sound more hawkish. Unemployment diminished by 47,000 to 1.36 million in the three months to August. The jobless rate remained at 4 percent, a 43-year low.

On the consumer front, price growth experienced disinflation as the CPI declined from 2.7 percent to 2.4 percent, a three months low. The up-tick in wages with a slower increase in CPI enhances consumers' real take-home pay checks, which paints a brighter picture for UK retailers. At the moment, there is an 18 basis point interest rate hike priced in for May 2019, with a full hike (25bps) priced for August 2019. Subsequently, the market is pricing another rate rise in summer 2020. Estimates are roughly in line with one hike a year, which the BoE has guided towards. However, all expectations are still subject to considerable uncertainty around the Brexit process. Additionally, expectations were revised dramatically in the past year due to the Brexit environment.

As for the sterling pound, GBP/USD began the weekly session on a strong foot-



ing reinforced by robust wages, which came near a decade high. After rising to a 4-day high of 1.3235 on Tuesday, GBPUSD lost its momentum as consumer inflation came below expectations. The pound was also pressured down on undesirable Brexit news. Unsuccessful British tactics to secure a Brexit deal ahead of a key European Union summit strengthened global investors' preference for safe haven currencies. The pound closed the week lower at 1.3070.

### UK sales cool off

Sales at British retailers dropped more than expected to -0.8 percent in September. After the relative strong retail sales in the previous two months, a drop back was somewhat anticipated. Even though the extent of this fall was greater than projected, it is not outside the normal range. A 1.5 percent decline on a monthly basis in food store sales accounted for nearly the entire decline in total sales. Over the quarter, sales growth has decelerated to 1.2 percent in Q3, from 2.0 percent seen in Q2. Looking at fundamentals, an inflated wage growth figure seen last week and falling consumer prices are good news for British shoppers and sellers. If real incomes remain robust, then consumption and overall GDP growth may pick up. On the monetary front, the absence of domestically generated price growth advocates that there is little need for monetary tightening and uncertainty still looms over the economy due to Brexit outcome scenarios.

### China's GDP loses momentum

The second largest economy in the world expanded at the slowest rate in the third quarter since the rock bottom of the 2008-09 global financial crises. The trade

war theme has created an environment of uncertainty, while the Chinese government tries to curb the high degree of corporate debt and lessen the amount of pollution created from the industrial sector. There was an obvious struggle from the auto sector. In details, sales of vehicles were at 7.6 percent y/y growth in Q1, car sales growth slowed to -1.5 percent in Q2 and -4.1 percent in Q3. The auto segment is a huge sector both in China as well as globally and it is often seen as an indicator for consumer sentiment. The economy grew at a slower at 6.5 percent in Q3, from 6.7 percent in Q2.

The latest reading has increased the pressure on the government to deliver support as investors grow increasingly skeptical about capital outflows. This has seen the yuan lose its value significantly since the start of the year and the Shanghai stock exchange is trading at a 4-year low. Chinese officials also tried to enhance investors' morale as stock markets suffered sharp reductions this year. The CSI 300, which tracks the largest companies listed on the Shanghai and Shenzhen bourses, dropped 23 percent YTD.

The Japanese yen was near a 1-month high versus the greenback at the start of the week at 111.61. However, the high was short lived as US treasury yields rose. The safe haven yen is extremely sensitive to rising US debt costs as the Japanese economy is in a negative interest rate territory. It seems that interest rate differentials favor a stronger dollar. The yen lost 0.33 percent of its value to dollar in the last five trading days.

### Kuwaiti dinar

USD/KD opened at 0.30330 yesterday morning.

## KAMCO GCC Economic Updater

## Higher oil revenues to cut GCC budget deficits in 2018

KUWAIT: Budgets deficits for the GCC region in 2018 are now forecasted to reduce to \$14 billion (-0.9 percent of GDP), an 82 percent reduction from 2017 budget deficits (\$79 billion), based on our analysis of IMF's general government fiscal balance estimates. The lower deficit is largely ascribed to higher oil prices expected for 2018 and over the medium term, and the ongoing revenue side initiatives and expense side optimization undertaken by GCC governments. Furthermore, as a result of higher forecasted oil prices, the region's fiscal balance is expected to swing to surplus in 2019, to \$30 billion (1.7 percent of GDP), as against earlier expectations of a surplus only in 2020. Consensus of oil price forecasts and oil price futures point towards \$70/barrel or higher, and this should aid GCC budgets in our view.

Based on IMF's WEO projections released in Oct-18, Kuwait, UAE and Qatar are expected to report budget surpluses in 2018 and 2019. Current account surpluses are also expected in the GCC over 2018 and 2019, and is expected to average over 7 percent of GDP over the period.

### Credit trends

Inflation trends reported for Aug-18 suggested that overall consumer prices grew across UAE, Kuwait and Qatar, as quarterly inflation indices inched up between 10bps-30bps, while Saudi Arabia and Bahrain witnessed lower CPI levels. Money supply (M2) growth as of Aug-18 declined across the GCC as compared to Jun-18. Credit disbursed across the GCC was positive q-o-q in Q2-18, but witnessed mixed trends in Aug-18 as compared to Jun-18.

KAMCO Research sees better flexibility for fiscal and debt management for the region in 2019. Q2-18 real GDP estimates of GCC countries point towards growth for the region in 2018, from both oil and non-oil sectors. The backdrop of higher oil prices will also aid the expansionary budgets for 2019, as announced by Saudi Arabia and the UAE in their preliminary budgets. Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Finance forecasts budget expenditure to climb 7.4 percent in 2019 to reach SAR 1.106 trillion from their 2018 estimate of SAR 1.030 trillion.

Further, UAE announced a 2019 federal budget draft estimate of AED 60.3 billion, a 17.3 percent increase from their budget estimate for 2018. Moreover, healthy budget revenues and adequate room in terms of balance of trade should give these GCC countries ample flexibility for debt management, in terms of timing and ascertaining size of

future debt issuances. The announcement of pro-expansionary budgets coupled with higher prevailing oil prices are positive in our view and shows commitment towards diversification efforts and improving non-oil economic growth. However, going forward the nature of the OPEC+ agreement in 2019 and global trade developments will be significant for oil prices and its impact for the GCC region.

### Kuwait

Real GDP in Q2-18 grew by 1.4 percent q-o-q from KD 9.79 billion in Q1-18 to KD 9.93 billion in Q2-18 driven by growth in both non-oil and oil sectors. The real oil GDP grew 1.9 percent q-o-q over the same period from KD 5.46 billion to KD 5.56 billion, while the non-oil GDP grew by 0.8 percent from KD 4.33 billion in Q1-18 to KD 4.37 billion in Q2-18. Higher oil prices drove Kuwait's nominal GDP 8.3 percent upwards q-o-q from KD 10.02 billion in Q1-18 to 10.86 billion in Q2-18. Nominal oil GDP grew by 13.1 percent q-o-q in Q2-18 to KD 5.49 billion while non-oil GDP improved by 3.9 percent q-o-q to KD 5.37 billion. On a y-o-y basis, 45.3 percent increase in nominal oil GDP from Q2-17 to Q2-18 led to a 23.4 percent increase in Kuwait's nominal GDP in Q2-18.

Kuwait's trade balance surplus over Jan'18-Jul'18 posted robust growth of 72.8 percent y-o-y to reach KD 5.81 billion from KD 3.36 billion during the same period in 2017. Exports grew by 32.1 percent y-o-y from KD 9.27 billion during Jan'17-July 18 to KD 12.24 billion during Jan'18-Jul'18, while imports increased by 8.9 percent to KD 6.43 billion over the same period.

Credit facilities extended by Kuwaiti banks by the end of Aug-18 decreased by 0.3 percent from Q2-18 (Jun-18) to KD 36.19 billion. On a y-o-y basis, credit extended improved by 1.7 percent, driven by the growth in Personal Installment Loans, which grew by 7.1 percent over the period and accounted for almost a third of the credit disbursed by Aug-18. Credit to the Real Estate & Construction sectors declined on a y-o-y basis, albeit marginally, as Real Estate sector credit went down by 1.7 percent, while the real estate sector witnessed a 1.5 percent decline in credit disbursed. Kuwait's broad measure of money supply (M2) declined marginally by 1.3 percent KD 37.92 billion in Aug-18 from Jun-18 (KD 38.42 billion), mainly due to a 6 percent drop in M1 money supply, from lower currency in circulation (-7 percent) and slight deposits (-6 percent).

### Saudi Arabia

Data released by the General Authority of Statistics shows that Saudi Arabia's real GDP in Q2-18 grew by 1.6 percent y-o-y from Q2-17, led by 2.4 percent y-o-y growth in non-oil GDP and 1.3 percent y-o-y growth in oil GDP. Growth in non-oil GDP in Q2-18 was mainly driven by the government sector as it grew by 4 percent y-o-y from Q2-17, while the private sector grew by 1.8 percent over the same period. In nominal terms GDP growth came

in at 18 percent y-o-y and 6 percent q-o-q was driven mainly by the oil sector and higher oil prices. Higher oil prices also lowered Saudi Arabia's budget deficit in Q2-18, as the deficit declined 79 percent q-o-q (Q1-18: SAR 34.33 billion) and 84 percent y-o-y (SAR 46.52 billion) to reach SAR 7.36 billion. Expenses were however higher by 34 percent y-o-y at SAR 280.95 billion, but was more than offset by increases in both oil and non-oil revenues.

### United Arab Emirates

UAE's quarterly government finances continued to strengthen from Q4-17 to Q2-18 as gross operating balance surplus grew from AED 3.70 billion in Q4-17 to AED 21.71 billion in Q2-18. The surplus seen in Q2-18 was up over 83 percent as compared to Q1-18 (AED 11.80 billion), despite higher budget expenses in Q2-18 (AED 95.01 billion) as compared to Q1-18 (AED 91.26 billion). Higher revenues drove the improvement in fiscal surplus, as revenues reached AED 116.71 billion. In terms of quarterly economic growth, the Central Bank of UAE estimates Q2-18 real GDP growth to have come in 2.3 percent q-o-q, up from the 1.6 percent q-o-q growth witnessed in Q1-18 based on their Augmented Economic Composite Indicator (AEICI).

### Qatar

Qatar's real GDP in Q1-18 receded by 3.6 percent q-o-q and reached BHD 199.20 billion. The non-oil sector which accounts for over 68 percent of the economy declined by 4 percent q-o-q from Q4-17, largely contributed by 5 percent drop in private sector growth. Oil sector growth also slowed by 3.3 percent q-o-q from QAR 53.87 billion to QAR 51.07 billion. Nevertheless, Qatar's current account surplus grew in GDP terms from 6.4 percent of GDP in Q4-17 to 7.3 percent of GDP in Q1-18, as per the Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics. Qatar reported a fiscal surplus of QAR 1.04 billion in Q1-18 after posting fiscal deficit of QAR 35 billion in 2017. The surplus came in Q1-18 came in as a result of 22.3 percent q-o-q growth in revenues while expenditure went down by 4.8 percent over the same period.

### Bahrain

Real GDP growth in Bahrain grew by 6.1 percent q-o-q in Q2-18 and reached BHD 3.22 billion from BHD 3.04 billion in Q1-18. The Mining and Quarrying sector, which predominantly includes crude oil & natural gas, was the key driver for the increase as the sector grew by 23.3 percent q-o-q in real terms. The Manufacturing sector, which accounts for 14.5 percent of Bahrain's total GDP, improved by 0.3 percent q-o-q, while the Construction and Real Estate sectors, that combine together for 12 percent of the total GDP grew by 0.7 percent on average during the second quarter of 2018. In the Services sector, Financial Services (16 percent contribution to total GDP) grew by 1.3 percent q-o-q in Q2-18.

## Warba Bank announces 5 winners of Al-Sunbula draw

KUWAIT: Warba Bank, "the Best investment Bank" and "Best Corporate Bank" in Kuwait, held its week 38th draw for Al-Sunbula Account. The draw announced the 5 lucky winners in the presence of representatives from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and Bank officials. The Bank proudly announces the lucky 5 winners who received KD 1000 each are: Salah Khalaf Awwad Al-Fadhli, Mohammad Ali Tariq Khairuddin Khagan, MUSAED ATEYAH MOHAMMAD AL-DHAFERI, SAUD ABDULRAHMAN QUNAIFETH AL-WAALAN and Mohammad Lami Swayan Al-Fadhli.

Al-Sunbula Account is the perfect choice for all customers who wish to save money and achieve steady returns while simultaneously have the opportunity to win cash prizes throughout the year. Due to the high traffic on this account, for its offerings of unparalleled opportunities, Warba Bank has worked on enhancing Al-Sunbula account to provide customers with more benefits. Such enhancements include increasing the number of winners and the frequency of the draws. Now, on every Thursday the Bank holds draws for 5 weekly winners of KD 1,000 each. In addition, the Bank continues its monthly draws held on the first Thursday of every month, with cash prizes of KD 30,000 divided amongst 4 winners: two winners getting KD 10,000 each, and two winners getting KD 5,000 each.

Thus, the new development of Al-Sunbula account has increased the total number of winners to 24, and the total amount of prizes to 50,000 KD instead of 30,000 KD. As for the chances for winning, each customer is eligible to enter the draw against each KD 10. It is noteworthy, that Warba Bank has recently launched the Al-Sunbula Fixed Deposit, which provides depositors with high returns of up to 3 percent, as well as getting monthly chances to win in Al-Sunbula Account draws.

Furthermore, Warba Bank has launched its latest Customer Onboarding solution, in line with its ambitious five-year strategy that enables non-Warba Bank customers to request opening Al-Sunbula account in an easy electronic manner through the Bank's website without having to visit any of the Bank's branches, by following 5 simple steps that might take up to 5 minutes. New customers will be able to request opening the account at anytime, anywhere, and the Bank will receive, process and pass the new application for approval through whole new and unique electronic system used to implement this service. Warba Staff will then contact the customer to determine the appropriate time to visit the branch to get required signatures, verify the customer's identity, deliver his/her debit card, and activate the account.

Business

# AUB reports KD 43m net profit for 9 months period ended 30 Sept 2018

Profit reflects a 7.5% growth y/y and an EPS of 23.4 fils

**KUWAIT:** Ahli United Bank (AUB) reported a net profit amounting to KD 43.0 million for the nine months period ending on 30 September 2018 compared to KD 40.0 million during the same period last year. This reflects a 7.5 percent growth year on year and an earnings per share (EPS) of 23.4 fils as compared with 21.7 fils EPS for the same period last year.

The Bank's increase in net profits is derived from its continued growth in core revenues whereby its net return on financing has grown by 6.4 percent during 2018.

AUB's operating revenue reached KD 92.3 million for the nine months to 30 September 2018, reflecting a 9.2 percent net increase as compared with KD 84.5 million achieved in the same period last year. Furthermore, the net operating income grew by 13.7 percent to reach KD 65.0 million for the same period in 2018 compared with KD 57.2 million reported for the period last year. Shareholders equity rose further by 5 percent reaching KD 427.2 million as of 30 September 2018 as compared with KD 406.9 million recorded at the end of 2017. A sound Capital Adequacy Ratio of 15.52 percent remained resilient with a comfortable cushion above the regulatory requirement of 13 percent.

The Bank has achieved satisfactory returns on both equity and assets of 13.9 percent and 1.5 percent respectively during the period, being amongst the highest Key Performance Indicators in the local market. Total assets and financing receivables grew by 7 percent each to reach KD 3,923 million and KD 2,859 million respectively as at the end of September 2018. Furthermore, customer deposits reached KD 2,436 million at the end of September 2018 backed by ideal cost, maturity and concentration management aiming to secure higher margins.

Commenting on these results, the Chairman of Ahli United Bank, Dr Anwar Ali Al-Mudhaf, said that the positive indicators that accompanied the Bank's performance during the third quarter of the year are the result of the continuous efforts made by all business sectors in the Bank to maintain a remarkable performance that enhances the Bank's reputation and solidifies its position within the Kuwaiti banking sector as the first bank operating in Kuwait, now for 77 years.

"It also reflects our successful business strategy and plans to diversify sources of income, maximize shareholder returns, and go far in achieving customer aspirations with an early response to their increasing needs, he said.

Dr Al-Mudhaf further reiterated the positive market outlook with an increase in the Government's capital spending and its expected reflection across the local economic and financial environment, which will provide more opportunities for the growth of credit portfolios for banks locally. He confirmed that Ahli United Bank, with its accumulated experience and continuous success since its inception, is one of the most keen banks to support the national development plan projects which will contribute to economic growth within the new vision of Kuwait 2035.

Dr Al-Mudhaf pointed to the advanced capabilities enjoyed by AUB and its commitment to the highest professional standards that are most appreciated by global ratings agencies and place the Bank at the forefront of banking and financial service providers in the State of Kuwait, which enables the Bank to continue to receive these superior ratings from agencies such as Fitch, Moody's and Capital Intelligence.

The Bank maintained a credit rating of "A+" on the long term and "F1" on the short term with stable outlook by Fitch Ratings Agency, and "A2" on the local currency with stable outlook by Moody's. Capital Intelligence affirmed the Bank's long term credit rating of foreign currency to "A+" and enhanced the short term foreign currency rating to "A2". All these ratings confirm the credit standing, capital quality, and stability of the Bank for future growth.

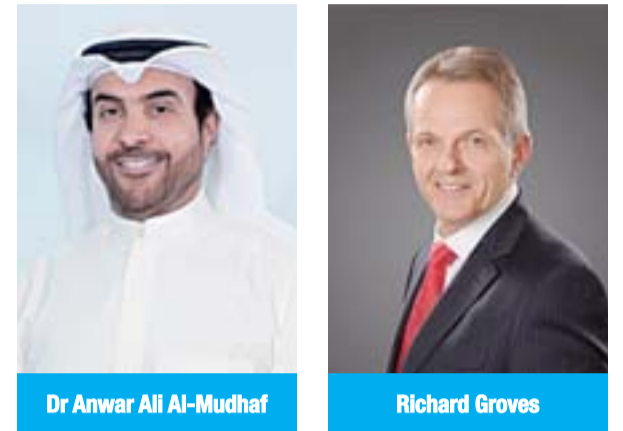
Dr Al-Mudhaf expressed his pride that the Bank recently won the 'Best Governance Bank in Kuwait 2018' award from Capital Finance International Magazine. This award reaffirms the appreciation of international institutions for AUB's leading position in the local market.

AUB's Chief Executive Officer Richard Groves emphasized that "The Bank has maintained its leadership position in Kuwait, due to the joint efforts of management, and all staff, noting that the financial results reflected the strong financial position of the Bank.

On the same subject, Groves praised the Bank's plan to embrace the most recent technological developments in banking and digital transformation to continue AUB's leadership by taking numerous significant steps in that direction. He further added: "We have recently collaborated with Kuwait Airways Corporation to launch a new POS service on-board for the first time in Kuwait and exclusively on KAC planes. This service represents a new development in the use of POS terminals which will allow passengers to use this service while on board. We have also launched a new partnership with Ajar Online Services to promote the growth of real estate rental payments through digital channels which provides an improved and efficient service for both tenants and property owners. In cooperation with Automated Services Network Company (eNet), the Bank also has successfully launched the service of bill payments of all major telecommunications companies in Kuwait, through the Bank's online banking service and mobile banking application.

Groves also lauded the tangible improvements witnessed by the Bank's Retail Banking Services that reflects the Bank's desire to meet the needs of its customers in a manner that suits their expectations. The Bank has recently launched the "Go" Youth package for students, which is an innovative package offering a range of banking services with numerous unique benefits designed to meet their needs allowing them the opportunity to win and save without being restricted to a minimum amount for opening the account. The Bank has launched the Afaq Saving Account for investment in Kuwaiti Dinar for individuals, which is an added value to the Bank's customers who look forward to saving while achieving returns on their deposits. Ahli United Bank has also launched, for the first time, a product for financing the costs of medical treatment services in cooperation with Al-Seef Hospital which includes numerous credit benefits through flexible monthly instalments.

During the course of the current year, AUB won a number of prominent awards including 'Most Innovative Strategic Domestic Treasury in Kuwait 2018' award from International Finance Magazine (IFM), one of the region's top tier publications focusing on financial serv-



Dr Anwar Ali Al-Mudhaf

Richard Groves



ices across the Middle East. The award reflects the Bank's overall vision in adopting the most innovative practices across the banking sector in Kuwait.

Finally, in concluding his statement, Dr Al-Mudhaf extended his thanks and appreciation to the Central Bank of Kuwait, the Bank's Board of Directors, customers, shareholders, management and staff for the confidence and support they have conferred upon the Bank. This has enabled the Bank to realize these continued achievements and maintain its preeminent position in the Kuwaiti banking sector.

## BF6 networking event held in Kuwait

**KUWAIT:** Following the success of the first BF6 networking event, held in April last year, the six Business Councils, the German Business Council Kuwait (GBCK), American Business Council Kuwait (ABCK), British Business Forum (BBF), French Business Council Kuwait (FBCK), the Australian Business Group (AusBG), and the Canadian Business Council (CBC), hosted over 400 members and guests representing over 75 companies, in the Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Centre.

The panel, consisting of Hind Sabeeh Barack Al-Sabeeh, Minister of Social Affairs and Labor and Minister of State for Economic Affairs, and the ambassadors representing the countries of each Business Council, included German Ambassador Karlfried Bergner, Austrian Ambassador Dr Sigurd Pacher, Swiss Ambassador Benedict Gubler, US Ambassador Lawrence Silverman, UK Ambassador Michael Davenport, French Ambassador Marie Masdupuy, Australian Ambassador Jonathan Gilbert and Canadian Ambassador Louis-Pierre Emond.

The panelists answered questions from the members of the Business Councils on "Working in Kuwait".

The various topics included: Kuwait Vision 2035 and areas of opportunities for foreign companies, Contracting in Kuwait, Employment Legislation, and the available



support structures that may help foreign companies operating in Kuwait. The event was possible due to the support of the sponsors Lufthansa, Kuwait Banking

Association, NBK, KPMG, Siemens, Al-Tamimi & Co and the Four Seasons, as well as the Business Councils working closely together to host this event.

## Germany urges global minimum tax for digital giants

**FRANKFURT:** German Finance Minister Olaf Scholz said in an interview for publication yesterday he backed a global minimum fiscal regime for multinationals as Europe looks to levy tax notably on US tech giants. "We need a minimum tax rate valid globally which no state can get out of (applying)," Scholz, a social democrat in conservative Chancellor Angela Merkel's coalition government, told the "Welt am Sonntag" weekly.

Europe is trying to devise a strategy to tax profits from the likes of Google, Amazon, Facebook, Apple and digital platforms such as YouTube and Airbnb which currently manage to keep fiscal exposure to a bare minimum.

Digital platforms "aggravate a problem which we know well from globalization and which we are trying to counter the shifting of profits to fiscally beneficial regions," said Scholz.

Scholz was last week nonetheless reported not to be convinced by a controversial EU proposal to slap a European tax on US tech giants amid worries it may turn out to be both ineffective and protectionist.

France for a year has rallied EU partners to draw up the tax which Paris says is necessary to ensure tech giants pay their way. Scholz explained he had launched an initiative designed to help states react to so-called fiscal dumping in support of embryonic OECD plans designed to fight tax transparency and cross-border tax evasion.

"We require coordinated mechanisms which prevent the displacement of revenues to tax havens," said Scholz. The European Commission, the EU's executive arm, has proposed a European tax on "big tech" with substantial digital revenue in Europe, based on overall revenue in Europe and not just profits. But lead opponent Ireland

says a growing number of countries are grumbling about hidden problems with the tax, including that it could inadvertently snag European companies.

There is also concern as to what consequences might flow from such a plan at a time against the backdrop of a potential full-blown EU-US trade war. Berlin worries that cranking up the ante on trade with the United States by launching what Washington could see as an attack on Silicon Valley's corporate giants may threaten German auto exports.

Germany has already shown some opposition to a French plan to tax tech giants three percent of certain forms of revenue including advertising and sale of personal data.

French Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire said Thursday he will in the coming days urge EU members to commit to backing a tax. A March proposal by the Commission includes introducing a tax as a bridge measure until such time as the OECD can roll out a measure which can be applied globally. —AFP

## Italy should not ignore damage to banks from soaring bond yields: Official

**MILAN:** Italy's government should not ignore the problems that soaring government bond yields are causing for Italian banks, including possible capital needs, Cabinet Undersecretary Giancarlo Giorgetti said in a newspaper interview yesterday.

Giorgetti also told Italian daily Il Messaggero that next year's budget deficit may turn out to be lower than the proposed 2.4 percent of gross domestic output.

The profligate budget plans of Italy's populist government have prompted investors to shed 67 billion euros (\$77 billion) of Italian government bonds since May, sending the yield premium Italy pays over safer German paper to more than 3 percentage points. "The increase in the (bond yield) spread, the amount of public debt banks hold and new European Union banking rules put the industry under pressure and may generate the need to recapitalize the most fragile lenders," said Giorgetti, who is an influential member of the far right League, one of the two parties in Italy's ruling coalition. Italian banks had been raising capital in recent years to restructure after a deep recession that turned almost a fifth of all bank loans sour. The clean-up was just beginning to bear fruit when lenders were hit by a spike in Italy's debt costs, which hurts the value of their large sovereign holdings, eating into their capital. Pummelled by investors, Italian banks' shares trade at a fraction of the value of their assets but the growing uncertainty over Italy's prospects would make it hard for them to

raise capital. "We can't just pretend nothing is happening and ignore these problems," Giorgetti said.

He said the government was made up of "responsible people who would do things responsibly." After initially rebuffing criticism from Brussels over a sharp deficit increase in the draft 2019 budget, which the European Commission has labelled an "unprecedented" breach of EU fiscal rules, Italy appeared to have softened its stance.

On Saturday, Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte said Rome wanted to establish a "constructive dialogue" with the EU over the budget because it recognized the role of European institutions. "The 2.4 percent figure is a ceiling for all the various measures included in the budget, but it's not a given that all of them can be implemented because there could be technical difficulties," Giorgetti said. The coalition comprising the League and the anti-establishment 5-Star Movement wants to boost deficit-spending to lower the retirement age and provide a basic income for the poor. —Reuters

## Burgan Bank announces winners of Yawmi draw

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

### The lucky winners are:

1. Mohammad Abdullah Ali
2. Abdulaleem Abdulsameea Abdulmutaleb Abdulrahman
3. Jamal Khaled Mohammad Alzamel
4. Humoud Khaled Hussain Alabdulmohsen
5. Jameelah Hamzah Saleh

In addition to the daily draw, Burgan Bank also offers a quarterly draw with more chances to win higher rewards, offering the chance to one lucky customer to win KD 125,000 every three months. The Yawmi Account offers daily and quarterly draws, wherein the quarterly draw requires customers to maintain a minimum amount of KD 500 in their account for two months prior to the draw date. Additionally, every KD 10 in the account will entitle customers to one chance of winning. If the account balance is KD 500 and above, the account holder will be qualified for both the quarterly and daily draws.

Burgan Bank encourages everyone to open a Yawmi account and/or increase their deposit to maximize their chances of becoming a winner. The higher the level of the deposit, the higher the likelihood to win.

کرایہ کے لئے  
کرایہ کے لئے اپارٹمنٹ  
مختلف علاقوں میں  
کویت کے اندر  
بندر الغار - داسمان - حولی - سالمیہ  
اپارٹمنٹ بنا رہے ہیں  
ایک بیڈروم  
لاؤنج  
باتھ روم  
باورچی خانے  
2 بیڈروم  
لاؤنج  
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## Business

# Daewoo E&C signs credit facility with ABK, CBK and Burgan Bank

## \$180m credit facility with banks with a tenor of two years

**KUWAIT:** Daewoo Engineering & Construction (E&C) announced yesterday the signing of a milestone credit facility with Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK), Commercial Bank of Kuwait (CBK) and Burgan Bank for an amount of \$180 Million with equal participation by the Banks.

The facility has been arranged through a syndicate structure with ABK and CBK acting as Joint Mandated Lead Arrangers and Book Runners. Burgan Bank has joined as an original lender and CBK is the Facility Agent.

Daewoo E&C is a globally recognized construction company and is considered one of the largest contracting companies internationally. Headquartered in Seoul - South Korea, the company's portfolio boasts of construction of civil projects, railways, harbors, reclamation projects, environmental projects, and leisure facilities. The company is currently working on mega-projects in Kuwait, including Al-Zour New Refinery and Clean Fuel Projects. Furthermore, Daewoo E&C is one of the major contractors for Duqm Refinery in Al-Duqm, Oman.



**KUWAIT:** (From left to right) Elham Mahfouz, CEO - Commercial Bank, Dinshaw Bhandari, AGM Corporate Banking - Burgan Bank, Michel Accad, Group CEO - ABK, Sheikh Ahmad Duaij Jaber Al-Sabah, Chairman - Commercial Bank, Inhwon Cho, Executive Vice President & Head of Finance - Daewoo E&C.

## ITS wins 'Best Islamic Finance technology provider 2018'

**KUWAIT:** International Turnkey Systems Group (ITS), the market leading provider of comprehensive Shariah-compliant financial solutions, was recently awarded the "Best Islamic Finance Technology Provider 2018" at the prestigious Global Islamic Finance Awards ceremonies held in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Commenting on the accolade, which was awarded at a ceremony attended by industry VIPs from across the globe, International Turnkey Systems (ITS) CEO, Esam Alkhesnam, said: "ITS is pleased to win the award for "Best Islamic Finance Technology Provider 2018" from the esteemed Global Islamic Finance Awards (GIFA) program underscoring our commitment to delivering world class financial technology solutions."

The GIFA Awards Committee selected ITS as the "Best Islamic Finance Technology Provider 2018". The recognition further highlights ITS as the market leading provider of innovative sharia-compliant IT solutions, and emphasize its long track record of serving the IT needs of the Islamic financial services industry. The ETHIX range is ITS's flagship solution which provides multi-channelled corporate and retail



Alkhesnam receiving the award

products and services in Islamic finance and investment, including core banking, trade finance, branch automation, digital banking, dashboards and reports, in addition to other pioneering products and services. The solution is built on robust technologies designed to support financial institutions as they strive to reach operational excellence, accommodate growth, and achieve cost leadership in financial services.

Alkhesnam added: "I believe that the Islamic Financial Services industry is entering a new era driven in large by Financial Technologies (Fintech). ITS is working to equip financial institutions with the technologies that they need to remain competitive and succeed in this new digital space and this award is testimony to our continued dedication to deliver on that promise."

## KIB awarded 'Excellence in Islamic Banking Products and Services' 2018

**KUWAIT:** In recognition of the hard work and dedicated efforts of the bank's staff, executive management and board of directors, KIB was bestowed with the "Excellence in Islamic Banking Products and Services Award" for the year 2018 by the World Union of Arab Bankers (WUAB). KIB received the award at the 2018 Arab Banks Awards & Commendations of Excellence ceremony, which was organized for the fourth year in a row by the WUAB in Beirut. The event was attended by a number of notable bankers and regulatory figures from both international and regional institutions.

KIB received this award based on several key criteria evaluated by the awards committee, which consists of a group of banking and economics experts from both the Arab region and globally. Accordingly, the research department at the Union of Arab Banks (UAB) and the WUAB awarded the Bank in recognition of its innovative Islamic banking products and services, high customer satisfaction levels, high standards of business ethics, customer focus, and continuous focus on innovation and development in all aspects

of the business. Receiving the award on behalf of KIB was Manager of the Corporate Communications Unit at the Bank, Nawaf Najia. On his side, KIB's Chairman, Sheikh Mohammed Jarrah Al-Sabah, said: "This Award serves as a testament to KIB's leadership and excellence within the local banking sector. It also highlights how KIB continues to implement a successful strategic approach and solid, future-looking vision in order to enhance its contribution to the Kuwaiti economy - something which has reflected positively on its performance and enabled it to successfully achieve its strategic objectives."

Al-Jarrah further expressed his pride at KIB receiving this award, which adds to the Bank's already impressive track record of honorable and prestigious accolades. "KIB's new strategy centers around establishing itself as a "Bank for Life", and this has motivated each and every person at the Bank to work tirelessly and relentlessly to provide our customers with the best possible service. To deliver on this promise, we strive to offer innovative and high-quality products and services tailored to suit the varying needs of our customers. This is how we continue to be true partners in our customers' lives, and why we were able to garner this prestigious award," added Al-Jarrah.

It serves to note that the WUAB is an organization which currently has more than 500 members from across the region. Headquartered in Beirut, the WUAB publishes the Banking Executive Magazine, which honors the achievements of Arab banks throughout the region on an annual basis.

## Geely joins Kuwait Airport fleet of taxis

**KUWAIT:** Geely has successfully entered the Kuwait airport fleet of taxis to establish its name as a pioneer and a trend-setter in serving incoming passengers. The trust given to Geely cars is a result of years of successful strategy and product development that started in 1986. Since then Geely Automotive has entered the top 10 automaker list in china, became a fortune 500 company placed in 267th position, acquired both Volvo Car Group and 10 percent stake in Daimler to become its single largest shareholder. Peter Horbury, the ex-Vice president of design at Volvo is leading their innovative design department.

On this occasion, Ashish Tandon, the general manager of Kuwait Automotive Imports Co stated "it is thrilling to witness the continuous progress of the Geely brand year after year and know that clients have put their trust in Geely vehicles." Mohammad Othman, Brand Manager of Geely, added "the success and growth of Geely is result of hard work of Geely engineers who tested these vehicles in toughest weather conditions before launching in Kuwait."

"We, at KAICO are serving Kuwaiti Customers since 1936 and we are dedicated to provide the best after sales service at all time." The Geely Emgrand X7 sport, serving now in airport taxi, is flagship model and represents the latest technology in the automotive industry.

### Adjustable electric seats

Eight-way adjustable electric seats complete with heating function, easy to operate and with multiple functions. Seats are created from high quality genuine Nappa leather, furthering that feeling of luxury.

### 6-speed tiptronic transmission

Gear changes have been crafted to be incredibly smooth, making the car more comfortable, easier to operate and a pleasure to drive.

### 2.4L naturally aspirated engine

The 2.4L engine adopts a light design and



integrates various advanced technology. It comes with segment leading power of 112Kw, strongest torque of 225Nm/rpm, meeting the European V emission standards. The engine is light, powerful, and more efficient and has lower fuel consumption.

### Intelligent four-wheel drive control

The intelligent all-wheel drive technology is able to send power to all four wheels automatically to ensure safe driving in inclement weather or on poor road surfaces.

### 18 lightening wheel hub

Large size double five - spoke wheel hub

are designed in the shape of lightning, creating a strong visual effect that enforces the sports feeling.

### 7" LCD dynamic display screen

The HD TFT display delivers clear pictures and bright colors with various display modes and gives you access to comprehensive information regarding the vehicle and your surroundings.

The Emgrand X7 & whole range of Geely vehicles can be seen & test driven in the Geely showroom located in Al Rai area. As well, all Geely vehicles are covered with a 10 years warranty service.

## VIVA announces offers on iPhone XR



**KUWAIT:** VIVA, Kuwait's fastest-growing and most developed telecom operator, announced offer on iPhone XR, bringing the latest iPhone innovations to more people, starting October 19, 2018. Customers will be able to pre-order at the VIVA's official website [www.viva.com.kw](http://www.viva.com.kw), VIVA's stores and VIVA's app.

iPhone XR integrates breakthrough technologies from iPhone XS in all-screen glass and aluminum design featuring a 6.1-inch Liquid Retina display, the most advanced LCD in a smartphone, with wide color support and True Tone for a more natural viewing experience. iPhone XR brings the smartest and most powerful chip in a smartphone with A12 Bionic, a next-generation Neural Engine built for advanced machine learning in everything from photography to augmented reality, the TrueDepth camera system that creates dramatic portraits using a single camera lens, long all-day battery life and six beautiful finishes: white, black, blue, yellow, coral and (PRODUCT) RED. This new design is splash and water resistant with a rating of IP67 and protects against everyday spills including coffee, tea and soda. iPhone XR also brings Dual SIM to iPhone through the use of digital eSIM.



What's On

# Mishref Co-op Pharmacy launches 3rd Health and Beauty Festival 2018



In its attempt to run ongoing promotions during 2018, the Chairman and Procurement Committee at Mishref Co-Operative Society, Ali Al Fahad stated that the month of October is witnessing several promotions and offers that are especially designed to meet the needs and demands of both shareholders and shoppers. Some promotions have already been launched while the best is yet to come: such as the October Mega Sale in the Central Market, Mishref Pharmacy, Family Supplies Center and Cosmetics & Perfume Center.

The Board of Directors are keen to launch various promotions through-

out the year as well as to diversify the range of products and goods that would play a key role in improving the service offerings as well as adding value to shareholders and Mishref residents. He said that the Co-op will always be a role model in delivering service excellence and amazing promotions. He went on to say that Mishref Co-op strives to choose the best renowned companies to participate in the Health and Beauty Festival starting from October 18 - 31, 2018 who are our partners in success.

There are 55 companies participating in the festival and many others are interested in being involved due to the Co-op's trustworthiness with share-

holders, shoppers and suppliers - that is considered one of the secrets to our success. The Health and Beauty Festival takes in more than 75 international cosmetics brands, in addition to food supplements and medical supplies that meet shoppers' demands.

The festival offers many promotions and discounts that are 50 percent, 30 percent and 25 percent, as well as "Buy 2 and Get 2 Free" and "Buy 1 and Get 1 Free". It's worth noting that the launch ceremony was held in the presence of the Co-Op's Chairman, Board Members, Finance and Administration Manager, Trade Manager and a number of attendees.

## Enjoy BBQ nights at Copthorne Al Jahra Hotel & Resort



Copthorne Al Jahra Hotel & Resort hosts BBQ nights every Wednesday from 7:00 pm to midnight. The barbeque is one of the most important activities of the hotel that is always awaited by BBQ lovers; it became a haven for families who want to eat the best food and spend pleasant moments with live music in a relaxing atmosphere around a swimming pool along with our garden area.

In addition to the rich buffet, the theme night is characterized by a variety of barbecue items as well as live stations including a charcoal tandoor, chargrilled shawarma corner, live preparation of lamb suckling, beef wagyu burger from clay stone with a twist of jalapenos, mouthwatering creamy jack cheese dip and spicy smoked tomato salsa. The chefs prepared different types of food on a live counter from an ancient smokey grill, in addition to innovative salad, and delicious pastries including a live crepe station. Have a chilled evening with freshly prepared fruit granites and mocktail drinks.



## KANA Kuwait holds theatre festival 2018

Vazhakula Reloaded presented by Mareena Moving Arts bagged three awards including the Best Play, Best Director and the Best Child Artiste awards at the second 'Thoppil Bhasi Theatre Festival 2018', organized by Kerala Arts and Nataka Academy (KANA Kuwait) at the Indian Community School auditorium, Khaitan on Friday.

At a colorful event, titled 'Thoppil Bhasi Theatre Festival 2018', five amateur troupes competed for the awards. The Best Second Play award went to 'Swapnavathil Padiyil Swarna Cheruppadayalam' staged by Kazhcha Kuwait. The Best Director award was bagged by Bijoy Scaria Palekkunnel for his performance in 'Vazhakula Reloaded' which also brought laureates for Aiju Poothettan (Best Actor) and Eric Davis (the Best Child Artiste). Bergman Thomas bagged the best Script Writer award for his play 'Pekkalam' which was staged by Theatre of Idiots.

Treesa Wilson was adjudged the best actress for her performance in 'Swapna Vathilpadiyil Swarna Cheruppadayalam' for the second year in a row. Samson Joseph was cho-



sen for Special Jury Award for direction of the play 'Nanathathil Ekathwam'. The awards were given away by the guests and KANA Kuwait office-bearers during a ceremony following the competition.

The festival was inaugurated by the chief guest and well-known film-theatre personality, writer and voice artist Prof Aliyar. Tracing the evolution and growth of Malayalam theatre over the last 40 years, Prof Aliyar recalled the contribution made by late Thoppil Bhasi through his epoch-making dramas and scripts. As the head of the Jury of Thoppil Bhasi Theatre Festival 2018, he commended the efforts being made by Kerala Arts and Nataka Academy in promoting

theatre and arts in Kuwait. President Kumar Thrithala delivered the presidential speech. Indian Community School (Khaitan) Principal K Gangadhar and jury member Prabhakam Pillai delivered felicitation speeches.

Festival Convener Sajeev K Peter welcomed the gathering and Vice-president Punnoose Anchery proposed a vote of thanks. KANA Kuwait patron Babu Chakola, Advisor K P Balakrishnan, Technical Advisor Idiculla Mathew and P R O Reji Mathew were also present during the inaugural ceremony. A large number of theatre enthusiasts and Indian community members were present during the festival.

## Symphony Style Hotel Kuwait GM receives award

Symphony Style Hotel, the Jewel of Kuwait City, proudly states that it is directed by one of the best general manager in the GCC region. Renowned for his approach to balance leadership, empowering employees and wealth of experience as a skilled hospitality operator Peter Schuler, who has served as General Manager of Symphony Style Hotel Kuwait for the past three and half years, was honored with the 'GCC's Best General Manager' award ceremony held recently in Dubai.

'Being leaders in today's competitive hospitality market is no longer optional, it is imperative to take the

lead if you want to achieve sustainable growth and set yourselves apart from the competition. The greatest achievements in hospitality are never the individualistic ones, success is only achieved by the remarkable power of a committed, consolidated team that remains loyal to the hotel's shared vision. I am proud to be part of this inspiring team and we look forward to fulfilling greater success together.' commented Peter Schuler on his recognition and award.

The prestigious World Leadership Congress and Awards recognized the distinguished leaders who innovate and have achieved outstanding success in hotel management, and customer services. The recognition of Symphony Style Hotel Kuwait, a Radisson Collection hotel, follows the exceptional efforts of the hotel to enhance the luxury hospitality experience of each guest and the working environment where all employees can engage in a trusted environment that boosts the team's talents and fuels their passion.



## NOTICE

You are cordially invited to the Tafseer class (Divine Wisdom from the Last Testament) on October 22, 2018 at 7:00 pm. This class will focus on Surat At-Munafiqoun (The Hypocrites), verses 6 and 7. We will witness the reaction of Madinah's leading hypocrite when advised to repent-which included asking Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) to pray for his forgiveness-and exam-

ine Allah's statement that He would not forgive hypocrites.

We will also discuss the different types of guidance, why hypocrites are worse than polytheists, and learn the supplication Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) frequently repeated. Finally, we will examine the event that led Abdullah to advise the hypocrites to stop spending on poor Makkan emigrants, Allah's response to that, and how Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) calmed the tense emotions of the Makkan emigrants and their Madinite hosts.



## Vibrant Mexican Week at Jumeirah

Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel & Spa is proud to present its "Experience an Authentic Mexican Week" in collaboration with the Embassy of Mexico in Kuwait. "It gives me a great pleasure to organize the Mexican Week with the Embassy of Mexico in Kuwait and provide our guests with traditional Mexican cuisine that has proudly become part of the UNESCO Cultural Heritage. I would also like to thank the efforts of Ms Patricia Isidro, the wife of H E Ambassador of Mexico to Kuwait Miguel Angel Isidro, in crafting the menu to make it look and feel truly authentic and genuine,"

said Savino Leone, General Manager.

The themed week will start in Pepper Steakhouse on October 21, 2018, where Kuwait's foodies and culture enthusiasts are welcomed to taste handcrafted recipes passed down for generations. The renowned steakhouse restaurant will be serving a rich set menu with a variety of dishes that create a unique blend of tradition and modern zest.

On the evening of October 24, 2018, a Mexican BBQ buffet will be served by the resort's spectacular poolside showcasing vibrant flavors, key signature live stations for taquitos, flautas, pepitos, quesadillas and many others along with main dishes. Culture, gastronomy and tradition are completed with live Mexican performance of a Mexican dance group, dedicated to promoting Mexican culture through a varied selection of songs and dances.



## Technology

# Dell EMC brings 'Women in Technology' initiative to UAE

## Panel discussions bring together regional women achievers in STEM

DUBAI: Dell EMC, as part of the Dell Technologies Forum in Dubai, hosted the first Middle East edition of its 'Women in Technology' initiative, which featured accomplished women in technology-related careers in the UAE as speakers and panelists. Globally, the technology industry typically falls behind others when it comes to inclusivity and diversity, resulting in a sparse talent pool of female IT professionals, and the number of female Chief IT Officer (CIOs) at just around 16 percent.

In the UAE, the statistics show a more positive trend, as women account for 56 per cent of all graduates in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) streams, and 35 per cent of all Internet entrepreneurs, according to HR consultancy BWP. The Women in Technology session brought together women from within Dell EMC and beyond to present on topics including milestones, challenges, and other realities faced by women in technology workplaces.

Manal Ansari, Vice President, Arab WIC (Arab Women In Computing), and Innovation Manager, Emirates National Bank, and Dr. Hoda Khzaimi, Director - Security Center, NY University Abu Dhabi, and President of Emirates Digital Association For Women, were the keynote speakers. The session then included a panel discussion with women in technology leadership roles, including Abeer El Rawy, IT Data Center Manager, DEWA, Nisreen Salem, Big Data Architect and Program Manager, RTA, Jennifer Lynn, freelance cybersecurity consultant, and Patricia Florissi, Vice President, Global CTO for Sales and Distinguished Engineer, Dell EMC. The session was moderated by Haidi Nossair, Marketing Director - META region, Dell EMC.

Haidi Nossair said: "Companies with diverse management are more likely to develop new and innovative products. This creates the need for a holistic approach to increase the interest of girls and women in STEM. At Dell Technologies, diversity and inclusion is a business imperative and is supported by multiple initiatives.

Bringing WIT to Dell Technologies Forum is a great opportunity to give women the platform to speak about unique challenges and opportunities to accelerate the representation of women not only in IT but in leadership roles as well and what are the responsibilities of men and women combined to make it real."

Patricia Florissi said: "We know that a diverse workforce supported by an inclusive culture delivers business and social value that is just as important to Dell's market leadership as our technology strategy and execution. At Dell, we engage in cultivating diversity and inclusion through three pillars: Culture, community, and commitment. A diverse and inclusive environment ensures that Dell is a place where people want to work, team members feel that they belong, and our values reflect those of our customers. As a global company, we have the power to impact multiple industries and every geography that we serve."

During the session, Dr. Hoda Khzaimi stressed on the importance of a collaborative effort among women and men to create an equitable environment, and also the growing need for oversight into the critical area of women's integration into the workplace. "As the UAE is a melting pot of nationalities, with businesses from all over the world too, it is natural that there isn't one single approach to ensuring inclusion and diversity. Given the visionary leadership of the UAE, I believe the need of the hour is an entity that links the Government, the leadership, and the corporate world to develop a Global Transparency Index, which will provide guidelines and benchmarks for organizations to take the right steps. This will ensure that Gender Diversity, in particular, becomes a business imperative, and allows well-performing organizations to benefit more", she said.

Gender empowerment is a key strategic pillar within Dell's Diversity and Inclusion priorities and as such Dell established a number of programs that help elevate and promote women within the organization. Leading



Women@Dell is a year-long program in collaboration with Simmons College School of Management. The program is designed to meet the specific needs of senior level, high potential women with C-Suite aspirations already holding senior level positions.

The Managing Success Now program is focused on mid-level high potential women, which helps arm them with the skills they need to appreciate and understand differences, and equip them with negotiating skills and the like to help them propel their careers forward in a positive fashion. Through the Dell Women's Entrepreneur Network (DWEN), Dell supports and nur-

tures a community of female entrepreneurs by providing access to technology, networks, and capital.

Dell holds an annual DWEN Summit, which brings top women leaders together to connect on today's pressing gender and entrepreneurship issues. Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) are communities that provide opportunities for personal and professional development by connecting team members around areas such as gender, ethnicity, and background. Currently, more than 34,000 team members participate in one of 13 ERGs, through more than 300 chapters in 60 countries around the world.

## China-backed hydro dam threatens world's rarest orangutan

JAKARTA: A billion-dollar hydroelectric dam development in Indonesia that threatens the habitat of the world's rarest great ape has sparked fresh concerns about the impact of China's globe-spanning infrastructure drive. The site of the dam in the Batang Toru rainforest on Sumatra island is the only known habitat of the Tapanuli orangutan, a newly discovered species that numbers about 800 individuals in total.

The \$1.6 billion project, which is expected to be operational by 2022, will cut through the heart of the critically endangered animal's habitat, which is also home to agile gibbons, siamangs and Sumatran tigers. Indonesian firm PT North Sumatra Hydro Energy is building the power plant with backing from Sinohydro, a Chinese state-owned enterprise (SOE) that insures overseas investment projects, and the Bank of China, company documents show.

Chinese SOE Sinohydro, which built the mammoth Three Gorges Dam, has been awarded the design and construction contract

for the project. The development is one of dozens being pushed by the government to improve electricity supply throughout the sprawling archipelago, parts of which are regularly plagued by blackouts. But the Chinese-backed project has sparked fierce resistance from conservationists, who say the potential environmental risk has already seen the World Bank Group shy away from involvement.

Its Chinese backers appear undeterred, however, something critics say underscores the troubling environmental impact of Beijing's trademark "Belt and Road Initiative", which seeks to link Asia, Europe and Africa with a network of ports, highways and railways. "This issue is becoming in some ways the face of the Belt and Road initiative," Professor Bill Laurance, director of the Centre for Tropical Environmental and Sustainability Science at James Cook University in Australia, told AFP. "I think this crystallizes in a way that people can understand what a tsunami of 7,000-plus projects will mean for nature."

### Death knell

Until recently, scientists thought there were only two genetically distinct types of orangutan, Bornean and Sumatran. But in 1997 biological anthropologist Erik Meijaard observed an isolated population of the great apes in Batang Toru, south of the known habitat for Sumatran orangutans, and scientists began to investigate if it was a unique species. Researchers studied the DNA, skulls

and teeth of 33 orangutans killed in human-animal conflict before concluding that they had indeed discovered a new species, giving it the scientific name Pongo tapanuliensis or Tapanuli orangutan.

The 510-megawatt dam, which will supply peak-load electricity to North Sumatra province, will flood part of the ape's habitat and include a network of roads and high-voltage transmission lines. Critics say it will fragment the three existing populations, who are living in a tract of forest less than one-fifth the size of the greater Jakarta region, and lead to inbreeding. Meijaard said the dam would be the "death knell" for the animal. "Roads bring in hunters (and) settlers-it's the start, generally, of things falling apart," he told AFP.

### Weighing the risk

But the plight of the cinnamon-furred ape seems to have been given little attention in the environmental impact assessment by PT North Sumatra Hydro Energy, according to conservationists and scientists who have seen the document. In August, the Indonesian Forum for the Environment (Walhi) filed a legal challenge against the environmental permit approved by the North Sumatra government, saying it failed to address the dam's impact on wildlife, communities living downstream, or the risk of damage from earthquakes in the seismically active region.

PT North Sumatra Hydro Energy and Indonesia's environment ministry declined to



GOH, INDONESIA: This handout picture from the Sumatran Orangutan Conservation Program (SOCP) taken shows a Tapanuli orangutan in the Batang Toru rainforest, its only known habitat, on Sumatra island. — AFP

respond to AFP's requests for comment. Bank of China said in a statement it did not comment on specific projects, but added it takes "all relevant factors into consideration when formulating policies and making decisions." The World Bank, through its sister organization the International Finance Corporation, declined to comment on any aspect of its initial ties to the project-outlined in World Bank documents dated March 2017 — or environmentalists' claims it pulled out due to habitat concerns.

The Batang Toru project is not the only development in Indonesia linked to the Belt and Road initiative, which aims to bolster Chinese influence abroad. But it might be the most contentious. "We really hope the financial backers of this project will see there are environmental and social problems with the project and decide not to support the project," said Yuyun Eknas of the Indonesian Forum for the Environment (Walhi). "The World Bank has pulled out. We hope the Bank of China will do the same." — AFP

# CLINIC PAGE



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Stars

CROSSWORD 2040



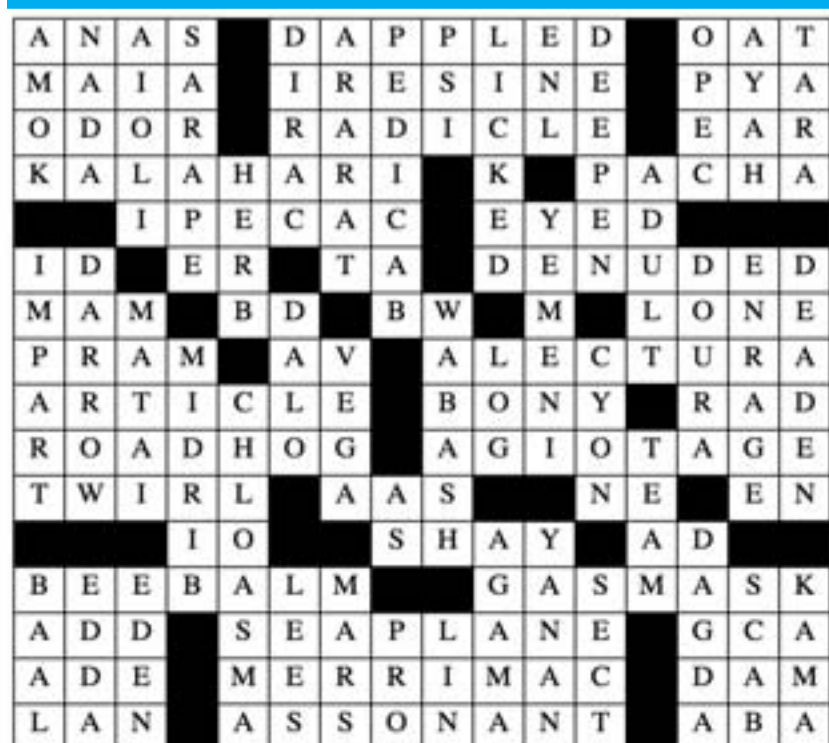
ACROSS

- (Akkadian) Father of the gods and consort of Tiamat.
- A Chadic language spoken in northern Nigeria.
- A master's degree in business.
- A colorless odorless gaseous element that give a red glow in a vacuum tube.
- Pertaining to or resembling Utopia.
- A cgs unit of work or energy.
- Of or relating to or near the tarsus of the foot.
- English biochemist (born in Germany) who discovered the Krebs cycle (1900-1981).
- A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
- King of Wessex whose military victories made Wessex the most powerful kingdom in England (died in 839).
- Passerine bird of New World tropics.
- The sixth month of the civil year.
- Minute single-celled green freshwater organism having a single flagella.
- The dialect of Malay used as the national language of the Republic of Indonesia or of Malaysia.
- A nucleic acid that transmits genetic information from DNA to the cytoplasm.
- Common Indian weaverbird.
- A loud harsh or strident noise.
- Weapons considered collectively.
- An endorsement.
- One of the twelve Apostles (first century).
- Gum resin used especially in treating skin irritation.
- Any heathlike evergreen shrub of the genus Epacris grown for their showy and crowded spikes of small bell-shaped or tubular flowers.
- Appraisal of the biological activity of a substance by testing its effect on an organism and comparing the result with some agreed standard.
- A rare heavy polyvalent metallic element that resembles manganese chemically and is used in some alloys.
- Not in good physical or mental health.
- Type genus of the family Arcidae.
- A metric unit of length equal to one billionth of a meter.
- (Greek mythology) A maiden seduced by Zeus.
- Any of numerous local fertility and nature deities worshipped by ancient Semitic peoples.
- Alsatian artist and poet who was cofounder of Dadaism in Zurich.
- A region of Malaysia in northeastern Borneo.
- A room or establishment where alcoholic drinks are served over a counter.
- A percussion instrument with wooden bars tuned to produce a chromatic scale and with resonators.
- A Loloish language.
- A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
- A syntactic string that forms a part of some larger syntactic unit.
- A member of the Algonquian people living in Wisconsin the Fox River valley and the shores of Green Bay.

DOWN

- (prefix) In front of or before in space.
- Small beads made from polished shells and formerly used as money by native Americans.
- Acid gritty-textured fruit.
- Break the seal of.
- Pale yellow seedless grape used for raisins and wine.
- A highly unstable radioactive element (the heaviest of the halogen series).
- Fabric comprising a fitted part at the top of a garment.
- The month following March and preceding May.
- A daughter of your brother or sister.
- Alternatively, a member of the family Nymphaeaceae.
- In place of, or as an alternative to.
- (statistics) Approximating the statistical norm or average or expected value.
- (informal) Exceptionally good.
- A city in northern India.
- A unit of dry measure used in Egypt.
- Antibacterial drug (trade name Nydrizid) used to treat tuberculosis.
- Women's stockings made from a sheer material (nylon or rayon or silk).
- A Loloish language.
- Not fully developed or mature.
- The 3rd letter of the Greek alphabet.
- American Revolutionary patriot.
- Relating to or resembling an ape.
- A fictitious name used when the person performs a particular social role.
- A state in northwestern North America.
- (Greek mythology) The Titaness who was mother of Helios and Selene and Eos in ancient mythology.
- Relating to human society and its members.
- A gradual decline (in size or strength or power or number).
- An independent group of closely related Chadic languages spoken in the area between the Biu-Mandara and East Chadic languages.
- Agency of the United States government charged with mediating disputes between management and labor.
- A water wheel with buckets attached to the rim.
- English writer of macabre short stories (1863-1943).
- Being nine more than forty.
- A logarithmic unit of sound intensity.
- United States film maker (1897-1991).
- Fruit of the oak tree.
- A coffee cake flavored with orange rind and raisins and almonds.
- An Arabic speaking person who lives in Arabia or North Africa.
- A carriage consisting of two wheels and calash top.
- Rock that form the continuous lower layer of the earth's crust.
- Open-heart surgery in which the rib cage is opened and a section of a blood vessel is grafted from the aorta to the coronary artery to bypass the blocked section of the coronary artery and improve the blood supply to the heart.
- South African term for 'boss'.
- A demon who swallows the sun causing eclipses.
- East Indian tree bearing a profusion of intense vermilion velvet-textured blooms and yielding a yellow dye.
- A syndrome that occurs in many women from 2 to 14 days before the onset of menstruation.
- Injured by bites or stings.
- Before noon.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

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



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You seem to be able to get your point across with ease. You find yourself to not only be understood by others but to be very understanding of them as well. What a great time for communicating with those around you! You feel a strong desire to care for those around you. You want to make sure all is well with the world. You may find your needs are best satisfied by taking care of those around you. You tend to give freely, Virgo. It is nice when you find someone that makes you feel as if your needs are just as important to them. You may find this to be a very magical time in your life as it seems everything is just going your way.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Today spending time really getting to know those around you could be very beneficial to you. You are longing for deep personal relationships and this could be a great way to progress toward the development of just that. You find yourself being very sensitive when it comes to the needs of others. You may find yourself being very understanding today and find it very easy to communicate your ideas and feelings to those around you, Gemini. This is a time of growth for you in many ways. You are well on your way to a new and improved version of you. A sense of pride comes over you today.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You are optimistic and faith that all things good will come your way. The sky is the limit as far as you are concerned today. You may feel as if there is nothing you can not accomplish. Bring it on! In your personal life you may be ready to take a huge risk. Today may find you down on one knee, considering a move, or opening up and expressing your deepest feelings to someone. You are in a sort of daredevil mode and high on life. Your confidence level is at an all-time high and you are just the person who can make your desires become reality. Today, Cancer, there is just no stopping you!



Leo (July 23-August 22)

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



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

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



Libra (September 23-October 22)

You will tell on yourself by the company you keep. If all your friends look, talk, and think like you, you may want to seek out some new relationships. You can learn from children as well as elderly, and everyone in between. Cultivate people of different races and cultures, from different social and economic backgrounds. Don't avoid those whose religion is different from yours. When you feel secure about yourself, you can enjoy diversity, and your life will be enriched by each relationship.



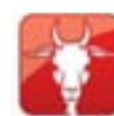
Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

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



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

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



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

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



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

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



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Don't be surprised if you cross paths today with someone who just doesn't sit right with you. You have a feeling that something about them just isn't right. You may feel as if you want to get away from this person as soon as possible. Your virtues are simple. You prefer this way of life. Today may be a day you are having difficulty with focus and performing your daily tasks. You seem in a dreamy mood and unable to snap back. Deep in thought you seem to have too much on your mind.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Fish 1

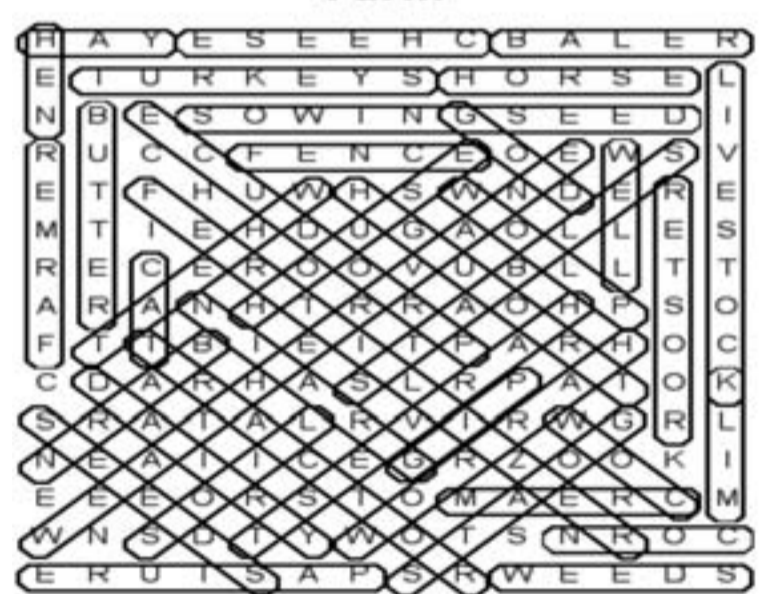
Find and circle all of the fish that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a secret message - a Benjamin Franklin quotation.



- |           |             |             |            |
|-----------|-------------|-------------|------------|
| BARRACUDA | DORADO      | PARROTFISH  | SMELT      |
| BLUEFISH  | DRUM        | PERMIT      | SNOOK      |
| BONEFISH  | GAR         | POMPANO     | STURGEON   |
| CAT       | GRAYLING    | REDFISH     | SUNFISH    |
| CHEESE    | GRUNT       | ROOSTERFISH | SWORDFISH  |
| CORN      | HALIBUT     | SALMON      | TILAPIA    |
| COW       | JEWFISH     | SAND DAB    | TRIPLETAIL |
| CREAM     | MACKEREL    | SAUGER      | TUNA       |
| DAIRY     | MUSKELLUNGE | SHARK       | WAHOO      |
| DOG       | PADDLEFISH  | SHEEPSHEAD  | WARMOUTH   |

Yesterday's Solution

Farm



- |        |            |           |             |
|--------|------------|-----------|-------------|
| BALER  | FARMER     | HOUSE     | SOWING SEED |
| BARN   | FENCE      | LIVESTOCK | STABLES     |
| BUTTER | FERTILIZER | MILK      | TRACTOR     |
| CAT    | GOATS      | PASTURE   | TROUGH      |
| CHEESE | GRAIN      | PIG       | TURKEYS     |
| CORN   | HARROW     | PLOW      | WEATHERVANE |
| COW    | HARVEST    | PRODUCE   | WEEDS       |
| CREAM  | HAY        | ROOSTER   | WELL        |
| DAIRY  | HEN        | SEEDS     | WHEAT       |
| DOG    | HORSE      | SOIL      |             |

The hidden message is: CHICKENS

Daily SuDoku



very hard

Yesterday's Solution



hard

# Lifestyle

MONDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2018



A dancer of the Korea's hip-hop-inspired band "Marionette" performs during the 11th Korea-Arab friendship caravan at the Abdul Hussein Abdul Redha Theater in Kuwait City. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat (See story and pictures page 22)

## Grain pain: Japan's ageing rice farmers face uncertain future



In this photo Japanese farmer Mayumi Oya poses with harvested rice plants on a paddy field in Kazo city, Saitama prefecture. — AFP photos



Japanese farmer Yuichi Ogura harvests the rice with a combine on his paddy in Kazo city, Saitama prefecture.

A crop once deemed so important it served as a form of currency, Japanese rice has fallen out of favor with younger, westernized consumers, in a shift that has left ageing farmers struggling for survival. Rice consumption has nearly halved over the past 50 years, and as the older generation of farmers and consumers dies out, some fear the industry will be unable to hold its own in a competitive global market. Kazuo Ogura, a 66-year-old farmer, is one of the lucky ones. His son Yuichi decided to follow him into the family business.

Ogura senior looks on proudly as his 38-year-old son uses a specially designed machine to plant this year's harvest, splashing through golden paddy fields that stretch as far as the eye can see. Surviving in this tough environment is all about "producing quality food at a reasonable price" and harnessing economies provided by

“

**I was the only one out of 220 students at my local school who went into farming**

”

large-scale production, Ogura told AFP. The future of his establishment in Kazo, some 50 kilometers (30 miles) north of Tokyo, looks assured as Yuichi follows in his muddy footsteps but farms all over Japan are dying as farmers age—the average age of a rice farmer is now 67.



Japanese farmer Toshiko Ogura loads harvested rice by a combine in Kazo city, Saitama prefecture.



Japanese farmer plants rice seedlings on his paddy in Kazo city, Saitama prefecture.

"I was the only one out of 220 students at my local school who went into farming," Yuichi said. "There are not many people in their twenties who go into farming."

Even existing farms have been forced to close when their machinery breaks down because farmers cannot afford to replace the costly equipment. "Machines get more expensive every year. To replace them requires a certain level of profit but that's difficult when you are farming a small plot," Yuichi said. The Oguras have managed to stay competitive so far by joining forces with two other families to farm around 100 hectares of rice fields—nearly 100 times the size of the average plot.

They sell their rice—which belongs to the leading Koshihikari variety—at 300 yen (\$2.66) per kilogram.

### 'At a turning point'

Although rice consumption in Japan has been falling for more than half a century, the crop's exalted status in Japanese culture—where it even serves a religious purpose in Shinto rituals—has ensured its survival until now. Generous subsidies aimed at controlling supplies and prices have made rice farming one of Japan's most protected industries, but Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's government scrapped the policy this year, urging farmers to become more competitive. Japanese agriculture is "at a turning point", Ken Saito, who was farm minister until a reshuffle this month, told reporters. "Farmers have to think about producing food that sells. More than ever, they have to be attuned to the market," he added.

And as Abe prepares for potential trade negotiations with US President Donald Trump, analysts say he may have to concede some ground on agriculture—which could include Japan's customary high tariffs on imported rice—in order to avoid getting whacked with US duties on automobiles and other key exports. — AFP

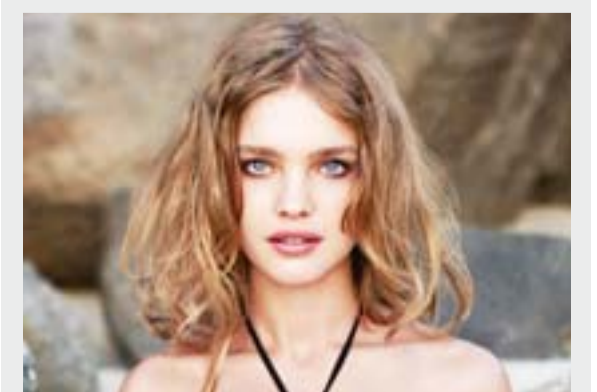
## Vodianova gets personal in bid to save disabled children from orphanages

Russian supermodel Natalia Vodianova is best known for strutting down catwalks but she is most proud of her behind-the-scenes work—such as campaigning to keep disabled children out of orphanages as efforts mount to stop institutionalizing children. Vodianova said she was acutely aware of the issues faced by families with disabled children after growing up with her half-sister Oksana who was born with cerebral palsy and autism in Nizhny Novgorod, 300 miles (500km) east of Moscow.

When Oksana was born, nurses at the hospital suggested her mother put her into an orphanage and have "another healthy child"—while Vodianova said she was bullied by other children at school for having a disabled sister. "The rule has been that for many years children with special needs, with disabilities, are abandoned by their families," Vodianova, 36, once nicknamed Supernova, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation in a telephone interview. "You can't blame the family. The system has not been adapted for a family to raise a child with special needs."

The non-government organization Disability Rights International (DRI) said the institutionalization of children with disabilities is a worldwide problem and it has documented abuses against children in 25 countries. Human Rights Watch has estimated that 30 percent of Russian children with disabilities lived in institutional orphanages of which 95 percent had at least one living parent.

The J.K. Rowling charity Lumos is also part of a growing campaign globally to help an estimated eight million children who live in orphanages and other institutions globally. More than 80 percent of these children are not orphans but have been separated from their families because of shame, poverty or discrimination. Vodianova got involved after she set up the Naked Heart Foundation in 2004 to help victims of an Islamist militant siege of a school in Beslan, southern Russia, which ended in a chaotic gun battle killing more than 300 people, including 186 children. —Reuters



Russian supermodel Natalia Vodianova.

GHETTS CALLS FOR  
GRIME STAR TO HEADLINE  
GLASTONBURY

Ghetts says it's time for a British rapper to headline Glastonbury. The 34-year-old grime star - whose latest album 'Ghetto Gospel: The New Testament' came out in September - accepts it's great that Michael and Emily Eavis have booked Americans like Jay Z and Kanye West to top the bill but now they should look to homegrown rappers like Stormzy and Skepta to close the Pyramid stage. Speaking exclusively to BANG Showbiz, he said: "I feel like we've got a lot of homegrown talent. Not just with rappers - singers across the board, musicians across the board ... I back one of to headline Glastonbury 100 per cent. It would be great if that happened. We've had that at Wireless and we should have that at Glastonbury." Ghetts collaborated with Stormzy in 2017 on 'Bad Boys' and is so pleased that his friend is riding high at the top charts and is always honored when his friend praises him in interviews. He also loves the recognition he's been getting from his fans when he's out in public. He said: "Yeah man, it's a lot of love man. The hard work is paying off, it feels good ... It's kind of surreal. I don't really get to live outside of the moment. But you do get those moments where it's like wow - you never think they know who you are and it's just kind of a reminder. Wow - this person knows who I am and is familiar with my music and loves it!"

Jason Momoa's  
Aquaman 2 plans

Jason Momoa already "has plans" for 'Aquaman 2'. The 39-year-old actor is set to star as the water-based superhero in his first full length movie this December - after previously having a cameo role in 'Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice', and a slightly larger role in last year's 'Justice League' - and although the eponymously titled movie hasn't been released yet, Jason says he's already planning its sequel. Speaking to Total Film, he said: "I definitely have an opinion. Even when we were shooting 'Aquaman', I have the opening of 'Aquaman 2' ready. I went in and pitched it to [producer Peter] Safran, and I pitched it to [Warner Bros. chairman] Toby Enmerich. They loved it. It's awesome...But yeah, I have plans for 'Aquaman 2'." His comments come after he previously claimed being cast as the DC comics character was the "biggest honor". He said: "I mean, that was the biggest honor, like when Zack [Snyder, 'Justice League' director] told me - there's just so many brown-skinned kids that are gonna grow up and go, like, 'Yeah, all of our gods are water gods.' It is an absolute honor. Some people accept that he's not white. I think it's cool. It's an honor for me to be that person standing up. Dream job, you know what I mean?" Meanwhile, Jason previously revealed the ending of 'Aquaman' will see the character "become what he's destined to be". He said: "He was born with the powers but he never really harnessed them, honed them. Obviously this is his whole origin story. We've seen him in Justice League, which is maybe two minutes of his old life, so we get to see where he came from. I think when he was a little boy, he had these powers and he didn't really hone them, so this whole journey of him going to become the king ... the last frame of this movie you're going to see him actually become what he's destined to be."

## Spandau Ballet want to release new music

Spandau Ballet hope to release "new music" in the near future. The 80s pop band recently replaced Tony Hadley, 57, with West-End performer Ross Williams, 30 after the group's original singer announced he would be quitting last year, and have said they're now ready to embark on a new music journey with their new vocalist. The group - also comprised of Gary Kemp, Steve Norman, Martin Kemp and John Keeble - don't have a plan for their new music yet, but songwriter Gary admits it will be "unavoidable" to bring a touch of the 80s into the present day. He said: "The plan is for us to see how things go, one step at a time, but we want to do new music. As a songwriter I'm not trying to reinvent myself. I have a style, so I'm not going to suddenly go in and write a Kraftwerk album or an Adele album." The sound will sound like us, it's unavoidable. We're not locked into the Eighties but it'll be recognizable." And Gary, 59, has no plans to hire anyone to help him write new tracks, as he bemoaned the trend in drafting in the likes of Ryan Tedder or even Sir Paul McCartney to help groups write hits. He added: "You're always influenced by new music that comes along, you can't help it. There's a lot of people running to the likes of Ryan Tedder and other songwriters to write stuff. Even Paul McCartney did that." The 'Gold' hitmakers are heading back out on the road this week, and say they're stronger than ever despite Tony's departure. Gary said: "We've been through so many ups and downs but we're still here somehow - Spandau has become bigger than all of that." Whilst his brother Martin, 57, added to The Sun's Bizarre column: "We are a historic band, a band that meant a lot to a lot of people and played a big part in the history of pop music in this country. So we should be so lucky to play together and have that opportunity. In the end, we're a family. We might be a dysfunctional family, but whose isn't."

Miles Kane: Last Shadow  
Puppets could reform

Miles Kane would "never say never" to another Last Shadow Puppets reunion. The 32-year-old rocker - who recently released his third solo album 'Coup De Grace' - formed the side project with Arctic Monkeys frontman and longtime pal Alex Turner in 2008 before releasing their second album 'Everything You've Come To Expect' in 2016. And although fans had to wait a lengthy eight years between releases, Miles has said there could be another revival of the group in the future. He said: "The Last Shadow Puppets was good, I had great fun with that. Bring them back? Who knows, yeah! Never say never." The 'Don't Forget Who You Are' hitmaker was previously a frontman for The Rascals before embarking on his solo endeavors, and after having been friends with Alex for several years, he's often been compared to the superstar

rocker. Miles admits the comparisons used to upset him when he was younger, but says he now has the confidence to know he's "amazing" on his own. He said: "I think it's inevitable - I used to feel the comparison when I was younger, but I don't really care now, you know, you think what you think. I know I'm amazing and I know I make good music. I used to think of the comparisons like that, and it's fair enough, I get it, I'd probably think the same, but I don't really care now." Despite feeling the scrutiny in his early days, Miles now even sees the comparisons as a good thing. Speaking to the Metro newspaper, he said: "I don't blame people if they want to compare - it's going to happen, so it's cool. And it's not like it's not a bad thing, is it? His new album is great, it's fantastic."

Jamie Lee Curtis: Jake Gyllenhaal  
told me about Halloween reboot

Jamie Lee Curtis heard about the 'Halloween' reboot through Jake Gyllenhaal. The 59-year-old actress reprised her role as Laurie Strode in the latest installment of the horror franchise, and has said she found out about plans for the movie through fellow actor Jake, who had just finished working with director David Gordon Green. When asked how she found out, Jamie said: "That was a call from Jake Gyllenhaal, who had worked with David and said, 'My friend David, who I love and had a really good experience with, wants to talk to you about a thing. You've gotta call David.'" And when she did give David a call and got sent the script, she says her immediate reaction was that it was "beautiful". Asked by Collider.com what her first reaction to the script was, she continued: "So, we spoke, and he sent me the script. I read it, and I

called him that day. The two things that popped in to my mind, right when I read it, and I read it on vacation, was that there was a scene where Allyson went on a run in the neighborhood and then she went into her house to get ready for school, and she opened the closet door. It's not in the movie, but that was on page 2, and I thought, 'Oh, that's beautiful.' Forty years ago, I ended in that closet, and now, here was my granddaughter, opening the closet and getting ready for school, to go on with her day. I thought that was beautiful. I thought the journalists were great, and that they were British was just perfect. Right away I was like, 'Okay, this is fantastic.' I finished it and thought it was great."



## Chris Hemsworth fears boredom

Chris Hemsworth's greatest fear is "boredom". The 'Bad Times at the El Royale' actor - who has daughter India, six, and four-year-old twin sons Sacha and Tristan with wife Elsa Pataky - believes his desire to always look for new things to capture his interest has helped drive him into his career. Asked his biggest fear, he said: "Boredom. I think that's what drove me into this line of work. 'There's so much going on, different settings, different movements, different people. It keeps me interested.'" The 35-year-old actor loves taking on work that scares him a little bit because it pushes him harder and makes his job more challenging. Asked his ambitions for the future, he said: "I want to keep learning and exploring interesting stories and characters. I like being able to go into a project with a little bit of fear because it's that element of fear that pushes you harder." But it isn't just the love of his work that drives Chris on, as the 'Thor' actor is keen to do what he can to have a "great future" with his family. He added: "I also want to be a good husband and father to my children. 'I'm living the life I always dreamed of and I want to do everything I can to enjoy a great future with my family.'" And Chris admitted his professional success has been far greater than he ever expected. He added to Psychology magazine: "In terms of work, a few years ago I would have settled for much less than I've been able to achieve - I never imagined getting to this point in my career. 'But now I see work as something I do for my family, so that they can all enjoy the advantages and benefits of whatever success I have.'"

Mulligan turned  
down Botox at 23

Carey Mulligan turned down Botox at the age of 23. The 33-year-old actress has revealed that when she began her film acting career she sought some professional beauty help for lines underneath her eyes and was immediately offered the wrinkle-smoothing injections. In an interview with the Sunday Times' Style magazine, she said: "Someone tried to give me Botox when I was 23. I was bothered by the lines under my eyes, and went to see someone, hoping for a cream, but they said, 'We can just put a bit of Botox in.' And I replied, 'My whole job is about me moving my face!' " The 'Great Gatsby' actress raises three-year-old Evelyn with her husband, Mumford & Sons frontman Marcus Mumford, and she has revealed that her daughter is very honest with her mother when it comes to her imperfections and often comments on her forehead wrinkles. She said: "At the moment my daughter's favorite thing is to push my forehead together and shout, 'Mummy, lines!' There is nothing like a little bit of toddler truth." The 'Mudbound' star has admitted that having her daughter has changed her outlook on beauty and made her stop fretting about walking the red carpet. She said: "When I was younger I was riddled with insecurities - red carpets made me feel like crying. I was scared of wearing big expensive dresses. It felt like a model's job and I didn't know what role I was meant to play. The first time I did press after I'd had my daughter she was one month old. I literally ran to the red carpet, did it, ran home, pulled off my dress and fed her in my Spanx and six inch heels." — BangShowbiz



## Bollywood star couple announce wedding dates

Bollywood superstars Deepika Padukone and Ranveer Singh announced yesterday that they are tying the knot, ending months of speculation about their relationship. The pair confirmed they will be married next month in a statement posted on their official Twitter accounts in Hindi and English. "With the blessings of our families, gives us immense joy in sharing that our wedding is set to take place on the 14th and 15th of November, 2018," it stated. Padukone, 33, and Singh, 32, reportedly started dating in 2013 but had kept details of their relationship largely out of the public eye.

Padukone is one of Bollywood's highest-paid stars and one to break into Hollywood, starring in "xXx: Return of Xander Cage" opposite Vin Diesel. The soon-to-be-weds have also shared the silver screen together, including a controversial Bollywood epic earlier this year that sparked violent protests in northern India. Padukone played a legendary Hindu queen and Singh a medieval Muslim ruler in the flick, which angered hardliners, some of whom burned down cinemas and made threats towards the two stars. Singh debuted in 2010 and has worked in 14 films. Padukone has acted in about 40 movies since 2006 —AFP



In this file photo Indian Bollywood actor Ranveer Singh (left) and actress Deepika Padukone dance during a promotional event for the forthcoming Hindi film 'Bajirao Mastani' in Amritsar. — AFP

## Duchess Meghan wears chic maxi dress on Bondi Beach



Duchess Meghan wore a striped maxi dress and espadrilles to take a stroll on Bondi Beach in Australia on Friday. The 37-year-old royal - who is expecting her first child in the spring with her husband, Prince Harry - has already showcased some new looks by her go-to designers Martin Grant and Roksanda during her 16-day tour of Australia, New Zealand, Tonga and Fiji. The Duchess opted for a striped Martin Grant maxi dress and Castaner espadrilles during a visit to Bondi Beach in Sydney, where the couple met a local surfing community group, known as OneWave, and helped to raise awareness for mental health and well-being.

The former 'Suits' actress - who was previously known as Meghan Markle before getting married in May - has had websites crashing with fans eager to get their hands on the coveted pieces she's been pictured in. Meghan recently stepped out in a sleeveless shift dress by Karen Gee after announcing her pregnancy, causing the label's website to crash. The Duchess has attracted plenty of for her simple-but-chic looks on the tour and even wore a piece from her pal Serena Williams' fashion line. On the second day of her royal tour of the Commonwealth in Dubbo, Australia, Meghan wore a grey blazer from the tennis legend's collection.

The royal opted to wear a double-button style blazer with patch pockets and a red-and-blue windowpane pattern. Serena, 37, was thrilled that her friend sported her blazer - which has now sold out - and took to Instagram to reveal her joy, sharing a picture of the Duke and Duchess holding hands and smiling. She wrote: "The face you make when you and Duchess of Sussex Meghan have matching @serena blazers. (sic)". — Bang Showbiz

## Cara Delevingne: I used to hate my eyebrows

Cara Delevingne used to hate her eyebrows. The 26-year-old model-turned-actress is known for her signature full eyebrows, but Cara has admitted that when she was younger, she tried to make them smaller as they looked "like giant slugs" on her face. The British beauty told InStyle magazine: "I did [hate my brows], and my mum would always tell me they were my best feature. 'I was like, 'They look like giant slugs on my face and you think they're my best feature?' I wanted small eyebrows, and I'd try to tweeze them down. I was also naturally skinny, but I wanted curves." The 'Suicide Squad' star believes that a lot of women harbour insecurities about their appearance.

However, Cara feels that "real beauty" comes from within and has argued that less importance should be attached to looks. She said: "I don't know why we do that as women. I didn't start appreciating my brows until everyone else did. 'We want to be skinnier, we want to be taller, we want to have a big bxx, those are fads, and real beauty is from within. 'I mean ... we can all be vain at times, but for me, looks are one of the least meaningful things in my life.'" Although Cara considers beauty and fashion to both be an "endless pool of creativity", it still took her a while to begin experimenting with make-up and different styles. She explained: "I wanted to be a kid for as long as I could. I treated make-up like a costume or a disguise, whether it was me being a clown or a superhero. 'When I started working, I delved into make-up and began to discover my femininity in so many ways. Beauty and fashion created an endless pool of creativity and wonder for me.'" — Bang Showbiz



## Klum's Halloween costume will be 'very, very cute'

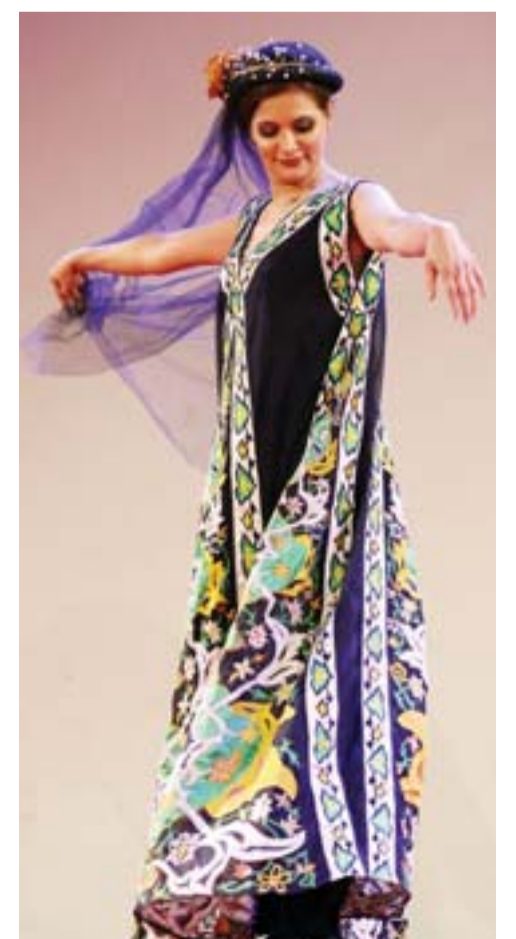


Heidi Klum's Halloween costume will be "very, very cute" this year. The 45-year-old supermodel is famous for her elaborate outfits on the spooky holiday and although she won't spill all the details, she has promised fans that this year she won't be dressing in anything scary. Speaking to People, she said: "This time it's going to be very cute. It's not gonna be scary; it's going to be very, very cute." But among those who get a sneak peek of the former 'Project Runway' host's costume are her four kids - Leni, 14, Henry, 13, Johan, 12, and nine-year-old Lou - because they are often around when her outfit is being created.

She said: "My kids know; they always know, they always wonder how it's done, and I have fittings and people come over when I have to try different pieces on. 'So a lot of the times they are a part of the process and they see it happen.'" This year will mark the 19th anniversary of Heidi's annual Halloween bash and she admitted her costumes have grown more elaborate over the years - which can also be risky. She said: "In the beginning stages, I didn't know about these [prosthetics] professionals yet and I did my own hair and make-up, and I had some people who would help me put the clothes together. 'When you do prosthetics and all of this stuff, I'm always having my fingers and toes crossed that it actually does work out on the day because there was no dress rehearsal."

"Because we can't actually glue all these things down and see if it actually really works. So it's always a bit nerve-wracking for me, too, that it actually does work out in the end. Usually it does, but you just never know until the day comes." The blonde beauty - who has appeared last year as a werewolf from Michael Jackson's 'Thriller' video - previously teased fans on social media by posting a picture last month of a mask being specially made in a workshop. —Bang Showbiz

## 'Iraqi House of Fashion'



Kurdish models display traditional clothing during the 'Iraqi House of Fashion' show in Arbil, the capital of the Kurdish autonomous region in northern Iraq, on October 20, 2018. — AFP

# Korea-Arab Society holds 'Friendship Caravan'



Hong Youngki, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Kuwait delivers his speech.



Korean dancers perform during the 11th Korea-Arab friendship caravan at the Abdulsusein Abduredha Theater in Kuwait City on October 20, 2018. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



By Ben Garcia

Hosted by the Korea-Arab Society, the 11th Korea-Arab Friendship Caravan was held on Saturday at the Abdulsusein Abduredha Theater in Salmiya. Hong Youngki, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Kuwait, welcomed guests at the standing-only venue. "I am very honored to see the crowd today. This is a full house and people are standing at the back. Cultural exchange has been part of Kuwait and Korea relations and we are drawing closer and closer

each year," Hong said.

The Korea-Arab Society is a non-profit organization funded by Korean and Arab governments, business entities and relevant organizations. It aims to enhance cooperation between Korea and Arab countries, especially in the area of cultural, economic, educational and academic exchange.

The audience was treated to a non-stop repertoire of traditional Korean music and dance, such as the ensemble of four percussionists (Sando Seoljanggu), traditional dance (Yeonheungmu) and traditional folk dance

(salpuri and pangut). Gugak was also performed and applauded by attendees, as it represents the generations and traces of history in Korean culture. B-Boy also performed Marrionette, a hip-hop-inspired dance which demonstrated choreography to tell the story.

Dr Bader Al-Duweesh, National Council for Culture, Art and Letters (NCCAL) Assistant Secretary General for Art, said the musical event was co-organized by NCCAL to highlight the importance of cultural exchange of both countries.



## Can a hungry Mali turn rice technology into 'white gold'?

When rice farmers started producing yields nine times larger than normal in the Malian desert near the famed town of Timbuktu a decade ago, a passerby could have mistaken the crop for another desert mirage. Rather, it was the result of an engineering feat that has left experts in this impoverished nation in awe - but one that has yet to spread widely through Mali's farming community. "We must redouble efforts to get political leaders on board," said Djiguiba Kouyate, a coordinator in Mali for German development agency GIZ.

With hunger a constant menace, Malians are cautiously turning to a controversial farming technique, known as rice intensification, to adapt to the effects of climate change. The method, pioneered in Madagascar in 1983, has raised hopes that Mali's small-scale rice farmers might be able to increase their productivity to meet the country's gargantuan appetite for the grain. Consumption of the staple stood at about 72 kg (163 lb) of rice per person in 2014, according to the latest data Mali's National Directorate of Statistics has made public - and demand is continuing to grow.

Dubbed the System of Rice Intensification (SRI), the new rice production method involves planting fewer seeds of traditional rice varieties and taking care of them following a strict regime. Seedlings are transplanted at a very young age and spaced widely. Soil is enriched with organic matter, and must be kept moist, though the system uses less water than traditional rice farming. SRI is used on both irrigated and non-irrigated land, meaning it is possible to cultivate rice even in Mali's desert. pilots conducted by the U.S. Agency for International Development have shown.

Up to 20 million farmers now use rice intensification in 61 countries, including in nearby Sierra Leone, Senegal and Ivory Coast, said Norman Uphoff, a senior advisor at the SRI International Network and Resources Center at Cornell University in the United States. Rice plants grown following the method live longer because, given more space, more oxygen and less water, their roots grow bigger and deeper, so they are more resilient to drought and don't deteriorate under flooding, he said.

But, despite its success, the technique has been embraced with varying degrees of enthusiasm from country to country. That's because it competes with the improved hybrid and inbred rice varieties that agricultural corporations sell, Uphoff said by phone. "Corporate agriculture

has a huge stake in this," he said. The new technique is "not good news for the brand breeders and the seed companies".

### White gold

Interest in SRI has mounted as droughts and erratic rainfall become more common, added urgency to efforts to create a steady stream of food from farmland to cooking pots. Mali is West Africa's second-largest rice producer, but it still imports 18 percent of its rice annually, according to Abdoulaye Koureissi, national coordinator for a rice farmers platform. Imports prevent local production from reaching its full potential, he said. And longer droughts and other forms of unpredictable weather are destroying an ever-larger share of crops across this country, where nearly half the adult population suffered from stunting as children due to malnutrition, according to the United Nations. Malian authorities are looking for ways to reduce imports and become self-sufficient in rice, said Kouyate at GIZ.

For Faliry Boly, who heads a rice-growing association, the prospect of rice becoming a "white gold" for Mali should spur on authorities and farmers to adopt rice intensification. The method could increase yields while also offering a more environmentally-friendly alternative, including by replacing chemical fertilizers with organic ones, he said. What's more, rice intensification naturally lends itself to Mali's largely arid climate, he said. Kouyate said that rice intensification uses up to 40 percent less water than traditional rice growing methods.

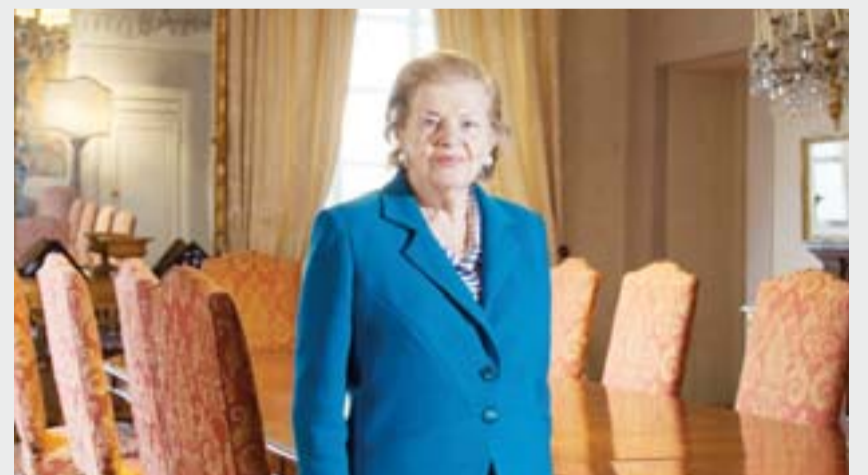
### A new push

The European Union and other international funders have supported aid projects that encourage the practice in six of Mali's administrative regions so far. This year, around 100 small-scale farmers were trained in the method through a GIZ-backed effort, Kouyate said, and hundreds more have been trained in other areas of Mali. Yet, rice intensification has remained largely experimental, with no governmental policy in place to bolster the adoption of the practice, Kouyate said.

Another obstacle, experts say, is that many farmers using techniques hundreds of years old are often reluctant to try new ways of growing rice. And the cost of a rice transplanting machine - a key part of the system - is between \$2,100 and \$2,900, more than many farmers can afford. Koureissi, of the rice farmers' platform, said he has also seen farmers discouraged by the time investment required to learn the new method, teach it to their farmhands and then practice it. ("Rice intensification) asks for a lot of time spent in planting rice, because the seedlings are planted very young, 8 to 15 days old, maximum," he said.

But Sibiri Konate, who has been farming rice for nearly three decades in Baguineda, a small town in the country's south, said the new technique has changed his life. Konate went across the country to get training on rice intensification from another farmer two years ago. On his four-hectare farm - part of a larger communal allocation - Konate said he has seen his harvest jump from seven to 10 tonnes per hectare. Even in bad years "I always manage" to get a harvest, he said. "But it is difficult to get other farmers here to commit." — Reuters

## Wanda Ferragamo, matriarch of famed shoemaker, dies at 96



Wanda Ferragamo, the honorary president of the Florentine shoemaker founded by her husband Salvatore, has died at the age of 96, the family said on Friday. Wanda was left a widow 58 years ago when her husband passed away. She took charge of Salvatore Ferragamo alongside her 16-year-old daughter, quickly learning how to run a business while raising her six children. Wanda turned the shoemaker into an international fashion powerhouse by extending the business to accessories and clothing. The group listed on the Milan bourse in 2011 and last year reported revenue worth nearly 1.4 billion euros (\$1.6 billion). In recent months the family repeatedly dismissed speculation about a possible sale of the fashion group and appointed Micaela Le Divelec Lemmi, a former Gucci executive, as the group's new CEO in July.

Ferragamo, which issued a profit warning in December, has been battling falling sales and profitability, partly due to a clean-up of inventories. It said in July it would continue to invest in relaunching the brand. "With immense pain... we want to tell you about our mother's passing," Giovanni, Ferruccio, Leonardo and Massimo Ferragamo said in a message to staff. "Her precious teachings and her memory will be for all of us an example of righteousness and great passion for life." Wanda kept an active role in the company even when she handed over the chairmanship to her son Ferruccio. Marilyn Monroe was one of Ferragamo's customers, for whom the shoemaker created a high heel pump that became a signature model for the company. — Reuters





Competitors take part in the Victoria Harbour swimming race in Hong Kong yesterday. Swimmers braved the waters to compete in the challenging annual harbor race across one of the world's most famous and busiest waterways. — AFP

# Trump says to exit nuclear arms pact, Russia threatens retaliation

**ELKO, Nevada/MOSCOW:** US President Donald Trump said Washington would withdraw from a landmark Cold War-era treaty that eliminated nuclear missiles from Europe because Russia was violating the pact, triggering a warning of retaliatory measures from Moscow. The Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, negotiated by then-President Ronald Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev in 1987, required elimination of short-range and intermediate-range nuclear and conventional missiles by both countries.

"Russia has not, unfortunately, honored the agreement so we're going to terminate the agreement and we're going to pull out," Trump told reporters on Saturday after a rally in Nevada. Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov said on Sunday that a unilateral withdrawal by the United States would be "very dangerous" and lead to a "military-technical" retaliation. Gorbachev, now a frail 87-year-old, said it would be a mistake for Washington to quit the treaty, and it would undermine work he and US counterparts did to end the Cold War Arms race. "Do they really not understand in Washington what this could lead to?" Interfax news agency quoted Gorbachev as saying.

A Kremlin spokesman said Russian President Vladimir Putin would seek answers about the planned withdrawal when he meets John Bolton, Trump's national security adviser, for scheduled talks in Moscow this week. US authorities believe Moscow is developing and has deployed a ground-launched system in breach of the INF treaty that could allow it to launch a nuclear strike on Europe at short notice. Russia has consistently denied any such violation. Trump said the United States will develop the weapons unless Russia and China agree to a halt on development. China is not a party to the treaty.

## European battleground

The arms control accord, signed by Reagan and Gorbachev in a ceremony at the White House, bans land-based medium-range nuclear missiles capable of hitting Europe or Alaska. It ended a Cold War-era crisis, when the Soviet Union installed nearly 400 nuclear warheads pointed at western Europe. The United States had responded by stationing Pershing and Cruise missiles in Europe. But this provoked a wave of protests

from anti-nuclear campaigners, who felt the deployment turned Europe into a potential nuclear battleground. In the early 1980s, hundreds of thousands of protesters gathered in Bonn, West Germany, and campaigners formed a protest camp at Greenham Common, in Britain, the site of Cruise missiles.

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Ryabkov, in comments reported by state-controlled RIA news agency, said if the United States withdrew, Russia would have no choice but to retaliate, including taking unspecified measures of a "military-technical nature". "But we would rather things did not get that far," RIA quoted him as saying. TASS news agency quoted him as saying withdrawal "would be a very dangerous step", and it was Washington and not Moscow that was failing to comply with the treaty. He said the Trump administration was using the treaty in an attempt to blackmail the Kremlin, putting global security at risk. "... We will, of course, accept no ultimatums or blackmail methods," Interfax quoted him as saying.

British defense minister Gavin Williamson, in comments reported by the Financial Times, said London stood "resolute" behind Washington over the issue, and that the Kremlin was making a mockery of the agreement. However, another NATO member, Germany, voiced misgivings. German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas said that for 30 years the treaty had been a pillar of Europe's security architecture. "We now urge the United States to consider the possible consequences," of quitting the pact, Maas said yesterday.

Trump has in the past threatened to tear up international agreements but in the event has not carried through. Republican Senator Bob Corker, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, drew a parallel with the NAFTA trade pact, which Trump threatened to tear up, before a reworked version of the deal was brokered last month. "This could be somewhat like the fact that they were going to end NAFTA, and then ended up negotiating some small changes," Corker said on CNN's "State of the Union". "So this could be something - just a precursor - to try to get Russia to come into compliance." Corker said quitting the treaty had not come up in a talk with Trump's Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. — Reuters

"naked truth" over the death of Khashoggi. Erdogan, whose ties to Saudi Arabia appear to have further soured over the Khashoggi case, said he would reveal the findings of his country's investigation into the killing in the coming days. "We are looking for justice here and this will be revealed in all its naked truth, not through some ordinary steps but in all its naked truth," Erdogan told a rally in Istanbul. Erdogan is expected to make a full statement to his party's MPs in parliament tomorrow. "Why did the 15 men come here? Why were the 18 people arrested? That should be explained in all its details," said Erdogan.

Erdogan has so far stopped short of making strong statements on the case, often referring to a prosecutor's investigation into the killing. Analysts see this as an attempt to avoid provoking a full rupture of relations with Saudi Arabia. As the Turkish leader is expected to reveal all details into the journalist's killing, Trump stepped back from his stance that Saudi Arabia's latest explanation over the death was credible amid mounting pressure back at home.

"Obviously there's been deception and there's been lies," he said of the accounts of Khashoggi's death offered by Riyadh. "Their stories are all over the place." Trump emphasized as he has before how important the US-Saudi relationship is to Washington's regional strategic goals. He described the 33-year-old prince, widely known as MBS, as a "strong person; he has very good control". "He's seen as a person who can keep things under check," added Trump. "I mean that in a positive way." — Agencies

## Israel freezes demolition of...

Continued from Page 1

Israeli authorities say the small village, located east of Jerusalem along a road leading to the Dead Sea, was built illegally, and they have given residents until the beginning of October to leave and demolish their structures. The decision to evict the villagers followed years of legal battles and after negotiated attempts to agree on an alternative site for relocation failed. The fate of Khan Al-Ahmar has drawn international concern, with European countries calling on Israel not to move ahead with plans to demolish it.

Israel's supreme court on Sept 5 rejected a final appeal against the demolition, but following that ruling, there have been unofficial attempts to reach understandings, a lawyer representing the village's residents told AFP. "Our offers were based on what we told the court, that we're willing to move a few hundred meters to the north," Tawfiq Jabareen said. The government has yet to respond to the proposals, Jabareen said, refusing to divulge the identity of the person attempting to mediate between the sides.

In Khan Al-Ahmar, residents said they would stay put and doubted Netanyahu's sincerity. "Our strategy is to stay in our land, and we will not leave it," Eid Al-Jahalin told AFP. "Yesterday there was a decision to stop the demolition, but this decision can change at any moment." Ibrahim Abu Dahuk said Netanyahu's decision could be "a trick" to prompt activists camping out at the site to leave ahead of a forceful eviction. "We do not trust the Jews," he said.

Netanyahu's move raised the ire of his two major coalition partners, with Defense Minister Avigdor

Lieberman saying he opposed the decision to delay the demolition. Education Minister Naftali Bennett also insisted the law must be upheld, "even if the international community opposes and threatens," pledging his Jewish Home party would "ensure it happens". On Wednesday, the International Criminal Court's chief prosecutor warned that Israel's planned "evacuation by force" of the village could constitute a war crime. The residents have refused to leave on their own, and Israel had been making preparations to expel the residents and demolish the village.

Khan Al-Ahmar, home to approximately 200 people, is situated in a strategic spot near Israeli settlements, the expansion of which could effectively cut the West Bank into two. Last month, Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Sweden, Belgium, Poland and the Netherlands warned that the demolition "would severely threaten the viability of the two-state solution", calling on Israeli authorities to "reconsider their decision to demolish" it.

Separately, Israeli forces arrested the Palestinian governor of Jerusalem for unspecified offences he allegedly committed in the occupied West Bank, the Palestine Liberation Organization said yesterday. Adnan Gheith was arrested on Saturday evening in the east Jerusalem neighborhood Beit Hanina, the PLO said. Yesterday morning, he was taken to the Ofer Israeli military court, where he is being detained ahead of a hearing that will take place within four days, the PLO said in a statement.

PLO secretary general Saeb Erekat said the arrest was "a new step... against the Palestinian presence in Jerusalem," and constitutes a violation of Israel's own terms regarding Palestinian institutions in the city.

"The threats and detentions against Palestinian political and community leaders, including the abduction of Governor Gheith, should only be taken as part of Israel's plan to eliminate any foundations for a political solution based on two-states on the 1967 border," Erekat said in a statement. — Agencies

## Govt moves to employ more...

Continued from Page 1

ministry to provide him with a schedule for replacing expats with citizens. Informed sources added that according to CSC's plans on replacing expats with citizens, the ultimate goal is for citizens to reach 100 percent of the total workforce in administrative, media, PR, IT, development, follow-up and statistics jobs within

## Jordan wants Israel to return

Continued from Page 1

Rabin signed the peace agreement with Jordan and was killed by a rightwing Jewish extremist in 1995. "There is no doubt that from an overall point of view, this agreement constitutes an important and valuable asset for our two countries," Netanyahu said. The agreement on Baqura and Ghumar is automatically renewable unless either side gives a year's notice to terminate the deal, "in which case, at the request of either party, consultations shall be entered into".

On Friday and Saturday hundreds of Jordanians took to the streets in the kingdom's capital Amman calling on authorities to reclaim the two territories. Ghumar, which covers four square kilometers in the southern Aqaba

province, was taken by Israel during the 1967 Six-Day War. Baqura, a border area of six square kilometers in Jordan's northern Irbid province, was taken by Israeli forces in 1950.

During the peace negotiations, Amman allowed Israel to keep temporary control of Ghumar and Baqura - under the pretext that Israel had already built infrastructure and agricultural facilities in the areas - as long as it recognized they were sovereign Jordanian territory. Lawmaker Saleh Al-Armouti told AFP that deputies "had even called for an urgent meeting of parliament to discuss the issue". He welcomed the king's decision, hailing it as "a positive step that restores dignity to the Jordanian citizen and sovereignty over his land."

Director of the Al Quds Center for Political Studies Oraib Rantawi said Jordan's request would be a "test of Israeli intentions". Political analyst Adel Mahmoud said Jordan could face "pressure" from the United States, a key backer of both parties, to push for new negotiations if the Israeli response was negative but that "the king's decision has full popular support". — AFP

## Kuwait praises King Salman's...

Continued from Page 1

Jubeir insisted, however, that the operation was not ordered by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. "This was an operation that was a rogue operation, this was an operation where individuals ended up exceeding their authorities and responsibilities they had; they made a mistake when they killed Jamal Khashoggi in the consulate and they tried to cover up for it," he said.

A growing chorus of US lawmakers including several from President Donald Trump's Republican Party have criticized the Saudi leadership over the affair, but Jubeir was confident the US-Saudi relationship would survive the crisis. "The strategic relationship is important for both countries," he said. "I believe when the investigation is over and the facts are revealed, people know who is responsible and see those individuals punished, that the relationship will weather this." He added that King Salman was "determined to see this investigation through, determined to ascertain the facts, determined to hold those responsible accountable and determined to put in place policies and procedures in the security services to prevent something like this from ever happening again."

Meanwhile, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan yesterday vowed to reveal within days the



## Sports

# Skinner's hat trick leads Buffalo Sabres to 5-1 victory over Los Angeles Kings

## Fleury moves to 10th in wins as Vegas sinks Ducks

**LOS ANGELES:** Jeff Skinner earned a hat trick, and goaltender Linus Ullmark made 19 saves as the visiting Buffalo Sabres cruised to a 5-1 victory over the Los Angeles Kings on Saturday afternoon. Skinner scored his first goal at 3:31 of the second period. He tallied again at 15:52 of the period before his final goal came on an empty net with less than a minute to play in the third. Jason Pominville and Zach Bogosian scored the Sabres' other goals. Jonathan Quick had 21 saves for Los Angeles. Ullmark nearly earned his second shutout in two starts this season, after he paved the way to a 3-0 victory at Arizona on Oct. 13. Drew Doughty scored on the power play for the Kings at 12:16 of the third period.

### GOLDEN KNIGHTS 3, DUCKS 1

Jonathan Marchessault had a goal and an assist, and Marc-Andre Fleury had 17 saves to pick up his 408th career victory and move into 10th place on the NHL's all-time win list as Vegas downed Anaheim at Las Vegas. William Karlsson and Ryan Reaves also scored goals for Vegas, which won its third straight game. Fleury broke a tie with Glenn Hall for 10th place on the all-time career wins list. Ben Street scored the lone goal for Anaheim, which had a two-game winning streak snapped. John Gibson kept the Ducks in the game by making 42 saves.

### FLYERS 5, DEVILS 2

Jakub Voracek scored the tiebreaking goal on a breakaway with 3:10 remaining and added two assists, lifting Philadelphia to victory over visiting New Jersey. Voracek's goal gave the Flyers the win after the Devils' Brian Boyle scored the tying goal early in the third on a New Jersey power play. Boyle forged a 2-2 deadlock with a wrist shot over Brian Elliott's right shoulder while Kyle Palmieri set a screen. Elliott made 19 saves for the Flyers, who also received goals from Travis Konecny, Nolan Patrick, Wayne Simmonds and Scott Laughton. Keith Kinkaid had 16 saves for the Devils.

### AVALANCHE 3, HURRICANES 1

Gabriel Landeskog continued his scoring spree with two goals, and goalie Philipp Grubauer made 42 saves as Colorado defeated Carolina at Raleigh, N.C. Landeskog, who was coming off a hat trick Thursday night at New Jersey, scored in each of the first two periods. Nathan MacKinnon, who assisted on the first two goals, added a third-period goal with 3:09 to play. Micheal Ferland scored for the Hurricanes with 2:33 left. Sebastian Aho assisted on the play, giving him at least one point in all eight games this season. Carolina goalie Curtis McElhinney made 19 saves.

## World champion Chen wins Skate America men's title

**LOS ANGELES:** Nathan Chen's "watered down" free skate was more than enough to give the reigning world champion an emphatic victory Saturday at Skate America, first event of the 2018-19 Figure Skating Grand Prix.

Chen, learning to juggle training with classes in his freshman year at Yale University, went easy on the quadruple jumps at the Grand Prix event in Everett, Washington. But the American executed the scaled back program beautifully to score 189.99 points.

That gave the 19-year-old a total of 280.57 and a victory over Czech veteran Michal Brezina (239.51) by

### JETS 5, COYOTES 3

Adam Lowry scored his fourth goal of the season, Josh Morrissey and Tyler Myers each had a goal and an assist and Winnipeg continued its home dominance of Arizona with a win. Mathieu Perreault and Blake Wheeler added goals, and Jacob Trouba had three assists for the Jets, who have won all 10 home games against Phoenix since relocating from Atlanta in 2011. The Coyotes left Winnipeg for Arizona in 1996. Clayton Keller scored two third-period goals, Christian Fischer scored his first goal of the season and Oliver Ekman-Larsson had three assists for the Coyotes. Winnipeg goalie Laurent Brossoit made 42 saves, and Phoenix's Antti Raanta stopped 27 shots.

### BLUES 4, MAPLE LEAFS 1

Robert Bortuzzo scored first in a three-goal second period, and David Perron added two assists as visiting St. Louis defeated Toronto. Zach Sanford, Ryan O'Reilly and Ivan Barbashev also scored goals for the Blues, who won for the second time in seven games this season. Goaltender Jake Allen made 22 saves. Morgan Rielly scored for the Maple Leafs, who have lost two in a row. Toronto goaltender Frederik Andersen stopped 21 shots.

### SENATORS 4, CANADIENS 3 (OT)

Mark Stone scored 2:30 into overtime to lift host Ottawa past Montreal. Stone, who also scored Ottawa's first goal, took a pass from Matt Duchene and rang the game-winner from the left circle off the post behind Montreal goalie Carey Price. Mikkel Boedker and Duchene also scored for the Senators, who won their third straight. Goalie Craig Anderson made 24 saves. Max Domi, Phillip Danault and Paul Byron scored goals for the Canadiens, who had their three-game winning streak snapped. Price stopped 30 shots.

### RED WINGS 4, PANTHERS 3 (OT)

Gustav Nyquist scored 3:44 into overtime as Detroit got its first win of the season, defeating Florida at Sunrise, Fla. The Wings, who had started the season 0-5-2, also got goals from Dennis Cholowski, Dylan Larkin and former Panthers winger Thomas Vanek. Goalie Jimmy Howard earned the win, making 34 saves. Florida got goals from Keith Yandle, Nick Bjugstad and Mike Hoffman, whose score with 1:16 left in the third sent the game to overtime. Panthers goalie Michael Hutchinson could not hold a 2-0 lead. He stopped 27 shots.

### BLACKHAWKS 4, BLUE JACKETS 1

Corey Crawford made 37 saves for his first victory in more than 10 months, and visiting Chicago pulled away

a whopping 41.06 points. "It's a great start for me," said Chen, who bounced back from a disappointing fifth place at the Pyeongchang Olympics last year with a blockbuster win at the World Championships in Milan—where he completed six quadruple jumps.

"I definitely had sort of lower expectations coming into this event because I'm in a totally new situation in life," said Chen, who had three quadruple jumps in his free skate. "I'm really happy with what I did. I definitely, as I stated before, watered down my programs a lot, but I think it was definitely appropriate."

Chen will now return to Yale in New Haven, Connecticut, taking another break during the US Thanksgiving holiday week to compete at Internationaux de France. The earliest this season that he could face his biggest rivals—Japan's Olympic gold and silver medalists Yuzuru Hanyu and Shoma Uno—would be the Grand Prix Final in December.

Russia's Sergei Voronov, fourth after the short program, was fourth in the free skate also but that was good enough to put him on the podium in third place



**OTTAWA:** Matt Duchene #95 of the Ottawa Senators scores a power play goal against Carey Price #31 of the Montreal Canadiens as Mike Reilly #28 and Noah Juulsen #58 of the Montreal Canadiens look on in the second period at Canadian Tire Centre on Saturday. —AFP

to beat Columbus. Crawford made 12 saves in the first period, 16 in the second period and nine in the third period to notch his first victory since Dec. 17, 2017. He missed most of last season and the beginning of this season because of concussion-like symptoms. Patrick Kane scored two goals for the Blackhawks, while Alex DeBrincat and Marcus Kruger tallied one goal apiece. Zach Werenski scored Columbus' lone goal. Blue Jackets goaltender Sergei Bobrovsky turned aside 22 shots.

### WILD 5, LIGHTNING 4 (OT)

Mikael Granlund's overtime goal gave Minnesota the win over Tampa Bay at Saint Paul, Minn. Charlie Coyle dropped a pass to Granlund on the right side, and Granlund squeaked the puck past Lightning goalie Andrei Vasilevskiy (29 saves) for the game-winner at 3:43. Coyle, Marcus Foligno, Zach Parise and Jason Zucker also scored for the Wild, and Alex Stalock made

27 saves to earn his first victory of the season. The Lightning got goals from Ryan Callahan, Yanni Gourde, J.T. Miller and Anton Stralman, whose goal at 15:02 of the third period tied the score and forced overtime.

### PREDATORS 3, OILERS 0

Juuse Saros stopped 31 shots — 18 in the third period—to record his second shutout in as many outings against Edmonton as visiting Nashville won its fifth straight game. P.K. Subban and Viktor Arvidsson netted second-period goals 88 seconds apart, and Roman Josi added an empty-netter with 53 seconds remaining in the game for the Predators, who have now won 13 consecutive games against the Oilers. Cam Talbot made 25 saves for Edmonton, which saw a three-game winning streak snapped. Oilers star center Connor McDavid was held without a point for the first game this season. — Reuters

## Marquez clinches fifth MotoGP title with victory in Japan

**TOKYO:** Spain's Marc Marquez wrapped up his third straight MotoGP championship with victory at the Japanese Grand Prix yesterday after title rival Andrea Dovizioso fell on the penultimate lap while trying to find a way past the Honda rider.

The 25-year-old is now tied with Australian Mick Doohan on five premier class world titles, with only Italian's Valentino Rossi (seven) and Giacomo Agostini (eight) having won more.

Marquez, who had sealed two of his previous titles at Motegi, moved 102 points clear of Ducati's Dovizioso with three races remaining. Dovizioso started on pole and led for most of the race before Marquez, who had started sixth on the grid, made his move with four laps left.

Marquez had been on the Italian's tail for much of the race and the pressure eventually told on the Ducati rider as he relinquished the lead. Dovizioso attempted to move back past Marquez on the penultimate lap but pushed it too far and came off his bike. He recovered but eventually finished 18th.

That left Marquez knowing he was going to secure his fifth title as he completed his final lap, shaking his head in disbelief at the achievement. "I feel really, really good," said Marquez after celebrating with the Honda team, who were joined by the company's CEO Takahiro Hachigo at the manufacturer's home race.

"After Aragon I already felt, I already imagined that it will be here, but the good thing is when you have the first chance (to win the title), then you do it." In a bizarre turn of events, Marquez dislocated his shoulder while celebrating on the track with British rider Scott Redding.

"I just lay there on the asphalt and my brother and Jose put it in again," motorsports website Crash reported the champion as saying. "It was not the first time; maybe it was my weak point of the season because I dislocated it many times during training at home. "In December I need to make a stop with the doctor and for next year it will be perfect." Redding apologised for his role in the incident, adding: "Congratulations to @marcmarquez93 with 7 titles on there my babbie. Once we were rivals "big rivals" now we have nothing but respect and fun!! Sorry for the dislocated shoulder...." Marquez pipped Dovizioso on the final lap of the Thailand Grand Prix last time out and while he did leave it quite late at Motegi the result was the same. "I was able to follow Andrea, then I say okay, I will try to use the same strategy as Thailand, attack before the last lap because I felt like they had something," he said. "I was pushing really hard and he did a mistake." "I dislocated because he deserves to be here on the podium with us, but okay, the big boss will enjoy it." Dovizioso, who was the championship runner-up to Marquez in 2017, will have to wait another year for a shot at his first MotoGP premier class title. — Reuters

## Ooredoo renews partnership with Flying Start Triathlon

**KUWAIT:** Ooredoo Kuwait announced its strategic partnership for the second consecutive year with the Flying Start Triathlon at a press conference, further solidifying its position as a supporter of Kuwaiti youth and athletes. The triathlon will take place during the weekend on October 26 and 27 at Green Island. The triathlon will include exciting activities such as swimming, running, and biking. The event will also include different solo sports activities, and will be held in a friendly atmosphere for families to enjoy, with different coffee shops and snack vendors serving light meals and refreshments to athletes and audiences.

Commenting on this, Corporate Communications Senior Director at Ooredoo Kuwait Mijbil Alayoub noted that Ooredoo and the Flying Start Triathlon both believe in enabling youth and supporting them in reaching their potential, which is one of the biggest pillars of the company's CSR strategy. He added: "This strategic partnership goes in tandem with our belief in supporting youth initiatives and athletes in Kuwait. We are proud to be sponsors of the Flying Start Triathlon, and we wish all the participating athletes the best. We are especially proud of our young athletes that we sponsor, such as Kuwaiti champion Abdulaziz Al-Rashed, and Kuwaiti athlete Najlaa Al-Jeraiwi who represented Kuwait in the Asian Games this year."

Ooredoo works extensively around the year according to its CSR strategy to collaborate with different entities to support youth, such as the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs and the Public Youth Authority. This stems from the company's deep belief in the big role that youth play in building the future of the country.



Mijbil Alayoub

## Marathon runner returns to reformed Ethiopia after exile

**ADDIS ABABA:** After two years of political exile that began at the Rio Olympic Games marathon finish line the athlete Feyisa Lilesa returned home to Ethiopia yesterday saying the African nation was now a freer place.

Lilesa, now 28, won the silver medal at Rio but his anti-government protest-holding his wrists together in imaginary handcuffs in front of television cameras—against the former hard-line regime led him to remain in exile, choosing Flagstaff, Arizona, as his temporary haven. But on Sunday he was met at the airport by the country's Foreign Minister Workneh Gebeyehu and other dignitaries in the government of reformist Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed who came to power in April.

"There is quite a change in the country, now people can freely express their opinions and condemn the government freely," Lilesa told reporters in the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa. "My sympathy goes out to martyrs that sacrificed lives and gave the freedom to come to my country and join my family. They faced the dark and became a light for us," said a visibly emotional Lilesa.

"I want to come back to my previous performance. I have a big hope to score a good result for my country and myself," Lilesa said. Ethiopia this week unveiled a new 20-member cabinet featuring 10 women, becoming one of only a handful of nations to achieve gender parity in government. Since coming to power Abiy's measures



Feyisa Lilesa

have included ending two decades of conflict with neighbouring Eritrea, releasing jailed dissidents, welcoming formerly banned groups back into the country and announcing plans to privatise major state-owned industries. — AFP

## Sports

# Captain Kohli and Sharma star in India's big ODI win

## Bangladesh beat Zimbabwe by 28 runs in first ODI

### SCOREBOARD

Final scoreboard of the first one-day international between India and West Indies in Guwahati yesterday:

West Indies	
K. Powell c Dhawan b Ahmed	51
C. Hemraj b Shami	9
S. Hope c Dhoni b Shami	32
M. Samuels lbw b Chahal	0
S. Hetmyer c Pant b Jadeja	106
R. Powell b Jadeja	22
J. Holder b Chahal	38
A. Nurse lbw b Chahal	2
D. Bishoo not out	22
K. Roach not out	26
Extras (lb6, w8)	14
Total (8 wickets, 50 overs)	322
Did not bat: O. Thomas	
Fall of wickets: 1-19 (Hemraj), 2-84 (K. Powell), 3-86 (Samuels), 4-114 (S. Hope), 5-188 (R. Powell), 6-248 (Hetmyer), 7-252 (Nurse), 8-278 (Holder)	
Bowling: Shami 10-0-81-2 (w2), Yadav 10-0-64-0 (w3), Ahmed 10-0-64-1 (w3), Chahal 10-0-41-3, Jadeja 10-0-66-2.	
India (target 323)	
R. Sharma not out	152
S. Dhawan b Thomas	4
V. Kohli st Hope b Bishoo	140
A. Rayudu not out	22
Extras (lb2, nb3, w3)	8
Total (2 wickets, 42.1 overs)	326
Did not bat: R. Pant, MS Dhoni, R. Jadeja, Y. Chahal, U. Yadav, M. Shami, K. Ahmed	
Fall of wickets: 1-10 (Dhawan), 2-256 (Kohli)	
Bowling: Roach 7-0-52-0, Thomas 9-0-83-1 (w2, nb1), Holder 8-0-45-0 (w1), Nurse 7-0-63-0, Bishoo 10-0-72-1 (nb2), Hemraj 11-0-9-0.	
Result: India won by 8 wickets	
Series: India lead the five-match series 1-0	
India: V. Kohli, R. Sharma, S. Dhawan, A. Rayudu, MS Dhoni, R. Pant, R. Jadeja, U. Yadav, M. Shami, K. Ahmed, Y. Chahal	

**GUWAHATI:** Skipper Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma hit sparkling centuries yesterday to lead India's eight-wicket demolition of West Indies in the first one-day international in Guwahati. Kohli made 140 and Sharma took an unbeaten 152 for a record 246 runs to flay the West Indies bowling attack during their team's 323-run chase. The hosts, who swept the two-Test series against the visiting Caribbean side, romped home with 47 balls to spare. The effort from Kohli and Sharma easily overshadowed a dominant 106 by West Indies batsman Shermion Hetmyer in his team's 322-8 after being put into bat first.

In reply, India lost opener Shikhar Dhawan in just the second over of the innings after he was bowled by debutant fast bowler Oshane Thomas.

Kohli then took charge with Sharma, who was happy playing second fiddle to his in-form captain, as the duo put on India's biggest-ever ODI stand against West Indies for any wicket. The skipper built on his quickfire fifty to get his 36th ODI ton in just 88 deliveries, hitting Roach for a boundary to make the three-figure mark amid loud cheers from a packed home crowd.

Sharma, who was relatively quiet till his captain's 100, soon got cracking and reached his century with a boundary off spinner Ashley Nurse. The two marauding batsmen started to toy with the opposition bowlers before Devendra Bishoo got Kohli stumped against the run of play. Kohli smashed 21 fours and 2 sixes.

Sharma went on to hit the winning six with Ambati Rayudu, who remained unbeaten on 22, at the other end. West Indies had their moments in the game when Hetmyer smashed six fours and six sixes during his 78-ball knock to give his side what looked like a competitive total.

Leg spinner Yuzvendra Chahal claimed three wickets, returning impressive figures of 3-41 from his 10 overs, to check West Indies' surge. Hetmyer, who registered his third ODI century in just his 13th game, built crucial partnerships including a 60-run sixth wicket stand with skipper Jason Holder, who made 38.



**GUWAHATI:** West Indies bowler Oshane Thomas (C) gestures during the first one-day international (ODI) cricket match between India and West Indies at Barsapara Cricket Stadium in Guwahati yesterday. — AFP

Bishoo, on 22, and Kemar Roach, on 26, put on 44 runs for their ninth wicket unbeaten stand to take West Indies well past the 300-run mark, which in the end proved insufficient to test the Indian batting.

The second ODI in the five-game series is scheduled for Wednesday in Visakhapatnam.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh beat Zimbabwe by 28 runs in the first one-day international to take a 1-0 lead in

the three-match series at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Dhaka yesterday.

Opener Imrul Kayes struck a career best 144 off 140 balls to guide Bangladesh to 271-8 before the hosts restricted Zimbabwe to 243-9 in 50 overs. Sean Williams made the highest score for Zimbabwe with 50 not out off 58 balls. Off-spinner Mehidy Hasan claimed a career best 3-46 for Bangladesh. — AFP

## Messi injury blow as Barca go top with win over Sevilla

**BARCELONA:** Barcelona snapped a four-match winless run in La Liga with a 4-2 home victory over title rivals Sevilla on Saturday to reclaim top spot but the triumph was marred by talisman Lionel Messi fracturing his arm and being ruled out for three weeks.

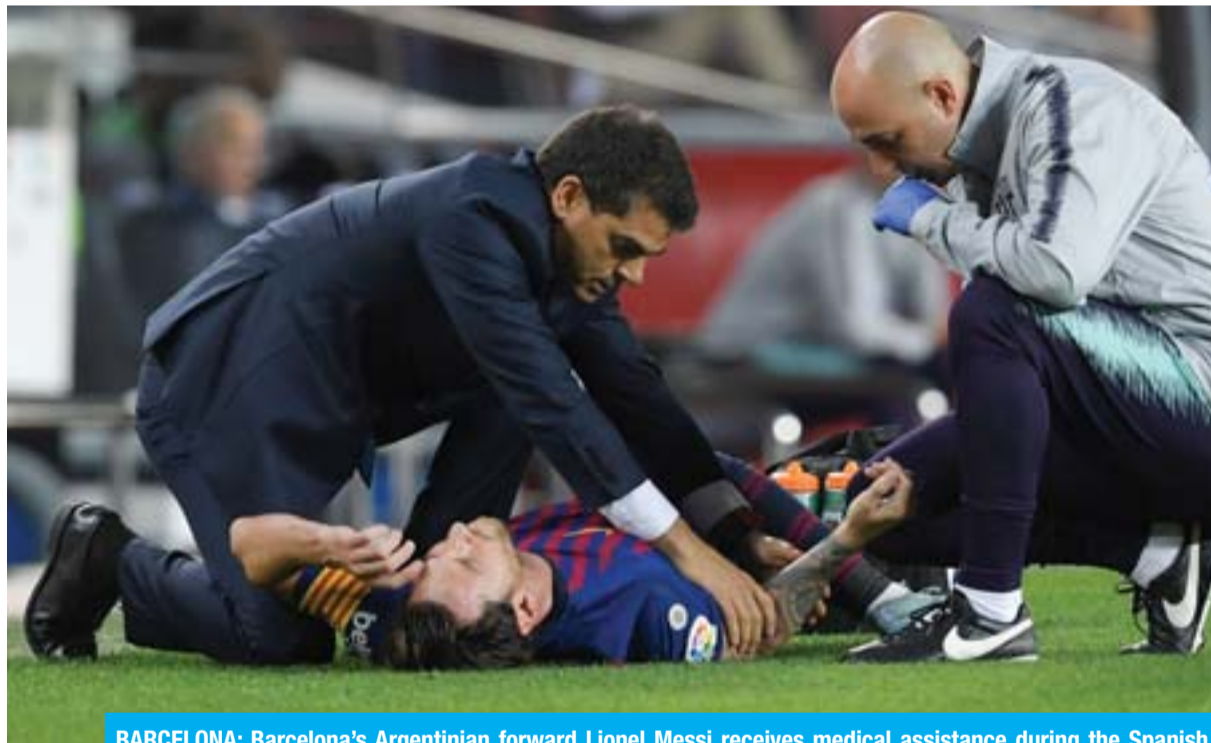
Record signing Philippe Coutinho gave Barca the ideal start by curling a first-time shot into the top corner in the second minute, helped by a clever through ball from Messi.

Sevilla almost struck back instantly when Guilherme Arana hit the post but Messi doubled the lead in the 12th minute with a trademark solo run from deep and a left-footed strike into the far corner as he entered the area. The Argentine was left badly hurt moments later following a challenge from Franco Vazquez and left the pitch with a bandaged right arm.

A club statement revealed the forward had suffered a fracture, ruling him out of five games in La Liga and the Champions League, most crucially next Sunday's 'Clasico' at home to arch rivals Real Madrid as well as both games against Inter Milan. "It's a considerable loss," said Barca coach Ernesto Valverde of the injury to his club's all-time top scorer and captain.

"We know what he gives us and what we miss when he is not around. We have to deal with it and we will be prepared. It's clear that we will notice his absence, but we will cope and we have resources, even though we will be facing some very difficult teams."

The Catalans, now on 18 points from nine games and one point clear of Alaves and two of Sevilla, lacked



**BARCELONA:** Barcelona's Argentinian forward Lionel Messi receives medical assistance during the Spanish league football match FC Barcelona against Sevilla FC at the Camp Nou stadium in Barcelona on Saturday. — AFP

momentum without Messi in the second half and it took a jaw-dropping double save from Marc-Andre ter Stegen to prevent Sevilla from pulling a goal back.

Moments after the German's heroics, Barca practically killed off the game when Luis Suarez converted from the penalty spot after being tripped by Sevilla's goalkeeper Tomas Vaclik.

Sevilla midfielder Pablo Sarabia pulled a goal back for the visitors soon after, helped by a heavy deflection from Barca defender Clement Lenglet, only for former

Vincent-St. Mary High School, LeBron James!"

The Rockets scored the first seven points before James scored on his first shot attempt, cutting Houston's lead to five two minutes into the game. James introduced himself to the Laker fanatics with an 18-foot pull up jumper.

A minute later he tried his first three pointer from 26 feet but it bounced away. It was a more reserved start than the one he had on Thursday when he delivered back-to-back, rim-rattling dunks for his first two baskets to open his Lakers' era.

On Saturday, he electrified the Staples Center crowd for the first time with a monster two-handed slam to tie the contest 14-14 halfway through the first quarter. Paul was ejected along with Lakers Rajon Rondo and Brandon Ingram after they were involved in a wild melee that saw punches thrown on both sides.

"I saw it from a distance. It was very heated stuff," said Rockets coach Mike D'Antoni. Paul and Rondo were the main combatants trading blows after Paul stuck his finger in Rondo's face and pushed him hard.

Rondo answered with a roundhouse left that would have made boxing champion Floyd Mayweather proud—the fighter was sitting courtside obviously enjoying the fireworks. Paul then missed with a right but connected with a hard left of his own.

Ingram was given two technicals, one for starting the fiasco by pushing Harden in the back and the other for a sucker punch from behind on an unsuspecting Rockets player as he charged back into the kerfuffle for round two.

"It escalated pretty quickly but besides that I am happy we got our first win," said Harden, adding that Paul said Rondo spit on him. "As a man the only thing you can do is stand up for yourself."

James played the role of the peacemaker, grabbing



**LOS ANGELES:** Eric Gordon #10 of the Houston Rockets and Lonzo Ball #2 of the Los Angeles Lakers reach for a rebound during a 124-115 Rockets win at Staples Center on Saturday in Los Angeles, California. — AFP

Paul from behind and dragging him away from the melee. He declined to comment on the fight after the game. "I figured it had broken up. I looked down at my clipboard to figure out what play to run next and I looked back up and there was mayhem going on," said Lakers coach Luke Walton. — AFP



### Matches on TV

(Local Timings)

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE	
Arsenal v Leicester City	22:00
beIN SPORTS HD 2	
SPANISH LEAGUE PRIMERA	
Real Sociedad v Girona	22:00
beIN SPORTS HD 3	
ITALIAN CALCIO LEAGUE	
Sampdoria v Sassuolo Calcio	21:30
beIN SPORTS HD 4	

## Unai Emery's Arsenal face gruelling week

**LONDON:** Unai Emery admits Arsenal will struggle to cope with a draining schedule that sees them host Leicester at the start of three games in seven days. Emery's side will be pushed to the limit by the television schedulers, who moved their Premier League clash with the Foxes to Monday evening at the Emirates Stadium.

The Gunners then travel to Portugal for a Europa League tie against Sporting Lisbon on Thursday before returning to domestic action at Crystal Palace. In contrast, Sporting were due to face Loures on Saturday night, giving them more time to recover before hosting Arsenal.

Emery has fielded a strong side in Arsenal's previous Europa League matches, but he will be forced to rotate more heavily this time. "We are one team with a very high level and very high demand for us," he said.

"Every player, they need to feel they can play every match. With only three days difference between one match and another, you can't do that. "You can't do that with play and rest, play and we can't do that without changing players. But if I decide to play with the same players Monday, Thursday, Sunday, the players can't do that."

"We want to play a lot of matches. We want to continue doing our way with different possibilities tactically and with the players - but with a lot of matches, we can't do that." Arsenal are on a nine-match winning streak in all competitions, but their chances of extending that run past the coming week will be severely tested. Emery acknowledges the television rights holders can determine when his team play, but he wishes they showed more common sense. "We are first in one competition (the Premier League) and the TV is very important," he said.

"The TV has the target to choose the matches Friday, Sunday, Monday. If they decided we are going to play Monday we don't stop to think if it is better to play Monday or not. "I prefer to play Saturday or Sunday. It (playing on Monday) has the advantage for more time to prepare the match - that's one positive. "After, we are going to play Thursday, we are going to play Sunday also, two matches very quickly after Leicester. For me it's not an excuse because we are preparing for Monday."

Meanwhile, Leicester manager Claude Puel insists he always knew Arsenal striker Alexandre Lacazette would come good. Lacazette endured a difficult first season with Arsenal, but has five goals in 10 games this term.

Puel, who gave Lacazette his senior debut in 2010 when they were together at Lyon, said: "He is a complete player with good transition with the ball and without the ball. He is always available for the team."

"He works all the time and he has kept his clinical edge and I am not surprised about his quality and his good work with Arsenal. "He started with me. His first game at the beginning he was always a striker but to find a place and get game time in the team he started as a winger. "He had always the same quality and was clinical in the box." — AFP

## Rockets spoil James' home debut in fight-marred game

**LOS ANGELES:** LeBron James' home debut with the Los Angeles Lakers ended on a sour note Saturday as the Houston Rockets seized control late for a 124-115 win in a physical contest at Staples Center.

James finished with 24 points and five assists but the Lakers couldn't stop the Rockets' dynamic duo of James Harden and Chris Paul, who combined for 64 points. Harden finished with 36 points and Paul delivered 28 and 10 assists before he was ejected in the fourth quarter for fighting.

"We were right there. It was a one point game and we had an opportunity to win the game," said James. "I am not disappointed at all. We are going to have some early troubles. Nobody said it was going to be easy."

The four-time NBA most valuable player James signed with the Lakers three months ago after leading the Cleveland Cavaliers to four straight NBA final appearances, including their first championship in 2016.

Saturday's loss left James still searching for his first win as a Laker. In his season-opening game on Thursday in Portland, James scored 26 points in a 128-119 loss to the Trail Blazers. "We had some miscues, we had some missed shots, that's the way the cookie crumbles," James said.

James was introduced to the sold out crowd of 19,000 by Lakers announcer Lawrence Tanter: "The other forward is number 23, his 16th campaign, St.

# Houssam Meraachli Crowned Champion of Red Bull Player One



**H**oussam Meraachli has managed to clinch the title of champion at the Red Bull Player One Kuwait Final, beating out 127 other participants.

Red Bull Player One, an international League of Legends tournament, has come to Kuwait for the first time ever! Hundreds of gaming enthusiasts competed for the national championship title with the aim of heading to the World Final of Red Bull Player One in Brazil.

In a unique championship, that challenges

in-game heroes across a variety of battlefields and game modes, the 1V1 format served as a platform for amateur gaming enthusiasts whose dream is to become a League of Legends star. Red Bull Kuwait was, no doubt, in the position to impress hundreds of gaming enthusiasts.

128 participants battled it out in the online qualifiers from October 14 to 17 and only the top eight thrown – thirsty gamers made it to the on-ground National Final, held at Grand Cinemas Al Hamra on October 19. The winner

of the coveted title will head to the World Final in Brazil in November to compete against finalists from 15 other countries that have participated in the series.

The series kicked off in Greece in March and the competition has continued since then in Ireland, Slovenia, Kosovo, Portugal, Peru, Chile, and Mexico. Qualifiers will continue in United Arab Emirates, Colombia, and Jordan.

Red Bull Player One in Kuwait is sponsored by Grand Cinemas, X-cite by Alghanim

Electronics, Quality Net, PLG, Legion, Talabat and Acqua Eva. Media partner, Kuwait Times covered this popular event.

Brazil hosted the first ever Red Bull Player One final in 2014 making it possible for all League of Legends gaming enthusiasts to put their skills to the test.

To find out more about Red Bull Player One follow @RedBullKuwait on Instagram & Twitter, and @RedBull on Facebook.



**25** Skinner's hat trick leads Buffalo Sabres to 5-1 victory over Los Angeles Kings



**26** Captain Kohli and Sharma star in India's big ODI win



**26** Rockets spoil Jamesí home debut in fight-marred game



## Substitutes set up Everton win

Everton moved up three places to eighth



LIVERPOOL: Everton's English defender Michael Keane (L) vies with Crystal Palace's German midfielder Jeffrey Schlupp during the English Premier League football match between Everton and Crystal Palace at Goodison Park in Liverpool, north west England yesterday. — AFP

**LONDON:** Two late goals by Everton substitutes brought the Merseysiders a third successive win when they beat Crystal Palace 2-0 at Goodison Park in yesterday's only Premier League game.

Ademola Lookman set up the first in the 87th minute for another substitute, Dominic Calvert-Lewin to head in and the third replacement, Cenk Tosun, scored two minutes later.

Palace had missed a chance to take the lead when Serbian international Luka Milivojevic's penalty was

saved by Everton and England goalkeeper Jordan Pickford. Wilfried Zaha, passed fit after missing an Ivory Coast international in midweek, had won the penalty when he was clipped by Seamus Coleman on the hour. The miss meant Crystal Palace have scored only five goals in nine games, the second worst record in the Premier League.

Everton moved up three places to eighth in the table, Palace dropping to 15th. The London side, only two points above the relegation places, were bitterly disap-

pointed after having a fair share of the game until the dramatic finale.

Their goalkeeper Wayne Hennessey saved well from Gylfi Sigurdsson and Theo Walcott on either side of halftime as the game warmed up.

Palace defender James Tomkins headed carelessly wide from a chip by Andros Townsend and when Tomkins did better to head across goal, Cheikh Kouyate's header came back off the underside of the bar. As Pickford said later, the penalty was the turning

point. "I thought he (Milivojevic) was going to go to my left so I left a leg dangling and managed to get a foot on it," the goalkeeper told Sky Sports. "It was the game-changer. The crowd got going and we brought the lads on for two great finishes." Turkish international Tosun, with a second goal in three games, said that an Everton squad approaching full fitness are now full of confidence after the three successive wins. "We played a really good second half and will go to Old Trafford next week with confidence," he said. —Reuters

## Pliskova stuns Wozniacki, Svitolina downs Kvitova

**SINGAPORE:** Big-serving Karolina Pliskova used her most potent weapon to damaging effect as she overwhelmed defending champion Caroline Wozniacki 6-2 6-4 in their opening round robin match of the WTA Finals at the Singapore Indoor Stadium yesterday.

In the earlier White Group encounter at the eight-woman event, Elina Svitolina tore up the form book with a brilliant display of serving and retrieving to register a 6-3 6-3 victory over Petra Kvitova.

Wozniacki had beaten Pliskova in the semi-finals a year ago and held a 6-3 lead in head-to-head encounters between the pair but the former world number one refused to let her Danish opponent settle in a ruthless display of big hitting.

"I felt pretty good from the baseline today, so it wasn't only down to my serve," Pliskova said in a post-match interview. "The game was solid from my side and

she looked nervous at the start... it's always tough to defend the title for everybody, so I am happy with my performance today."

Pliskova's power proved too much for Wozniacki for most of the match as the Czech, who also moved well, secured two breaks in a row to stake an early lead and kept the tenacious Dane at arm's length to claim the opener in 36 minutes.

The Czech continued her onslaught to break immediately at the start of the second set, staving off three break points against her to consolidate the advantage as Wozniacki tried desperately to get back on level terms. The Dane used her brilliant backhand to create further openings on the Pliskova serve but a combination of tightness on key points from Wozniacki and solid groundstrokes from the Czech prevented the champion from gaining a foothold.

Pliskova earned two match points in the ninth game but Wozniacki survived them both to ensure the Czech would have to serve for the match, which she managed after saving two break points by sealing victory with a clubbing ace.

"Matches against Caroline are always tough and the last time we played here, I had a lot of chances but did not convert them," added Pliskova, who saved all 10 break points the Dane forged against her.

In the early match, 24-year-old Ukrainian Svitolina came into the White Group opener on the back of seven straight defeats by left-handed Kvitova, but she

capitalised on her opponent's erratic play to record a stunning triumph.

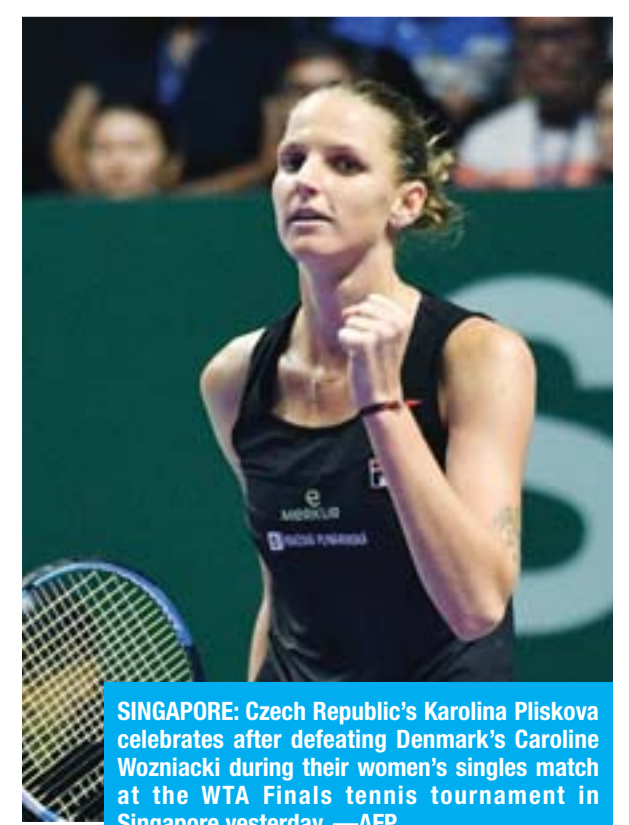
Svitolina, making her second appearance at the season-ender, appeared focused and determined to make amends for a lacklustre display a year ago when she exited in the round robin phase. Both players appeared nervous at the start of the match as they struggled to find their timing on a court playing faster than ever, but Svitolina settled after dropping her opening service game and never looked back once she took the opener.

The Ukrainian continued to play an error-free brand of no-risk tennis to claim her fifth game in a row to open the second set and once she forged her fourth break of the match in the sixth game, the writing was on the wall for her opponent.

"You need to play at the best level you can imagine because everyone is very strong. From the beginning you have tough matches and even if you don't start well, you are still alive and fighting for a semi-final spot," Svitolina added.

Svitolina, who suffered a minor health scare when she felt dizzy during her post-match news conference, will take on Pliskova on Tuesday, while Wozniacki will hope to get her title defence back on track against Kvitova on the same day.

Action in the Red Group starts today with Naomi Osaka taking on Sloane Stephens in a battle between the last two US Open winners. Top seed Angelique Kerber faces Kiki Bertens. — Reuters



SINGAPORE: Czech Republic's Karolina Pliskova celebrates after defeating Denmark's Caroline Wozniacki during their women's singles match at the WTA Finals tennis tournament in Singapore yesterday. —AFP