



**5** Kuwaiti designer Ajeel takes part in Paris fashion show



**28** Manchester Utd thrashed by Everton; Liverpool back on top



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## Sri Lanka on edge as blasts at churches, hotels kill 207

Dozens of foreigners among dead • Eight suspects arrested • Amir sends condolences

**COLOMBO:** A series of eight devastating bomb blasts ripped through high-end hotels and churches holding Easter services in Sri Lanka yesterday, killing at least 207 people, including dozens of foreigners. The attacks were the worst act of violence to hit the country in the decade since the end of a bloody civil war that killed up to 100,000 people. For many in Sri Lanka, the apparently coordinated attacks brought back painful memories of life during the long-running conflict, when bomb blasts were a frequent occurrence.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility but the government said eight people had been arrested and investigators would look into whether the attackers had "overseas links". The government also imposed a nationwide curfew and curbed social media access to restrict "wrong information" spreading in the country of 21 million people. The powerful blasts - six in quick succession and then two more hours later - injured hundreds. At least two of them involved suicide bombers, including one who lined up at a hotel breakfast buffet before unleashing carnage.

HH the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable yesterday to Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena, expressing deepest condolences over the attacks. The Amir affirmed Kuwait's strong condemnation of such heinous terror attacks, indicating that Kuwait is standing in solidarity with Sri Lanka and its people in this regard. HH the Amir conveyed sentiments of sympathy towards the families of the victims, as well as praying for the swift recovery of those injured. HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent similar cables.

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(Left) Sri Lankan security personnel walk through debris following an explosion in St Sebastian's Church in Negombo yesterday. (Center) Security personnel walk past dead bodies covered with blankets amid blast debris at St Anthony's Shrine following an explosion in the church in Kochchikade in Colombo yesterday. (Right) Security personnel and police investigators look through debris outside Zion Church following an explosion in Batticaloa in eastern Sri Lanka yesterday. — AFP

### News in brief

#### Amir congratulates Kuwaiti surgeon

**KUWAIT:** HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah yesterday sent a letter to Kuwaiti surgeon Dr Waddah Al-Rafaie, who was inducted into the American Surgical Association (ASA), making him the first Kuwaiti to receive such an honor. The Amir expressed most profound pride in Refaie's academic and medical accomplishments, wishing him a continuously successful career. HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah and National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem sent similar letters to Refaie. — KUNA

#### Case filed against fee hike

**KUWAIT:** Lawyer Abdellatif Fahd Al-Ameer presented a petition against ministerial decision 127/2019 to increase fees for expats who visit hospital emergency departments, and demanded its cancellation because it clashes with the law and sharia. He said the decision is unjust and malicious, an abuse of authority by the health minister and contradicts the constitution and Islamic sharia. — A Saleh

#### Four killed in failed Saudi attack

**RIYADH:** Four assailants were killed yesterday when authorities thwarted an attack on a state security building in Saudi Arabia's central Riyadh province. The four had helped carry out the attack at the Mabatheth (domestic intelligence) station in Zulfi, a small city about 250 km northwest of the capital Riyadh, a spokesman for Saudi state security said. Three security force members were injured in the attack, the spokesman said, adding that security services were dealing with "explosive materials" and other items left behind during the incident. — Reuters

#### Saudi, UAE pledge \$3bn Sudan aid

**RIYADH:** Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates yesterday announced three billion dollars in financial support for Sudan following the overthrow of longtime leader Omar Al-Bashir. The oil-rich Gulf states pledged to inject \$500 million into the Sudanese central bank and \$2.5 billion to help provide food, medicine and petroleum products, the official Saudi Press Agency (SPA) said. It did not specify if the money is a gift or a loan. — AFP

### Kuwait Stock Exchange (Boursa Kuwait) elects first board after privatization

**KUWAIT:** The General Assembly of Boursa Kuwait elected yesterday its new board of directors for a period of three years, headed by Hamad Al-Humaidhi, with Ahmad Al-Thunayan as Vice President. The board of directors includes member Bader Al-Kharafi, Talal Al-Bahar, Khaled Al-Falah, Raed Boukhamseen, Faleh Al-Ruqba and Bader Al-Jeyaan. The general assembly also approved the distribution of free bonus shares to shareholders at a rate of 5 percent from its capital, and paid up capital of 5 fils per 100 shares for the fiscal year 2018.

Humaidhi told KUNA on the sidelines of the general assembly meeting that the new board members will meet next week to tackle the most important features that

will be taken to strengthen the market. Board member Kharafi told reporters that the new strategy will be based on several clear and specific fronts, most notably encouraging foreign companies to list as well as searching for all ways to enhance liquidity levels.

Kharafi added that the strategy also includes the introduction of new products and services, as well as continued attempts to persuade government companies in the interest of enhancing liquidity. Kharafi noted that there is a tendency to reconsider the possibility of finding solutions in terms of fees imposed on listed companies, pointing out the need to develop a specific mechanism to encourage family companies to list. — KUNA



KUWAIT: The newly-selected board of directors of Boursa Kuwait. — KUNA

### King restores citizenship of 551 Bahrainis

**DUBAI:** Bahrain's king yesterday ordered the citizenship of 551 Bahrainis to be restored. "His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa has issued an order, reinstating the citizenship of 551 convicts whose nationality had been revoked as per court rulings," state-run Bahrain News Agency reported. US ally Bahrain has been gripped by bouts of unrest since 2011, when authorities cracked down on protests

demanding political reform. Since then, hundreds of protesters have been jailed and those convicted of terrorism offences have been stripped of their nationality. Bahrain has accused Iran of training and backing demonstrators in order to topple the government, charges Tehran denies.

BNA news agency said King Hamad, who can reverse court decisions, requested that the competent authorities take into account "the nature of crimes committed". He has instructed the interior ministry to examine each case and prepare a list of those whose nationalities can be reinstated. Human rights groups estimate that 990 people have had their citizenship revoked since the start of judicial proceedings in 2012 against those who took part in the protests.

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### Sudan leader vows to hand power to people

**KHARTOUM:** Sudan's military leader vowed yesterday he was committed to handing power to the people, as a sea of protesters outside army headquarters awaited the unveiling of a rival civilian council. New army ruler General Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan also pledged to respond to demonstrators' demands within a week and confirmed that cash worth over \$113 million had been seized from deposed president Omar Al-Bashir's residence.

Protesters yesterday waved national flags and held their mobile phones aloft as night fell, the torches on

Continued on Page 24



KHARTOUM: A Sudanese protester waves the national flag as he flashes the V for victory sign on a bridge during a protest near the army headquarters yesterday. — AFP



### Kuwait Airways plane lands safely after hitting snow

**KUWAIT:** A Kuwait Airways plane landed safely in Beirut after it was hit by a mass of snow, the national carrier confirmed yesterday. The Kuwait Airways Airbus A320 plane operated for Flight KU501 departing to Beirut yesterday morning was hit by a sudden impact of a mass of passing snow, the airline said in a statement, noting that the plane landed safely at Rafiq Hariri International Airport in Beirut. The plane, which had its nose damaged due to the impact, underwent repairs by technical teams belonging to Kuwait Airways. The flight was expected to return from Beirut to Kuwait at 7:00 pm, the statement said, adding all passengers were taken to hotels for rest.



## Local

# Amir receives visiting info ministers participating in Arab Media Forum

## Palestinian minister praises Amir's role on Palestinian affairs



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Minister of Information Mohammad Nasser Al-Jabri, as well as Arab ministers participating in the 16th Arab Media Forum. — Amiri Diwan photos



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Acting National Assembly Speaker Essa Al-Kandari.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace yesterday Minister of Information and State for Youth Affairs Mohammad Nasser Al-Jabri, Palestinian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Information Nabil Abu Rudaineh, Omani Minister of Information Dr Abdul Monem bin Mansour Al-Hasni, Bahraini Minister of Information Ali Al-Rumaihi, and the Arab League Assistant Secretary for Social Affairs Ambassador Baderaddin Alali on the occasion of the 16th Arab Media Forum's session, held in Kuwait. The meeting was attended by Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah. Earlier yesterday, His Highness the Amir received Acting National Assembly Speaker Essa Al-Kandari, as well as Acting Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

### Amir's role

Meanwhile, Palestinian Information Minister Abu Rudaina hailed His Highness the Amir's role on the Palestinian issue. Speaking to reporters, after meeting His Highness the Amir, he said Palestinians

"appreciate Kuwait's national and regional role" on the matter. "We will never forget that (Palestinian political party) Fatah had great beginnings in this hospitable country, and this historic relationship, between Palestinians and Kuwaitis, has continued through the ages. We have all the faith and appreciation in the Kuwaiti role, particularly amid its Security Council membership," said Abu Rudaina.

The Arab region is facing a "huge conspiracy" aimed at weakening it, and forcing it to abandon its holy sites, he warned. "We will move across all fronts to defend our rights and we will not allow the 'Deal of the Century' conspiracy to go through," he said. Commenting on the rumored deal, the minister said it leaves Jerusalem out of the equation, underlining that "without Jerusalem, there would be no Palestinian state, no peace, no stability, and no security. We will never accept settlement or the annexation of Arab land." He went on to urge Arab nations to stand together in the face of suggested proposal. Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas is currently meeting Arab League counterparts in Cairo, and will then travel to Europe in a mission

aimed at rallying support for his cause as Palestinian delegations prepare to meet officials in China, Japan and Russia on the matter, the minister said.

### Congratulation letter

In other news, His Highness the Amir received yesterday a congratulation letter from the Under Secretary General and Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) Dr Rola Dashti. In the letter, Dr Dashti conveyed her congratulations on honoring His Highness the Amir by the World Bank in recognition of his role in supporting economic and social development on both Arab and international levels. She appreciated the gratitude of the international community for humanitarian initiatives of His Highness that aims to support and develop different countries regionally and internationally. Dr Dashti praised His Highness's efforts to enhance peace and security, praying Allah Almighty to bless His Highness the Amir with perpetual well-being, and to achieve the aspired progress and prosperity for Kuwait under his wise leadership. In return, His Highness the Amir



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Acting Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

sent a cable to Dr Dashti, thanking her for her warm sentiments. In the cable, His Highness the Amir confirmed that this honor is a tribute to the State of Kuwait and its people, and to proof the prestigious status of Kuwait among other countries of the world because of the adopted initiatives.

Kuwait initiatives aims for achieving the requirements of sustainable development

in various countries of the world and supporting humanitarian efforts to alleviate the suffering of those affected by Wars, conflicts and natural disasters. His Highness the Amir expressed his sincere wishes to bestow everyone in the service of the dear homeland and raise Kuwait's flag in various regional and international forums. — KUNA

### News in brief

#### Mauritania's president to visit Kuwait

KUWAIT: President of Mauritania Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz and his accompanying delegation is set to arrive to Kuwait today on an official visit, during which he will hold talks with His Highness Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. — KUNA

#### Ministry takes over POWs' affairs

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Foreign Ministry said it would assume the role formerly associated with the National Committee for the Missing and POWs after it was disbanded yesterday. The Foreign Ministry will manage the matter instead, it said in a statement, expressing commitment to maintaining services offered to the families of Kuwaitis who went missing after Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait. The committee was formed in 1992, a year after the liberation of Kuwait by joint military Kuwaiti and allied forces. The families were urged to renew their information at the following address, between 9:00am and 1:00pm: Foreign Ministry - Consulate Affairs, Shuwaikh, Jahra Road, near Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), Tel: (+965) 2222-5726(+965) 2222-5736. — KUNA

#### Municipal Council conference

KUWAIT: The Municipal Council conference will be held at the end of the month under the patronage and presence of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah and participation of State Minister for Economic Affairs Mariam Al-Aqeel, State Minister for Municipal Affairs Fahd Al-Shula, State Minister for Housing Affairs Jenan Bushehri and other officials. The conference will be held at the Four Seasons Hotel over two days, Kuwait Municipality said in a press release.

#### MoI mourns policeman

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Interior (MoI) expressed grief over the death of policeman Mohammad Abdullah Al-Enezi in a painful accident on Saturday. Enezi, member of the general department of the special forces, was fatally injured while on duty. He was rushed to Farwaniya hospital but died upon arrival, the ministry's General Department of Public Relations and Security Media said in a statement on its Twitter account. The ministry offered condolences to the deceased's family, praying to Allah Almighty to bless his soul with mercy in Heaven and bring solace to his relatives, it noted. — KUNA

## Kuwait's FM heads delegation at Arab League Mideast talks

CAIRO: Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah headed Kuwait's delegation yesterday at the Extraordinary Session of the Council of the League of Arab States at Ministerial Level, at invitation from Palestinian state to discuss the latest developments of the Palestinian cause. In his speech, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled renewed Kuwait's firm stand and position toward brotherly Palestinian people and supporting their cause as main Arab issue. He also reviewed Kuwait's role in the Security Council to support the Palestinian cause during its non-permanent membership from 2018-2019, in accordance with the international standards. The Kuwaiti delegation also included Assistant Foreign Minister for the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Sheikh Dr Ahmed Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah, Assistant Foreign Minister for Arab Affairs Ambassador Fahad Al-Awadhi, Kuwait Permanent Representative to Arab League Ambassador Ahmad Al-Baker and a number of Foreign Ministry senior officials.

The Arab League members urged joint action during a "delicate stage" to face "unprecedented" US-supported efforts by Israel aimed at "legitimizing unlawful conditions



CAIRO: Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah attends the Extraordinary Session of the Council of the League of Arab States at Ministerial Level. — KUNA

and an illegal reality." During the session, the ministers expressed "sorrow" that several nations have chosen to "ride this wave," opening diplomatic missions in occupied Jerusalem, committing a clear breach of international law and relevant Security Council resolutions. These countries should be made aware that Arab nations are monitoring their every stance and that these moves are condemned and rejected and affect their relationship with all Arab nations, Arab League chief Ahmed Abulgehit told the meeting. He urged the need for Arab countries to work closely on their "priority and main issue." — KUNA

## 1.5 million job seekers contacted on Bayt.com last year

KUWAIT: Bayt.com, the MENA region's leading job site, reported that the number of CV searches undertaken by employers approached the three-million mark in 2018 alone. This high job talent hunting activity goes hand-in-hand with the number of CVs that were contacted: Bayt.com closed the year with more than 1.5 million job seeker contacts revealed through its CV search technology. The following were among the most searched for job areas on Bayt.com last year: sales, accounting, HR, Secretary, Marketing, Engineering, Project Management, Customer service, Finance, Graphic design, Nursing, Procurement, Information Technology, Legal, Business Development, and many more.

"At Bayt.com, we are determined to support the MENAs job market by strengthening connections between job seekers and employers, and 2018's numbers are a testament to that," says Omar Tahboub, General Manager of Bayt.com. After reaching a database of 35+ million CVs, Bayt.com also developed several more AI-powered technologies to further enhance the process of connecting employers with top talent through its flagship CV Search tool. Notably, meaning ontology was created, where employers are given meaning-based suggestions based (as opposed to text-based suggestions) on their searches making the queries far more accurate. For example, if an employer is looking to hire an "account manager," the CV Search bot will suggest titles of similar meanings like "Sales manager" or "business rela-

tionship manager." This can also aid employers when trying to fill a vacancy with a broad job description, or even fill multiple vacancies within the same team.

Another recent addition to the Bayt.com CV Search tool is the auto-stamped feature. This mechanism automatically gathers all CVs that are related to the employer's search query, including all the variations that should fall under that name being searched for. For example, if an employer is searching for a new employee using a university name, company name, job title, or such, the results will be delivered regardless of name variations such as different spellings, typos, and acronyms.

Employers can also utilize various filters and query-specific suggestions that can either expand or narrow down their search and ultimately aid them in hiring their ideal candidate. One more impressive feature is the ability to reverse search. Employers who already have a CV of their ideal hire can upload the document and allow the CV Search technology to find exact matches to their sought after employee.

Tahboub adds: "With a database as large as Bayt.com's, employers are not only increasing their usage of the jobsite; they are also finding easier and more efficient ways to acquire top talent. Bayt.com has a history of heavily investing in innovation and technology that is disruptive to the industry and so we've realized that AI and cutting edge technologies are here to answer the latest needs in the market. With the robust features we've developed, Bayt.com's CV search gives employers new horizons of talent search, matching, and recruitment."



Omar Tahboub

## Kuwaiti minister calls on patients at Mayo Clinic



ROCHESTER, Minnesota: Kuwait's Minister of Health Sheikh Dr Bassel Al-Sabah visits a Kuwaiti patient at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota. — KUNA

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Minister of Health Sheikh Dr Bassel Al-Sabah visited Kuwaiti patients being treated at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, the United States of America on Saturday. The minister aimed to get reassured on health conditions of the Kuwaiti patients and make sure of the care provided to them, according to a statement by the Ministry of Health. During his visit, Sheikh Dr Bassel met the director general and executives of the nonprofit academic medical center to explore prospects of health cooperation and experience sharing as well as the possibility of training Kuwaiti physicians at US specialized centers. The minister, leading a delegation from his ministry, is on a visit to US hospitals, accommodating Kuwaiti patients, to be acquainted with the problems they might face. The minister also met officials of Kuwait Health Office in Washington and instructed them to facilitate the treatment and stay of patients and their companions, according to the statement. — KUNA



# Dozens of Kuwaiti women subjected to domestic violence, study shows

## Women 'dominate' jobs at Kuwait University; expats 34% of staff

By Meshaal Al-Enezi and A Saleh

**KUWAIT:** A recent study on domestic violence which involved between 150 and 200 Kuwaiti women revealed that 45 of them were subjected to abuse. The number may increase after the study is complete, said Ibtisam Al-Quoud, the Vice President of the International Organization for Child Protection (IOCP). She made her comments during a press conference yesterday to announce the start of the first forum in cooperation with the Arab Planning Institute, which will be held on April 29-30 under the patronage of State Minister for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh, entitled 'Crime and Sustainable Development...Obstacles and Solutions.'

Four discussion sessions will be held on family upbringing, education, school, women's skills and the information dimension in protecting the family, in addition to empowering women and children, said Quoud, who is also the forum's coordinator.

Meanwhile, IOCP President Abdelaziz Al-Subaei said the forum aims at strengthening the role of the family in social upbringing and concepts, besides studying, understanding and analyzing the phenomenon of crime, and determining the future directions of the society and contributions of information and civil society organizations.



### Juvenile home resident hurt in botched escape

#### Kuwait University jobs

Recent statistics showed women's dominance of jobs at Kuwait University, forming 62.3 percent of the total of 5,239 employees (3,268 female employees and 1,971 males). The statistics issued by the planning sector at Kuwait University revealed that expat employees make up 34 percent of the workforce with 1,797 employees (1,161 male and 636 female). Sources said this percentage includes administrators, technicians and allied academic faculty, while it does not include expat professors at various university colleges. It said 3,058 employees out of the total number work at the colleges. It said most expat employees of KU are in its colleges with 1,021 employees (581 male and 440 female), then the secretariat general with 364 employees (318 male and 46 female).

The statistics indicated that the university rector's deputies are second to the secretariat general in the number of expat employees with 307 employees (193 male and 114 female), then the university rector's sector with 105 expat employees (69 male and 36 female). The statistics revealed that the number of Kuwaitis employed in all university colleges and sectors is 3,442 (66 percent), and that female Kuwaitis are double of males (2,632, while Kuwaiti males number 810).

It also showed the few number of Kuwaiti males in some sectors, such as the rector's sector, as their

number is 59 Kuwaitis, while most of them are employed at colleges and their number is 500. The number of Kuwaiti females in the rector's office is 256, followed by the secretariat general with 369 Kuwaiti female employees. It revealed that most Kuwaiti employees of both genders work at colleges and their number is 2,037 employees, then in the rector's deputies sector with 556 Kuwaitis, then the secretariat general with 534, then the university rector's sector with 315 Kuwaitis.

#### License suspensions

Even as the traffic department suspended more than 1,000 driving licenses of expats in all governorates for various reasons, the department established a special department called the "security supervision department" and appointed several officers to follow up the license suspensions. The license can be cancelled on losing one of the conditions of getting a driving license, most importantly a change of profession, departing the country for good and continued violations. Security sources said among the department's specialties is reviewing expat driving licenses and making sure about their legality. Sources said license inspections continue and will not cease.

#### 422 violations

The Public Authority for Manpower sent 422 violations to the investigations department during the period of Jan 1, 2019 till April 17, 2019. Deputy Director General for Manpower Protection Abdullah Al-Motoutah said the violations were as follows: 29 labor inspection; 178 work safety; 72 permanent suspensions involving 502 workers; and 143 violation of article 10 involving 4,635 workers. Motoutah said the authority works on applying articles of law no. 61/2010.

#### Botched escape

The social affairs ministry said a resident at the juvenile home broke her foot while attempting to escape, and was sent to hospital for treatment. The ministry's official spokesman Abdelaziz Shuaib said the inmate was admitted in the care home in January last year over a family breakup. He said she attempted to escape in February and attempted to injure her hand so she could be taken to hospital and try to escape from there. The case is under investigation.

#### Import ban

Commerce and Industry Ministry issued eight administrative decisions in which it banned the import of eight brands of food items that are in use in some co-ops to safeguard consumers' health for several reasons, including contamination with bacteria and higher percentage of pesticides. The products include rice, ground red chili seeds, black tea, coriander, grape leaves, buffalo meat and dark chocolate.

#### Natural causes

An Indian man died of natural causes at Kuwait International Airport upon arrival from Sharjah. The deceased was born in 1960 and has a valid residency visa in Kuwait. Forensics and the coroner were informed to take the necessary actions.



## Three MPs say to grill info minister

By B Izzak

**KUWAIT:** MPs Riyadh Al-Adasani, Mohammad Al-Dallal and Adel Al-Damkhi said yesterday they will file to grill Information Minister Mohammad Al-Jabri over allegations of misusing government offices and financial and administrative violations.

Adasani said the grilling will be submitted during the current week and will focus around violations in four major fields; information ministry, the agricultural authority, the sports authority and failure to answer parliamentary questions.

The lawmaker said that a majority of MPs who supported the no-confidence motions against the two previous information ministers - Sheikh Salman Al-Humoud and Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah - are expected to back a planned no-confidence motion against Jabri.

Adasani charged that the minister has turned the information ministry into an election department for his personal benefit and that full-time sport appointments have been politicized. The lawmaker said the grilling contains massive violations in the distribution of state land for agricultural purposes.

MP Damkhi described the agricultural parcels as a "black box" adding that he and the other MPs

became more certain for the need to grill the minister after the meeting of the budgets committee with the agricultural authority which the minister attended yesterday.

MP Dallal said that they decided to file the grilling after reaching a deadlock by using other means with the minister to stop the violations, adding that the agricultural authority made no attempt to curb the violations which will be highlighted in the grilling debate. Jabri however said that grilling is a constitutional tool for lawmakers and that he is prepared to face the grilling.

MP Al-Humaidi Al-Subaie, who last month grilled Commerce and Industry Minister Khaled Al-Roudhan over alleged violations, said yesterday he will file a second grilling against the minister for providing false information during the debate of the grilling.

Roudhan had denied the allegations that he committed financial and administrative violations and he swiftly survived a no-confidence vote. But Subaie charged yesterday that the minister had provided false and wrong information during the grilling, bluntly accusing him of lying. He did not provide a specific date for the new grilling but added that he has started preparing it.

MPs Mohammad Hayef and Mohammad Al-Mutair last week filed to grill Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh over alleged violations and MP Abdulkarim Al-Kundari had said he will file to grill Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah. Newcomer MP Bader Al-Mulla said he will grill the finance minister in early June.



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**KUWAIT:** Firemen put out a blaze in a laborers' residence in Sulaibiya yesterday. The fire started in two rooms and spread to nearby trees. Sulaibkhat, Jeeb and backup fire stations responded. No injuries were reported. — By Hanan Al-Saadoun



## Local

## Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: Fishermen out in the sea during the early morning hours. — Photo by Jassem Al-Motar (KUNA)

## Winter sports becoming very popular in Kuwait

**KUWAIT:** Winter sports are very popular and attract many fans from around the world. The International Olympic Committee (IOC) is organizing the Winter Olympic Games every four years. In Kuwait, winter sports are attracting a growing number of boys and girls who play ice hockey, figure skating, speed skating and curling ice, under supervision of Kuwait Winter Games Club.

Kuwaitis began practicing ice hockey and have formed an amateur team in 1980s. But, the challenge was lack of an separate ice rink for players to exercise and play games, but the Club and the Public Authority for Sport joined hands to build an rink with IOC standards in Bayan Area. Feheid Al-Ajmi, Club chairman, said the new rink would contribute to development of winter games in Kuwait. Ajmi said the first three stages of the construction of the rink were supervised by a team from Finland, while the fourth phase, which would be supervised by a German team, would include installing ice machines.

Vice-Chairman Khaled Al-Mutairi said the new facility would organize the training timings for the teams, who would play in a safe environment. Jassem Al-Awadhi, Kuwait National Ice Hockey men team player, said they were eager to see completion of the rink because it would contribute to improvement of their game and endurance. Yara Al-Kharji, Kuwait Figure Skating women team player, said the new facility would ensure sustainability of practices. — KUNA



Feheid Al-Ajmi



Khaled Al-Mutairi



Jassem Al-Awadhi



Yara Al-Kharji



KUWAIT: The ice rink built by the Public Authority for Sport and Kuwait Winter Games Club.— KUNA

## Gulf Bank organizes beach clean-up for Earth Day

**KUWAIT:** Gulf Bank organized a beach clean-up event in honor of Earth Day on Saturday, April 20, 2019, at Kuwait Towers' Beach. A drive towards preserving the environment, the beach clean-up comes as part of Gulf Bank's corporate social responsibility. Bringing together employees from across the Gulf Bank family, the event promotes an attitude of voluntary responsibility among employees.

In collaboration with the Kuwait Dive Team, who provided their services and commitment to clean the beach front at Kuwait Towers, the initiative stressed on the significance of clean beaches and giving back to the environment. Through a lecture hosted on site by the Kuwait Dive Team, employees learnt about

the long-term effects of plastic pollution on marine habitats and reefs.

The clean-up initiative follows the Bank's participation in the global Earth Hour movement. The international initiative led by the World Wildlife Fund, saw Gulf Bank, turning off all unnecessary lighting at its Head Office, Crystal Tower, and across a number of its branches across Kuwait.

Ahmad Al-Amir, Assistant General Manager for External Communication, Gulf Bank, said: "Gulf Bank is committed to raising awareness towards the environment. Both Earth Hour and Earth Day place spotlights on the modern issues facing our planet, inspiring the world to be sustainable. Through Gulf Bank's participation, as part of the Bank's corporate social responsibility, we are working to unite Kuwait with the global community to protect our planet." The world's largest environmental movement, Earth Day lifts environmental issues onto the world stage, mobilizing citizens across over 190 countries.



Ahmad Al-Amir





Local

# Kuwaiti women leadership yet to be reflected in their empowerment in business: Shaikha Al-Bahar

## NBK Deputy Group CEO participates in 'Women's Empowerment Principles Conference'

KUWAIT: Shaikha Al-Bahar, Deputy Group Chief Executive Officer at the National Bank of Kuwait, participated as a keynote speaker at the 'Women's Empowerment Principles Conference - Kuwait' held yesterday by the General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development (GSSCPD), Kuwait University Women's Studies and Research Center (WSRC), and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP).

Al-Bahar participated alongside an affluent group of leaders and decision makers including: Mariam Al-Aqeel Minister of State for Economic Affairs, Lubna Al-Kazi Head of WSRC Kuwait University, and Khaled Mahdi Secretary-General of the General Secretariat of the Supreme Council.

In her speech at the conference held this year under the theme 'Translating Principles into Practices,' Bahar talked about how the Kuwaiti women's leadership in the business sector has been declining, as she discussed the main reasons behind that and reviewed some of the key mechanisms by which Kuwaiti women may be empowered on the economic front, as well as establishing women leadership within the business sector in an appropriate manner that matches their achievements within the educational, political and social rights fields.

Bahar highlighted the qualitative leaps achieved by Kuwaiti women in obtaining all their rights in getting access to education, workplace and political participation, emphasizing their success in gaining various rights compared to other countries across the region. The latest data published by international organizations shows leading figures in favor of females when it comes to their enrollment in different levels of education, reaching up to 87 percent in primary level and 89 percent in secondary level of education compared to 83 percent for male enrollment.

Bahar also stressed on Kuwaiti women's success in climbing the career ladder to affirm their prominent position in the business sector. Over the past years, female leaders successfully managed to pave the way

to acquiring many business and financial rights, as they held leadership positions, as well as participated in different lines of business activities including land ownership among other assets and grasped full and equal access to all types of financial services.

Bahar pointed out that the main problem was professional level disparities. Despite the Kuwaiti woman's success in obtaining her civil rights and the great leap she managed to achieve in education attainment, Kuwait ranks 126th in the Global Gender Gap report, reflecting a significant decline in Kuwaiti women empowerment. Regardless of their superior educational level, women still represent only 13.6 percent of the legal, legislative and senior management positions.

Bahar also emphasized the importance of continually striving to raise the level of education while ensuring that educational attainment received by women is geared towards preparing them for labor market, pointing out the need for women to enter into fields such as science, technology, engineering and mathematics, in addition to humanities and arts.

Bahar explained that the Kuwaiti public sector still presents the main employment destination to Kuwaitis as it offers substantial benefits when compared to the private sector's job offering. She also stressed that the government needs to develop the private sector's role and its participation in the Kuwaiti economy so that it may attract and employ job seekers, resulting in turn in women empowerment due to the gender equality in the private sector which is more pronounced than in the public sector.

Bahar pointed out that the wide disparities in wages and compensation between male and female employees is one of the key obstacles that presents itself against women empowerment on the economic front, especially in the public sector, where female employees receive 28 percent lower wages than male employees, stressing the need to eliminate such gaps in order to encourage women to get back in the work force and excel.

Bahar concluded by appealing to all leaders to overcome the barriers facing women empowerment in order



KUWAIT: Shaikha Al-Bahar, Deputy Group Chief Executive Officer at the National Bank of Kuwait, speaks at the 'Women's Empowerment Principles Conference - Kuwait.'



Shaikha Al-Bahar delivers her keynote speech.

“ Gender pay gap is titled in favor of men ”

Gender pay gap is titled in favor of men



A group photo of participants at the 'Women's Empowerment Principles Conference - Kuwait.'

to help provide a better working environment and improve the current systems and regulatory and operational frameworks, confirming her full trust and optimism in achieving those goals in no time in line with the martial efforts exerted by all governmental and civil institutions.

The Woman at NBK: 45 percent of the total number of employees; 128 different administrative positions are held representing 25 percent of such functional levels; 12.3 percent turnover rate in 2018; lower than male employees at 13.8 percent; 43.2 percent of NBK's 2018 new hires for a total of 106 positions

## Kuwaiti designer takes part in Paris fashion show

PARIS: Kuwaiti fashion designer Muntaha Al-Ajeel took part in a fashion show held at the Arab World Institute (AWI) in Paris, with eye-catching heritage inspired pieces of her own design. In a statement yesterday, Ajeel expressed pride in representing ambitious Kuwaiti women at international forums and highlighting her success in the field of fashion. "The invitation to participate with an elite group of Arab fashion designers at the world's fashion capital is a new achievement for the Kuwaiti woman," she said.

Ajeel named the line, 'Our Heritage, Most Beautiful in Ramadan,' showcasing the beauty of Kuwaiti kaftans, which remains a symbol of Ramadan elegance in Kuwait. Kuwait is slowly becoming a leading name across the international fashion scene, especially as large fashion houses become more and more up-to-date with Arab-inspired fashion and as several Hollywood stars have begun to pick their red carpet outfits from Arab designers, she added.

Ajeel was awarded the Middle East Businesswomen fashion award, the Elegance Icon title, the Honors Award, the International Pioneering award organized by the American Leadership Development Association, the Federation of GCC Chambers and the International Emirati Group. The award is meant for expert business leaders, and it was the first award given to a woman leader in fashion. In recognition of her international fashion shows, she was invited by the UN to organize a special fashion show for some of the world's First Ladies. Ajeel is a member of the Fashion Group International in New York and a member of the Arab British Chamber of Commerce. —KUNA



PARIS: Kuwaiti fashion designer Muntaha Al-Ajeel participates in a fashion show held at the Arab World Institute (AWI) in Paris. —KUNA Photos



Kuwaiti fashion designer Muntaha Al-Ajeel participates in a fashion show held at the Arab World Institute (AWI) in Paris.



Kuwaiti fashion designer Muntaha Al-Ajeel's designs are shown in a fashion show held at the Arab World Institute (AWI) in Paris.

## KIPCO Group supports TEDxAUK

KUWAIT: KIPCO - the Kuwait Projects Company (Holding) - and its Group companies are supporting the second TEDxAUK event, organized by AUK's Center for Research in Informatics, Science and Engineering (RISE). The event will be held at the Salwa Sabah Al-Ahmad Hall on April 27, and is supported by KIPCO, Burgan Bank, Gulf Insurance Group, United Real Estate Company and Qurain Petrochemical Industries Company.

TEDxAUK is a curated half-day immersive experience that brings speakers, artists and the audience together with the purpose of sharing perspectives, sparking deep discussions and inspiring positive networks and impactful actions around ideas that matter. The theme of TEDxAUK will be formed around voyages: concepts of

perseverance, learning, personal growth and self-actualization.

Eman Al-Awadhi, KIPCO's Group Communications Director, said: "KIPCO is delighted to be supporting the RISE Center in bringing the TEDxAUK to the university's students and the public at large for the second year. Last year's event was a great success, and this year's lineup of speakers is guaranteed to offer the audience nothing less. Such events help highlight AUK as more than just an educational institution, but also as a platform from which discussions and new ideas are launched, and greater value is added to our students and the larger community. We would like to thank Burgan Bank, Gulf Insurance Group, United Real Estate and Qurain Petrochemical Industries for being lead supporters of this symposium."



Eman Al-Awadhi



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Amid security worries, gun sales thrive in Iraq's Mosul

## Sri Lanka bomber queued at hotel buffet, then unleashed devastation

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NYBORG: A view of the city center of Nyborg, Denmark is pictured. Three votes by the European Parliament in recent years have exposed deep divisions between EU members from the wealthier west and the previously communist east of the bloc. —AFP

# EU's votes highlight east-west divide

## Influx of refugees from Muslim countries sparks worry

**PARIS:** Three votes by the European Parliament in recent years have exposed deep divisions between EU members from the wealthier west and the previously communist east of the bloc.

### Migrant quotas

On September 17, 2015, amid Europe's worst migrant crisis since World War II, the EU assembly backed plans to relocate 120,000 refugees around the EU to help share the burden of the frontline states of Greece, Hungary and Italy. In a non-binding vote, lawmakers approved by a large majority plans drawn up by the European Commission - the EU's executive - with 371 voting for, 124 against and 55 abstaining. Socialist, liberal and centre-right groups in the parliament largely backed the quotas.

But of their 70 Euro-MPs who voted against or

abstained, 61 came from former communist bloc countries in eastern Europe: Hungary, Latvia, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and the Czech Republic. Ethnically and religiously homogenous, the traditionally Christian eastern countries are marked by their history as ex-Soviet satellites when they were cut off from the rest of the world. They fear an influx of refugees from Muslim countries would expose them to a "terrorist threat", the Polish Institute of International Affairs said at the time of the vote.

### Censuring Hungary

On September 12, 2018, the European Parliament voted to launch a rare procedure that could lead to sanctions against Viktor Orban's populist Hungarian government for posing a "systemic threat" to the EU's founding values. It was the first time the parliament had

initiated such action under Article 7 of the EU Treaty, sometimes described as a "nuclear option". The motion won the two-thirds of votes needed for its adoption, with 449 votes for, 197 against and 47 abstentions.

But once again Euro-MPS from eastern countries of Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia and the Czech Republic mostly voted against or abstained. The vote had been called after a report on Hungary that voiced concerns about judicial independence, corruption, the rights of minorities and refugees, and academic, religious and media freedoms. The motion is highly unlikely to succeed as Poland - a fellow ex-communist state that is also facing an Article 7 procedure - has promised to wield its veto to prevent sanctions.

### Short-term workers

The European Parliament on May 29, 2018 voted

after two years of laborious negotiations in favor of reforms to rules for workers on short-term contracts in other EU countries. The reforms were aimed at ending abuses of legislation that allows companies to send workers from low-wage countries to jobs in wealthier western Europe for short periods.

It had led to charges of "social dumping" because companies were not required to make contributions to the host country's health and welfare systems, and posted workers were in some cases paid less than in their homeland. Here too eastern Euro-MPS from Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and the Czech Republic voted against the legislation, possibly because they send more workers abroad than they take in. Western European countries such as France and Germany, who host many expatriate workers, welcomed the reforms. —AFP

## Explosions in Libya capital

**TRIPOLI:** Explosions shook the Libyan capital Tripoli yesterday after an air strike, residents said, in an escalation of a two-week offensive by eastern forces on the city held by the internationally recognized government. A Reuters reporter and several residents said they saw an aircraft circling for more than 10 minutes over the capital with a humming sound before opening fire on a southern suburb, scene of the heaviest fighting between the rival forces.

Reuters was unable to confirm whether an aircraft or unmanned drone was behind the strike which triggered heavy anti aircraft fire. Residents had reported drone strikes in the past days but there has been no confirmation and explosions heard in the city centre this time were louder than in previous days.

Residents counted several missile strikes which apparently hit a military camp of forces loyal to Tripoli in the Sabaa district. Authorities had closed Tripoli's only functioning airport but reopened it hours later, the airport's website said. The Libyan National Army (LNA) force loyal to commander Khalifa Haftar started an offensive two weeks ago but has been unable to breach the government's southern defences.

If a drone strike was confirmed this would point to more sophisticated warfare. The LNA has so far mainly used ageing Soviet-made jets from the air force of Muammar Gaddafi, toppled in 2011, lacking precision firepower and helicopters, according to residents and military sources. In the past the United Arab Emirates and Egypt have supported Haftar with air strikes during campaigns to take eastern Libya. Both countries flew air strikes on Tripoli in 2014 during a different conflict to help a Haftar-allied force, U.S. officials said at the time.

Since 2014 the UAE and Egypt have provided the LNA with military equipment such as aircraft and helicopters, helping Haftar to gain the upper hand in Libya's eight-year conflict, past UN reports have established. The UAE



AIN ZARA: Libyan fighters loyal to the Government of National Accord (GNA) run as they fire their guns during clashes with forces loyal to strongman Khalifa Haftar south of the capital Tripoli's suburb of Ain Zara. —AFP

even built an air base in Al Khadim in eastern Libya, one such report said in 2017. The air strikes, which were also filmed by residents in video posted online, came after a day of heavy clashes in southern districts, with shelling audible in the city centre.

### Trump

The violence spiked after the White House said on Friday that President Donald Trump spoke by with Haftar earlier in the week. The disclosure of the call and a US statement that it "recognized Field Marshal Haftar's significant role in fighting terrorism and securing Libya's oil resources" has boosted the commander's supporters and enraged his opponents. Western powers and the Gulf have been divided over a push by Haftar's forces to seize Tripoli, undermining calls by the United Nations for a ceasefire. Both sides claimed progress in southern Tripoli on Saturday, but no more details were immediately available.

A Reuters TV cameraman visiting the

southern Khalat Furgan suburb on Saturday heard heavy shelling but saw no apparent change in the frontline. Shelling continued in the southern outskirts of the capital on Sunday. On Friday, two children were killed in shelling in southern Tripoli, residents said. The fighting has killed 220 people and wounded 1,066, the World Health organization (WHO) said. It was unclear why the White House waited several days to announce Monday's phone call. On Thursday, both the United States and Russia said they could not support a UN Security Council resolution calling for a ceasefire in Libya at this time. Russia objects to the British-drafted resolution blaming Haftar for the latest flare-up in violence when his LNA advanced to the outskirts of Tripoli earlier this month, diplomats said. The United States did not give a reason for its decision not to support the draft resolution, which would also call on countries with influence over the warring parties to ensure compliance and for unconditional humanitarian aid access in Libya. —Reuters

## Iraq court sentences 4 to death for joining IS

**BAGHDAD:** An Iraqi court has sentenced four people to death by hanging for belonging to the Islamic State militant group and committing terrorist crimes in Iraq and Syria, a judiciary statement said yesterday. The four men, wanted by Iraqi authorities, were handed to Iraq by the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), the statement said.

A Baghdad criminal court convicted them for joining IS and "carrying out criminal operations that targeted innocent civilians with the aim of undermining peace and stability in Iraq and Syria". A judicial source said the four men were Iraqi. In February, Iraq's military said the SDF had handed 280 Iraqi and foreign detainees to Baghdad. Thousands of foreigners have fought on behalf of Islamic State in Iraq and Syria since at least 2014. Many foreign women came - or were brought - from overseas to join the militants.

Iraqi courts are relying on counter terrorism laws to prosecute thousands of suspects, including foreign fighters, for joining the ultra-hardline jihadist group. Human rights groups have accused Iraqi and other regional forces of inconsistencies in the judicial process and flawed trials leading to unfair convictions. Islamic State captured a third of Iraq in 2014 but was largely defeated both there and in neighboring Syria where US-backed forces proclaimed last month the capture of Islamic State's last territory, eliminating its rule over a self-proclaimed "caliphate".

### Kosovo repatriates 110

Kosovo on Saturday repatriated 110 of its citizens from Syria, mostly mothers with their children having followed their partners who went to join jihadist groups in the

war-torn country. The group also included four men suspected of having fought for the Islamic State group, who were charged upon arrival in Pristina with participating in a foreign conflict, chief prosecutor Aleksander Lumezi told reporters.

Kosovo, whose population of 1.8 million is 90 percent Muslim, is one of the European countries with the proportionally biggest number of jihadi fighters in Iraq and Syria. The US embassy in Kosovo welcomed the move, calling it an example for others. "With this repatriation, Kosovo has set an important example for all members of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS and the international community to follow," the embassy said in a statement. "Today, in the early hours of the morning, a very sensitive and important operation was conducted with the help of the United States in which the Kosovar government repatriated 110 citizens from the war zone in Syria," justice minister Abelard Tahiri told a news conference earlier.

Some 300 Kosovars joined jihadists in Syria and Iraq, according to the interior ministry. Other countries have been slow to repatriate their nationals involved in the conflict. France brought five children home in March amid massively hostile public opinion. Of the Kosovar fighters in Syria and Iraq, around 70 were killed and an estimated 120 have come home, with most arrested on their return. The authorities believe that around 30 fighters and some 50 Kosovar women and children are still in Syria, police chief Rashit Qalaj said Saturday.

Kosovo, which is a close ally of Washington, passed a law four years ago allowing citizens to be jailed for up to 15 years if they leave the country to join armed groups abroad. Repatriated civilians "deserve rehabilitation and the hope for a peaceful life far from the conflicts", Tahiri said. President Hashim Taci in a Facebook post urged their loved ones "to help them reintegrate our society as quickly as possible". —Agencies



International

# One month after IS 'caliphate' defeated, challenges aplenty

## Elimination of the physical 'caliphate' closes a long chapter

BEIRUT: Sleeper cells, prisons teeming with jihadists, camps crammed with their wives and children—perils abound in Syria, nearly a month after the Islamic State group's "caliphate" was declared defeated. The US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces announced victory over the IS proto-state on March 23, after a nearly five-year battle against the militant group. The elimination of the physical "caliphate" closed a long chapter in the Syrian conflict, but the SDF and the US-led military coalition have warned the fight is far from over.

IS is still able "to carry out regular attacks on a weekly basis", said Tore Hamming, an expert on jihadist movements at the European University Institute. Even after losing their last scrap of territory in the eastern village of Baghuz, the jihadists retain a presence in Syria's vast desert and hideouts elsewhere in the country. This week alone, IS militants killed 35 fighters loyal to Syria's government in 48 hours—feeding into a regime death toll over two days in excess of 60 at the hands of all jihadist factions - the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said.



### IS 'still holds' sizeable sway

American Security, warns that IS still holds sizeable sway over "networks of local support". "A big part of the ISIS strategy to regrow is that it continues to have strong ties into some of the local tribes in eastern Syria and western Iraq," he said, using an alternative acronym for the jihadist group. As both regime and US-backed forces seek to hunt down IS sleeper cells on the run, the Kurdish authorities in northeast Syria face another major challenge. Thousands of alleged jihadist fighters—including hundreds of foreigners—are now being held in Kurdish-run jails, while their relatives languish in overcrowded camps for the displaced.

Their numbers have created a major headache for the semi-autonomous Kurdish administration, which now wants to put suspected jihadists on trial. "We have called for an international tribunal to be formed to try these terrorists," top foreign affairs official Abdel Karim Omar said. "Our priority is to try the criminals," he said. Since 2014, IS fighters have been accused of carrying out beheadings, mass executions, rapes, abductions,

and ethnic cleansing. They stand accused of stoning to death women suspected of adultery, and forcing homosexuals off the top of high buildings. While many jihadists are now detained, they still pose a threat, according to experts. "These detention centers are becoming breeding grounds for radicalization," the Soufan Center said in a report published on April 12. "There is also a major risk of IS-engineered prison break attempts," said the organization, which specializes in security analysis. Hamming said "neither Syria nor Iraq have the resources or the political stability to properly handle such a large number of prisoners".



QAMISHLI: Syrian Christians pray at the Syrian Orthodox Church of the Virgin Mary in the northeastern Syrian Kurdish-controlled city of Qamishli. —AFP

### 'Future terrorists'?

Kurdish authorities are calling on the international community to help set up and guard new high-security detention facilities, after many Western states refused to take back their nationals. In a rare exception on Saturday, Kosovo repatriated four men suspected of having fought for IS in Syria, among 110 of its citizens. Syria's Kurds are also calling for much more support for displacement camps, where tens of thousands of people

have amassed after fleeing battles against IS. The camps host 12,000 foreigners - 4,000 women and 8,000 children—who are kept under surveillance, according to Omar. The largest of these camps, Al-Hol, has seen its population swell to more than 73,000 people, with conditions deteriorating as a result of the mass influx. The International Rescue Committee has reported severe acute malnutrition, pneumonia, and dehydration among children in the camp. —AFP

### 'Breeding grounds'

Before that, on April 9, IS claimed a double bombing that killed 13 people in the SDF-held city of Raqa. The White House has said that it would keep 400 US troops in Syria "for a period of time", after initially shocking allies in December by announcing a full withdrawal of 2,000 soldiers. But Hamming said this diminished contingent would struggle to deal with the lingering jihadist threat. "IS is still very active and will remain so. The small number of US forces will not solve that entirely," he said.

Nicholas Heras, an analyst at the Center for a New

## Afghan women go online to set #myredline for peace

KABUL: Kobra Samim, who rides for Afghanistan's national cycling team, wrote on Facebook that women's participation in sport is her "red line" as the US tries to forge a peace deal with the Taliban. Former politician Farkhunda Zahra Naderi tweeted that the protection of female leadership roles should be non-negotiable.

And activist Samira Hamidi is demanding that women be included in the peace talks. Across Afghanistan, women have taken to social media to join a campaign dubbed #MyRedLine that aims to pressure the government, the Taliban and the United States into ensuring women's hard-won advancements are not tossed aside in a rush for a peace accord.

"If the Taliban come back, we won't have the right to education, sports, and we will even be banned from coming out of houses," Samim, 23, told AFP as she adjusted the saddle on her mountain bike before setting off along a run-down Kabul street. "We want peace, but also

we want to continue our sports and cycling," Farahnaz Forotan, a journalist and activist who started the #MyRedLine campaign with support from UN Women Afghanistan, said her own red line was "my pen and my freedom of expression".

"If peace doesn't bring social justice to all victims of war in every corner of the country, then it won't be a stable peace," Forotan said. She said the #MyRedLine hashtag had been shared or retweeted thousands of times since the social media campaign was launched last month, with even President Ashraf Ghani tweeting that women's rights were the government's "red line" in the peace process. The campaign is also being shared on Facebook, in English, Pashto and Dari.

Before being toppled by the US invasion of 2001, the Taliban governed Afghanistan for nearly five years with a strict interpretation of sharia law. Women were confined to their homes, forced to wear burqas and forbidden from going to school. Some were publicly stoned to death on flimsy allegations of adultery. "Women were more vulnerable than anyone during the Taliban regime," Forotan said.

The United States is holding direct talks with Taliban leaders - all men - in a bid to forge a peace deal. Two Afghan women were invited to informal talks in Moscow in February between the Taliban and Afghan representatives,



KABUL: Afghan cyclist Kobra Samim talks with a young girl by a roadside in Kabul. Across Afghanistan, women have taken to social media to join a campaign dubbed #MyRedLine that aims to pressure the government, the Taliban and US into ensuring women's hard-won advancements are not tossed aside in a rush for a peace accord. —AFP

but their presence was very peripheral. A second, similar summit between Afghan delegates and the insurgents that was to take place in Doha this weekend and had been set to include more women has been postponed indefinitely.

International observers have blasted the talks, led on the US side by peace envoy Zalmay Khalilzad, for their lack of female inclusion. Other social media hashtags such as #afghanwomenwill-

notgoback have also gained traction, and Khalilzad appears to have taken note. On a trip to Afghanistan this month, the Afghan-born American envoy met with locals from all walks of life and with women's groups. The Taliban, however, appear unmoved. Spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid recently tweeted to deny reports that women were being included in the Taliban negotiating team and "neither do we believe it is necessary". —AFP

## Anger at poor public services 25 years into S African democracy

SOWETO: Inside the conical brick tower looming over Walter Sisulu Square in Kliptown, Soweto, Busi Hlatshwayo thoughtfully studies 10 giant bronze slabs announcing the core principles of South Africa's Freedom Charter. She pauses at one that declares: "The people shall share in the country's wealth!" and remarks wryly: "Where is that wealth?" Hlatshwayo then slowly recites another: "There shall be houses, security and comfort!" "Where (is the) comfort?" the 79-year-old asks. "Instead, we are still crying."

Hlatshwayo hails from Kliptown, a suburb of Johannesburg's Soweto township. Many people here live in crowded, makeshift homes built with corrugated iron sheets and other rudimentary materials. Several families share a single, outside toilet. "All these things written (here), none of them have been done," Hlatshwayo said, pointing at the triangular bronze slabs arranged to form an imposing, gleaming circle at the monument's heart.

As May 8 general elections approach, South Africans who accuse the ruling African National Congress (ANC) of reneging on Nelson Mandela's 1994 promise of "a better life for all", have staged often violent demonstrations in townships that still lack basic services 25 years after the country's first democratic vote, which ended white minority rule. —AFP

## Turkey opposition leader attacked at soldier's funeral

ISTANBUL: The leader of Turkey's main opposition party was attacked yesterday at a funeral for a soldier killed in fighting against Kurdish militants, a state news agency and his party said. Republican People's Party (CHP) chief Kemal Kilicdaroglu was taken to a nearby house by security forces for his protection, Anadolu state news agency said.

Video of the incident on social media showed a mob pushing and shoving around Kilicdaroglu as he makes his way through the crowd. His party confirmed Kilicdaroglu had been attacked, but it was not immediately clear if he had been injured. The group first protested against Kilicdaroglu's presence at the funeral in the Cubuk district of the capital Ankara and then attacked him with blows, Anadolu said.

The Ankara governor's office said in a statement: "Legal action has been launched against the culprits of the incident." The CHP last month won Ankara and Istanbul mayors' offices in local elections in a setback for President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's ruling party. Erdogan's AKP is appealing for a rerun of the Istanbul election citing irregularities in the very tight race against the CHP candidate Ekrem Imamoglu. Election authorities last week granted Imamoglu his mandate after carrying out a limited recount that showed he had won the city by a very slim margin of around 13,000 votes.



ANKARA: The Chairman of the Republican People's Party (CHP) Kemal Kilicdaroglu (center) is attacked by a protester yesterday while attending a funeral ceremony in Ankara's Cubuk district for a soldier killed in fighting against Kurdish militants. —AFP

### 4 Turkish soldiers killed

In another development, four Turkish soldiers and 20 armed assailants were killed in clashes between the military and the outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) near the border with Iraq, Turkey's defense ministry and military said yesterday. A military base was attacked overnight in the mountainous Cukureca district of Turkey's southeastern province of Hakkari, prompting the military to respond with an air operation, news agencies and the ministry said. The Turkish military said "at least 20 terrorists were neutralized" as a result, and it held a ceremony for the dead soldiers on Saturday, according to state-run Anadolu news

agency, Hulusi Akar, the defence minister, was to attend.

The ministry said six other soldiers were wounded in the clashes. "Terrorists are under intense fire with the air operation and fire support vehicles in the region," it said. The PKK, which has waged an insurgency for autonomy in Turkey's largely Kurdish southeast since 1984, is deemed a terrorist organisation by Turkey, the United States and the European Union. "Turkey is determined to continue its fight against terrorists and their supporters by making no compromises," Mustafa Sentop, the speaker of Turkey's parliament, was quoted as saying by Anadolu —Agencies

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## International

# Amid security worries, gun sales thrive in Iraq's Mosul

## Jihadist sleeper cells still active across the broader province

**MOSUL:** Hunting rifles, pistols and towers of ammunition magazines: new gun shops are popping up in Iraq's Mosul, where residents are keen to own personal firearms in the unpredictable aftermath of jihadist rule. The Islamic State group reigned over the city for three years before being ousted by Iraqi forces in mid-2017. But with jihadist sleeper cells still active across the broader province, the new half-dozen licensed gun traders in Mosul are seeing impressive sales. "We've got a lot of customers," said one shop owner in his 40s, who was granted a weapon-trading license from Iraq's interior ministry a few months ago.

All his customers have gun permits, and "many also carried membership cards in the armed forces", he told AFP. His most popular item? Hunting rifles, said the trader. "They make up 70 percent of all my sales," he said proudly. Iraq has one of the highest rates of civilian gun ownership in the world, according to the Small Arms Survey, which estimated about 20 guns per 100 Iraqi civilians last year.

Gun ownership was expected to increase since Iraq altered legislation in 2018 allowing civilians to purchase pistols and semi-automatic weapons, after they had only been allowed to buy hunting guns. In Mosul, newly-licensed shops are the latest addition to the roughly 130 gun shops across the rest of Iraq. They offer a wide spectrum of weaponry to Mosul's residents, from machine guns and hunting rifles to US, Chinese or Croatian pistols. They range from \$50 to \$5,000, a hefty purchase in a country where the average monthly income is \$500.

### 'Personal protection'

"We sell to civilians, but also to members of the military," said another gun shop owner in Mosul, who

also preferred to speak anonymously. The civilians included recreational hunters but also "businessmen and journalists" who felt they may be targeted for their profession, he said. One of them is Abu Nizar, a Mosul resident who keeps a pistol on his belt and a Kalashnikov assault rifle in his exchange office.

"A number of money-changing offices and other traders were attacked," the 45-year-old told AFP, so he requested a gun license to keep himself and his business safe. But it's not just civilians who are determined to be armed. Hamed Hassan, a 21-year-old member of Iraq's security forces, carries a weapon while on duty but has to turn it in when he goes home. "The security situation is still fragile," he told AFP while weaving his way between glass cases of rifles and ammunition stockpiles in a Mosul storefront. "I need a weapon for my personal protection."

Hundreds of jihadists are believed to be hiding in the rugged mountains and open plains around Mosul, with deadly hit-and-run attacks reported every few days against military installations or government offices. After the US-led invasion of 2003,

Mosul became a stronghold of the anti-American insurrection, with Al-Qaeda seizing control of parts of the city. The group's jihadist progeny IS overran Mosul in 2014, capturing stockpiles of arms, ammunition and tanks from Iraqi forces, much of which had originated as military aid from the US.

### 'Feeding black market'

Across Iraq, many communities rose up to defend themselves against IS, sometimes using personal weapons and in other cases with direct backing from the state. Now that fighting has died down, parts of those stockpiles are being illicitly bought and sold across the country. "Light arms of all types are still



**MOSUL:** A customer inspects a rifle sold in a gun shop in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul. Hunting rifles, pistols and towers of ammunition magazines: Gun stores are popping up in Mosul, where residents are keen to own personal firearms in the unpredictable aftermath of jihadist rule. —AFP

feeding the black market," a security official told AFP on condition of anonymity. "Some were stolen, others recuperated after jihadists fled and still others were smuggled" across northern Iraq, which borders Turkey and war-ravaged Syria.

But some Mosul residents fear even the legal trade in weapons could have negative repercussions on their city, deeply scarred by years of violence. When IS held Mosul, it forced teenage boys to fight and enrolled them in military training and religious classes, meting out violent punishments—including beheadings—against those who defied its rules.

"Mosul was recently recaptured—there are still clandestine terrorist cells there that could exploit" gun sales, said sociologist Ali Zeidan, who is from Mosul.

"Crime could go up if someone got their hands on weapons this way. There should be very tough restrictions," the 35-year-old said. Amer al-Bek, a political analyst in the city, said authorities should reconsider awarding gun sale licenses. "The situation in Mosul is not as stable as officials would have you believe," Bek said. "Selling such arms to civilians will have a negative effect on security now and in the future." —AFP

## Extremadura, Spain's forgotten region

**VILLAFRANCA DE LOS BARROS:** Positioned on the edge of a railway line, Villafanca de los Barros should be in prime position to move goods from its three factories. There is a slight problem though—close to no trains come through. So it is that products are transported by truck from this town in southwestern Extremadura, Spain's poorest region and also its worst connected, a major bugbear ahead of general elections on April 28.

Although nestled in the midst of vineyards, Villafanca depends more on the industrial sector than on agriculture. While Extremadura as a whole is experiencing a population drain, it has managed to maintain this 13,000-strong town thanks to three factories—one that makes bottles, the other cooking grills and a third that recycles aluminum. But "the trains are slow and few and far between," says Joaquin Rodriguez, deputy mayor of the sun-baked town.

Spain's dense network of high-speed trains is famous in Europe. But its tentacles have yet to reach Extremadura, on the border with Portugal. The trains that link the two provincial capitals, Badajoz and Caceres, to Madrid are antiquated and often break down. To top it all, they're expensive, says Juan Carlos Lopez Duque, spokesman for the association Milana Bonita which campaigns for better trains—an issue that has taken centre stage before the elections.

"It's cheaper to take the plane to the Canary Islands," a Spanish archipelago some 1,200 kilometers (750 miles) south of the mainland, he says. Public Works Minister Jose Luis Abalos has promised that by 2020, hybrid trains will connect the region with the rest of Spain. These trains can go up to 200 kilometers an hour and are powered by electricity and diesel, which is useful where there are no electrified rail lines, like in Extremadura.

### Neglected

The region was neglected during the 1939-1975 dictatorship of Francisco Franco, says Cesar Ramos Esteban, a socialist lawmaker in Caceres. And 44 years later, despite state and EU subsidies, Extremadura remains a mainly agricultural region. Spain's best cured ham, the world-famous "Jamon Iberico," comes from pigs that have fed off the green pastures of Extremadura. Tomatoes are grown on its southern plains, making it the fruit's biggest producer in Spain. It is the least developed region in Spain with the lowest GDP per capita and the highest unemployment - 23.1 percent compared to the national average of 14.4 percent.

The successive regional governments, most of them socialist, have tried to ensure that everyone has access to public services no matter where they live, says Cesar Ramos. He adds that in a region of one million people—with a further 700,000 from the region living outside its borders—they have battled to avoid villages dying off. In Casas de Don Antonio, a village 40 kilometers south of Caceres where hundreds of white houses creep up a hill to group around the church, only 85 residents remain. —AFP

## Care workers cross Europe's east-west divide

**LEOBEN:** Every two weeks, Alena Konecna packs her bags to leave her own mother and daughter at home in Slovakia and travel some 400 kilometers across the border into Austria to take care of someone else's mother. As citizens across the continent prepare to vote in May's European Parliament elections, 40-year-old Konecna is an example of those who regularly take advantage of one of the EU's most important pillars: the free movement of labor.

She's one of more than 65,000 people - mostly women from Slovakia and Romania - who form the backbone of Austria's domestic care sector. For two weeks at a time, Konecna stays with the 89-year-old bedridden woman to cook and care for her. "Without care workers from abroad, the 24-hour care system would break down... No one (in Austria) wants to do it," says Klaus Katzianka, who runs the agency that found Konecna her current job and who himself needs round-the-clock care due to a disability. But the arrangement may be coming under strain.

### Demographic time bomb

Austria - along with other countries such as Germany, Greece and Italy — looked to poorer neighboring states after the fall of communism to meet the need for carers generated by an ageing popu-

lation and changing family structures. But it is "problematic to build a system on this," says Kai Leichsenring, executive director of the European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research. As eastern European nations become richer and their own populations age, workers there may increasingly choose to stay put, he warns. Western European nations would then have to look further afield - to Ukraine or China, for example - to meet the ever-growing demand.

In Konecna's case, she started to work as a caregiver more than two years ago in the town of Leoben, nestled amid mountains in the Austrian countryside, which reminds her of her home in Banska Bystrica in Slovakia. Previously the single mother worked in a factory in the car industry. Fed up with the long shifts and inspired by her mother's erstwhile career as a nurse, in 2015 she took a three-month course in first aid and care skills, including some practical experience in nursing homes.

She also took a one-month German course, allowing her to watch TV with her employer and read newspapers to her. Care workers can earn roughly double as much in Austria than in Slovakia, although Konecna says it's hard to leave behind her daughter, now 19. "My daughter was often sick when I was away. And I have missed things like my daughter's birthday," she says, adding she would prefer working in Slovakia if wages were better there.

### 'Italy syndrome'

Besides being separated from their families, there are other problems in how

## Facts: Queen Elizabeth II as she turns 93

**LONDON:** Britain's Queen Elizabeth II celebrates her birthday yesterday, marking 93 years in the public glare. Here are five facts about Britain's oldest and longest-reigning monarch.

### Longevity

Over 80 percent of Britons have not experienced life under any other monarch, having not been born when Elizabeth ascended the throne on February 6, 1952, according to the UK Office of National Statistics. She has reigned over 14 prime ministers, coming to the throne during the tenure of Winston Churchill. She has also met with 11 of the 12 US presidents in office and signed more than 3,500 bills into law. On her birthday, the Queen will be 11 years and four months older than any British monarch in history, and at 67 years and 74 days, will be the longest serving by three years and 224 days.

### Birth

The Queen was born on April 21, 1926,

at 17 Bruton Street in London's upmarket Mayfair neighborhood, which is now a high-end Chinese restaurant whose signature dishes include "Roasted silver cod with Champagne". She has another official birthday on the second Saturday in June, to celebrate the landmark publicly. The double birthday tradition was started by King George II in 1748, who wanted to have a summer celebration.

### Animals

The monarch has been an animal lover all her life, and is particularly fond of horses and dogs. She has owned more than 30 corgi dogs, her favorite breed, and even invented a new breed, the dorgi - a cross between a corgi and a dachshund. She inherited several thoroughbred racing horses after her father King George VI died in 1952 and her rides have won more than 1,600 races. The 93-year-old has also owned an elephant, black jaguars and a crocodile - all gifts that were looked after in zoos - and due to arachid laws, still owns all unmarked mute swans and "royal fish" in Britain, including dolphins and sturgeons.

### Tax

Although not legally obliged to pay tax, Elizabeth chose in 1992 to start voluntarily paying income tax on her private



**LEOBEN:** Slovakian care taker Alena Konecna helps a 89-year-old bedridden woman in Leoben, Austria. —AFP

the sector works across Europe. A study by the Johannes Gutenberg University in Mainz found inadequate training, extreme working hours and salaries below the legal minimum wage. Up to 300,000 caregivers are estimated to work in private homes in Germany, mostly illegally.

They previously hailed mostly from Poland but now increasingly come from poorer EU states such as Romania and Slovakia. Konecna was put off going to Germany by the more grueling cycle which is common there, with workers staying three months at a time. For many of those from poorer EU member states working in the West, workplace condi-

tions can leave lasting effects.

In Romania, more than 150 women were hospitalized at Socola Psychiatric Hospital in the country's northeast last year alone, their mental health having suffered after caring for the elderly abroad — what has become known as the "Italy syndrome". "I had the misfortune to work all the time for elderly people suffering from Alzheimer's so I spent most of my time between four walls, under constant pressure," says one former hospital patient, a 58-year-old mother of two who worked in Italy from 2002 until 2014. "I devoted the most beautiful years of my life to elderly Italians." —AFP



**WINDSOR:** Britain's Queen Elizabeth II smiles as she receives posies of flowers from children after attending the Easter Mattins Service at St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle yesterday. —AFP

earnings amid public grumblings about the cost of restoring the family's fire-damaged Windsor Castle.

### Tech savvy

Despite the tradition and pomp of the family, the Queen has been comfortable with developing technologies ever since serving as a truck mechanic in World

War II. She sent her first email in 1976, sent a message taken to the moon by astronauts Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin in 1969, first tweeted in 2014 and made her first Instagram post last month. Her 1953 coronation was the first to be televised and, in 2012, her annual Christmas speech was made available on podcast. —AFP



International



COLOMBO: Sri Lankan security personnel walk past dead bodies covered with blankets amid blast debris at St Anthony's Shrine following an explosion in the church in Kochchikade in Colombo yesterday. — AFP

# Sri Lanka bomber queued at hotel buffet, then unleashed devastation

## 35 foreigners among over 200 killed in the blasts

COLOMBO: The suicide bomber waited patiently in a queue for the Easter Sunday breakfast buffet at Sri Lanka's Cinnamon Grand hotel before setting off explosives strapped to his back. Carrying a plate, the man, who had registered at the hotel the night before as Mohamed Azzam Mohamed, was just about to be served when he set off his devastating strike in the packed restaurant, a manager at the Sri Lankan hotel said. "There was utter chaos," said the manager, who spoke to AFP on condition of anonymity as he is not allowed to speak for the company.

The Taprobane restaurant at the hotel was having one of its busiest days of the year for the Easter holiday weekend. "It was 8:30 am and it was busy. It was families," the manager told AFP. "He came up to the top of the queue and set off the blast," he added. "One of our managers who was welcoming guests was among those killed instantly."

The bomber also died. Parts of his body were found intact by police and taken away.

Other hotel officials told how the bomber, a Sri Lankan, checked in giving an address that turned out to be false, saying he was in the city for business. Two other hotels, the Shangri-La and the Kingsbury, were hit at about the same time, along with three churches packed with worshippers attending Easter Sunday services.

The blast at St Anthony's Shrine, an historic Catholic Church, was so powerful that it blew out much of the roof, leaving roof tiles, glass and splintered wood littering the floor that was strewn with bodies. Authorities have not said who staged the attacks. But all suffered major casualties and damage. Many of the 35 foreigners killed in the blasts were at the hotels, officials said.

### 'Shock, grief and mourning'

"There was utter chaos, but we rushed all the injured to hospital in a very short time," the Cinnamon Grand manager said. "About 20 people were seriously wounded and we sent them to the National Hospital." The hotel is close to the Sri Lankan prime minister's official residence and Special Task Force commandos were quickly at the scene. At the Shangri-La, witnesses said they heard two loud blasts and that staff reported some people had been killed. But details of the toll were not immediately given.

An AFP photographer saw extensive damage in the second floor restaurant at the hotel, with windows blown out and electrical wires hanging from the ceiling. The Shangri-La said in a statement that the bomb hit at approximately 9:00 am local time at its Table One restaurant. "We are deeply saddened and shocked by the

incident and our thoughts and prayers are with the families of the casualties and those who have been affected," it said. "Our immediate priority is to look after the safety and wellbeing of all involved. A Shangri-La crisis management team has been activated to provide all necessary support."

The Kingsbury is also one of Colombo's most expensive hotels, positioned near the city's World Trade Center. The toll there was not known. In a statement on its Facebook page, the hotel said: "On behalf of the entire Kingsbury team we share in the shock, grief and mourning of our entire nation in the aftermath of the recent attack." "Medical evacuation and treatment of the injured guests and employees were handled immediately." The hotel said it had been "isolated" for further safety checks. — AFP

## World leaders react to deadly Sri Lanka blasts

COLOMBO: Religious and world leaders have condemned a series of blasts in Sri Lanka that killed more than 200 people yesterday, including dozens of foreigners - with British, Dutch and American citizens believed to be among them. Hospital sources also said Japanese citizens were among those injured by the bombs which ripped through high-end hotels and churches holding Easter services. Here is a summary of the reactions:

### Britain: 'Stand together'

British Prime Minister Theresa May described the attacks as "truly appalling". "The acts of violence against churches and hotels in Sri Lanka are truly appalling, and my deepest sympathies go out to all of those affected at this tragic time," she tweeted. "We must stand together to make sure that no one should ever have to practice their faith in fear."

### Netherlands: 'Terrible reports'

"Terrible reports from Sri Lanka about bloody attacks on hotels and churches on this Easter Sunday," Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte tweeted after the attacks first emerged. "Thoughts are with the victims and their relatives."

### Pope: 'Cruel violence'

Pope Francis expressed his sadness over the attacks during his traditional Easter address at the Vatican. "I want to express my affectionate closeness with the Christian community, attacked while it was at prayer, and to all the victims of such cruel violence," he said. The Catholic Church in Jerusalem had said in an earlier statement: "We pray for the souls of the victims and ask for speedy recovery of the injured, and ask God to inspire the terrorists to repent of their killing and intimidation."

### Australia: 'Terrorist attack'

Prime Minister Scott Morrison said in a statement: "To the beautiful people of Sri Lanka, Australia sends its heartfelt sympathies and our prayers and our support - and our offer to do whatever we can to support you in this terrible time of need. "At this time as Easter Sunday draws to a conclusion here in Australia, our heart goes out to those Christians and all of those other innocents who have been



COLOMBO: Sri Lankan security personnel keep watch outside the church premises following a blast at the St Anthony's Shrine in Kochchikade. — AFP

slaughtered today in this horrific terrorist attack."

### New Zealand: 'Devastating'

A month after dozens of Muslims were killed in a shooting at two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern described the attack as "devastating". "New Zealand condemns all acts of terrorism, and our resolve has only been strengthened by the attack on our soil on the 15th of March. To see an attack in Sri Lanka while people were in churches and at hotels is devastating. "New Zealand rejects all forms of extremism and stands for freedom of religion and the right to worship safely. Collectively we must find the will and the answers to end such violence."

### Pakistan: 'Horrific'

Pakistan's leader Imran Khan offered his "profound condolences" to Sri Lanka. "Strongly condemn the horrific terrorist attack in Sri Lanka on Easter Sunday resulting in precious lives lost & hundreds injured," he tweeted. "My profound condolences go to our Sri Lankan brethren. Pakistan stands in complete solidarity with Sri Lanka in their hour of grief."

### India: We stand with you

Narendra Modi, the leader of neighboring India, said his thoughts are with the bereaved families. "There is no place for such barbarism in our region," he tweeted. "India stands in solidarity with the people of Sri Lanka."

### EU: 'Sad day for the world'

EU commission chief Jean-Claude Juncker expressed his "horror and sadness" at the blasts, while EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini said the attacks marked "a truly sad day for the country and for the world". "Such acts of violence on this holy day are acts of violence against all beliefs and denominations, and against all those who value the freedom of religion and the choice to worship," she added in a statement.

### US: 'Senseless attacks'

The US ambassador to Sri Lanka, Alaina Teplitz, tweeted: "Deeply saddened by the senseless attacks in Sri Lanka today. Our thoughts are with the victims and their families. We stand with Sri Lanka's people at this terrible moment." — Agencies

## Sri Lanka in brief

PARIS: The tropical island of Sri Lanka, hit by a series of deadly blasts yesterday, emerged in 2009 from a 37-year civil war led by Tamil separatists. Some key facts about the Indian Ocean island nation:

### Ethnic, religious mix

Sri Lanka lies off the southern tip of the Indian subcontinent, the teardrop-shaped island is separated from its giant neighbor by the narrow strip of sea known as the Palk Straits. The island covers 65,000 square kilometers (25,000 square miles) with a population of 21.4 million, of which nearly three quarters are ethnic Sinhalese. The Tamils, the second-largest ethnic group, make up more than 15 percent of the population and live mainly in the north and northeast. The majority of Sri Lankans are Buddhist - 70 percent, mostly Sinhalese-while 12 percent are Hindus, mostly Tamils, and Muslims count 10 percent of the population, and Christians about six percent.

### Once Ceylon

The former Ceylon became a British colony in 1815 having previously been controlled by the Portuguese from 1505 to 1656 and the Dutch from 1656 to 1796. The last Sinhalese king reigned from 1798 to 1815. Sri Lanka gained independence from Britain in 1948.

### Civil war

Tamil rebels launched a separatist campaign state in 1972, triggering a civil war that lasted 37 years. The Tamil uprising was crushed by a Sinhalese-majority government in 2009 after a conflict estimated to have claimed up to 100,000 lives. Government troops have been accused of killing at least 40,000 Tamil civilians in the last months of the civil war. No one has been prosecuted for war crimes in the decade since the conflict ended. In 2019 Sri Lanka President Maithripala Sirisena appointed a general accused by the UN of war crimes against Tamils to the country's second-highest army ranking, evoking outcry from rights groups. In March the UN human rights chief warned Sri Lanka could slip back into conflict unless it addressed the "worst crimes" during the final stages of the conflict.

### Tea, tourists, radical monks

Sri Lanka's main export is tea, while the garments industry and money from workers abroad are also key sources of revenue. Following the end of the civil war, international tourism flourished, with more than two million visitors per year since 2016, compared to 448,000 in 2009. But religious tensions have been stoked by extremist Buddhist monks amid accusations of instigating hate crimes against minority Muslims. In 2018 the Colombo government imposed for the first time since 2011 a nationwide state of emergency, lasting some 10 days, in a bid to quell anti-Muslim violence after riots left three people dead. — AFP



COLOMBO: A member of the Sri Lankan security forces stands next to a broken Virgin Mary statue at St Anthony's Shrine following a bomb attack in Kochchikade in Colombo yesterday. — AFP



COLOMBO: A general view of the empty streets after the Sri Lanka Police curfew in Colombo yesterday. — AFP



## Analysis

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## Market 'pause party' makes Fed rate cut less likely

Risk-taking has been the rage since the Federal Reserve quit hiking interest rates at the end of last year. US stocks are back near record highs and investors are stockpiling the lowest-grade corporate bonds with only a smidgen of extra compensation for the added risk. That rebounding mood on Wall Street may be welcomed by a president that has been demanding the Fed cut rates after markets fell sharply last year, and complaining that even pausing at the current level is the wrong call.

But if anything the 'pause party' on Wall Street makes it even less likely that the US central bank will cut rates. Recent positive news on retail sales and exports, which have eased concerns of a sharply slowing economy, makes the case for a rate cut even weaker. Investors at least have gotten the message, and shifted from projecting a rate cut later this year to now putting the odds at only 50-50 that the Fed will move lower by early 2020.

The state of financial markets, say some analysts, is evidence the Fed's rate increases last year were on point, allowing the economy to continue growing while keeping risks in check. A rate cut at this stage would only be courting problems. "The argument for why they should keep the possibility of a rate hike on the table is because of financial stability," Citi chief economist Catherine Mann said in remarks on Wednesday to a conference on financial stability at the Levy Economics Institute of Bard College.

After a decade of near zero interest rates, "moving towards a constellation of asset prices that embodies risks is critical for getting us to a more stable financial market," she said, noting that both equity prices and low-grade bond yields show a market that remains too sanguine. In their critiques of the Fed, US President Donald Trump, White House chief economic adviser Larry Kudlow, and possible Fed nominee Stephen Moore have argued that lower rates would allow faster growth and be in line with Trump's economic plans. They contend that, with the risk of inflation low, the central bank does not need to maintain 'insurance' against it by keeping rates where they are.

Overlooked in that analysis are the financial stability concerns steadily integrated into Fed policymaking since the 2007 to 2009 financial crisis. Mann spoke at a conference named in honor of economist Hyman Minsky, who explored how financial excess can build during good times, and unwind in catastrophic fashion. The downturn a decade ago showed just how deeply that dynamic can scar the real economy.

Financial stability isn't a formal mandate for the Fed, which under congressional legislation is supposed to maintain the twin goals of maximum employment and stable prices. But since the crisis the central bank has concluded that keeping financial markets on an even keel is a necessary condition for achieving the other two aims. That doesn't mean an end of volatility or a guarantee of profits, but rather that risks are properly priced and that the use of leverage - investments made with borrowed money - is kept within safe limits.

That's a key reason why even policymakers focused on maintaining high levels of employment, like Boston Fed president Eric Rosengren, at times have taken on a hawkish tone in favor of rate increases. The worse outcome for workers, Rosengren and others have said, would be to let markets inflate too much, and crash again, even if that means risking a bit higher unemployment in the interim. Markets are currently "a little rich," Rosengren said in recent remarks at Davidson College in North Carolina.

Though not enough to warrant a rate increase, he said, it does argue against a rate reduction. Overall, Fed officials including Chairman Jerome Powell say they feel financial risks are within a manageable range, something policymakers feel has been helped along by the rate increases to date. The state of financial markets is "something that the Fed has to wrestle with," Rosengren said. "It's appropriate for interest rates to be paused right now." — Reuters

All articles appearing on this page are the personal opinion of the writers. Kuwait Times takes no responsibility for views expressed therein.



In this file photo taken on March 30, 2018, Saudi women attend a concert by Egyptian pop sensation Tamer Hosny in the western city of Jeddah. — AFP

## Grappling with ever-shifting 'red lines'

Two Saudis vent their opinions publicly. One is detained, the other is acquitted after the right to free speech is invoked. Such inconsistencies are provoking confusion over the kingdom's ever-shifting "red lines". Sex, religion and politics were once clearly delineated as no-go areas in Saudi Arabia, part of an unwritten but well-known social code of conduct for staying out of trouble in the absolute monarchy.

But as fast-paced social reforms shake up the petro-state and aggressive nationalism takes root, inconsistent state responses to perceived transgressions are muddying public understanding of where the boundaries lie. This month, a criminal court in Jeddah acquitted an unnamed Snapchat influencer accused of insulting fellow Saudis, saying every citizen had the right to express his opinion, local media reported without offering specific details.

The much-hyped case, which followed a broad government crackdown on dissenters and critics, drew both cheers and bewilderment in the kingdom. "Freedom of expression guaranteed," screamed a headline in bold red letters in the pro-government Okaz daily. That freedom did not appear to be guaranteed to academic Anas Al-Mazrou, who campaigners say was detained last month after he voiced solidarity with jailed women activists during a panel discussion at the Riyadh book fair.

Saudi Arabia's media ministry did not respond to a request to explain the contradiction, one of many across to kingdom. In February, a comedian was summoned by prosecutors and apparently forced to apologize for poking fun at the now-toothless religious police. But observers say other comedians have gotten away with it.

## Austria NGO fights hate online, one conversation at a time

When it comes to the problem of online hate speech, the culprits behind the keyboards and smartphones can take some surprising forms - just take 74-year-old Viennese retiree Ms H. Angered by an article she read on the Internet a year ago, the outwardly unassuming former midwife reacted with a Facebook outburst in which she said all immigrants should be poisoned on arrival in Austria. She said the comment was "spontaneous", written in the heat of the moment. But in the eyes of the law it could have amounted to the criminal offence of "incitement to hatred and violence". "The police summoned me and said I didn't have the right to write that," says Ms H, adding: "I thought it wouldn't go any further than that".

However, the Austrian authorities are trying to crack down on hate speech online, a phenomenon which countries across Europe are trying to grapple with - not least ahead of May's European elections. Since the end of 2017, several Austrian jurisdictions - including Vienna - have been trying to fight online abuse through a pilot program called "Dialogue instead of hate" ("Dialog statt Hass"). Instead of taking cases to court, prosecutors can now refer offenders to the program, which aims to cultivate media literacy and respectful behavior online.

### Offenders 'emboldened'

The program consists of a six-month course of 15 modules, covering topics such as disinformation, human rights, the workings of Facebook's news feed algorithm and dissecting tabloid headlines. The aim is to show participants how to "express one's point of view without denigrating others," explains Nikolaus Tsekas, head of the Vienna branch of Neustart, the crime prevention and rehabilitation NGO behind the course. The initiative comes amid rising international concern over the conduct of political campaigns online. In Austria the far-right Freedom Party (FPÖ), the junior

### 'Push and pull'

One Jeddah cafe was recently shut down by authorities for not enforcing gender segregation. But that prompted perplexity among the managers of other venues, where in recent years the sexes have been allowed to mingle. Last year, officials arrested a hotel worker who appeared in what they described as an "offensive" video, eating breakfast with a female co-worker. That left office workers who routinely share meals scratching their heads.

"The system is full of contradictions. It has no definite shape, and we don't know what is right and what is wrong," said Noah Al-Ghamdi, a civil engineer. "Maybe you do something spontaneous and one official doesn't like it and decides to crush you," he wrote on Twitter. Saudi political cartoonist Jabertoon recently captured the sentiment in a cartoon depicting a puzzled citizen boxed in by zigzagging red lines and being grilled by an official.

All this has raised questions over what is acceptable as Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman carries out a sweeping liberalization drive, which one official aims to drag the kingdom "kicking and screaming into the 21st century". The overhaul, popular with the youth, has ended decades-long bans on women driving and cinemas, and allowed mixed-gender concerts for the first time - at the risk of riling hardliners. It has so far not provoked any major backlash, but officials warn that reforming a society steeped in conservatism is fraught with peril.

The inconsistencies underscore a "push and pull strategy" as the kingdom attempts to roll out reforms without sowing turmoil, said Ali Shihabi who founded Arabia Foundation, a pro-Saudi think tank. Often the government reaction depends on social media reactions, observers say.

If an act goes viral online and creates a scandal, it stands the risk of a crackdown. "You keep on pushing the envelope while being very alert of public pushback, and react accordingly," Shihabi told AFP. "Public and social media reaction has an impact, as it should, and it shows that the government is pushing forward while treading carefully at the same time."

### 'Grey zone'

Holding citizens to different or vague standards, however, could prove unsustainable in the long run. "The Saudi government has gone to great lengths to forward its social modernization project," Eman Alhussein and Sara Almohamadi wrote in a report for the Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington. "However, without setting clear parameters for what is acceptable, the grey zone is likely to stretch further and could jeopardize social reform."

Most baffling perhaps is Saudi Arabia's crackdown on liberals in the midst of a liberalization drive. This month campaigners said nearly a dozen writers, bloggers and academics were swept up in a new wave of arrests without any public explanation by the government. Such arbitrary crackdowns are amplifying public fears as Saudi Arabia appears to pivot from austere religion to a form of hyper-nationalism.

In a televised debate last year, Shura Council member Abdallah Al-Fawzan said Saudis had the right to brand someone a "traitor" if that person fails to defend the country or chooses to remain silent. Such rhetoric and confusion over red lines has prompted many liberals to shut down their Twitter accounts - including those engaged constructively in critiquing the reforms. — AFP

## To vote or not to vote: Danes, Slovaks at odds over ballot

For first-time Danish voter Josepha Pultz Nielsen, voting in the upcoming European Parliament elections goes without saying, but disillusioned Juraj Martiny of Slovakia says he'll abstain because he has no faith in the system. The two illustrate how voter turnout in European elections varies widely, with northern nations at the top and eastern countries at the bottom. It is also often a reflection of citizens' satisfaction with the bloc's institutions. Denmark and Slovakia will each elect 13 representatives to the European Parliament between May 23 and 26.

Around 76 percent of Denmark's 4.2 million eligible voters say they plan to vote, compared to just 27 percent of Slovakia's 4.8 million. In the last EU elections in 2014, only 13 percent of Slovaks voted - the weakest turnout in Europe. Far from Denmark's bustling capital of Copenhagen, in the small central town of Nyborg, 21-year-old Josepha Pultz Nielsen plans to cast her ballot even though the European Union remains an abstract construction for her.

"I don't think there is a lot of focus on the EU. In school, we don't learn much about it," says the shy young woman who works as an after-school care teacher. While she sees freedom of movement as a clear benefit of European Union membership, she is primarily attracted to the idea of an open and welcoming bloc that can work together to address major issues. "We have to change the world and help each other with global warming," she says.

### Pseudo-democracy?

More than 350 million Europeans will vote to elect 751 members to the European Parliament in May. Danes are much more interested in the European elections than people in the rest of the EU, notes Catharina Sorensen, head of research at the think tank Europa. In the Scandinavian country, the general thinking is that "you



Pultz Nielsen



Juraj Martiny

simply have to go and vote if you support democracy in your country," she says. "In other countries there is less of a sense that it is a democratic duty to go and vote."

Pultz Nielsen agreed. "It's better to go and vote with a blank vote than not vote." Meanwhile only 25 percent of Slovaks vote regularly, according to Eurobarometer. Danes also tend to have confidence in institutions, be they national or European, with 60 percent saying they have faith in the EU. This compares to only 43 percent of Slovaks, according to Eurostat. "I do not like this institution," 42-year-old Slovak Juraj Martiny says of the European parliament, sitting at a cafe in Bratislava.

The director of a public relations firm, he won't be going to the polls in the May elections, though he did vote five years ago. He says the European Parliament is a pseudo-democracy. "Decisions are being made by the European Commission, which - as opposed to the members of the European Parliament - has not been directly elected." He also feels the parliament is too far removed from the daily lives of Europeans in general, and Slovaks in particular.

It can't even "approve unambiguous legislation that would ensure that a jar of Nutella bought in Paris would be the same as one bought in Budapest or Bratislava," he says, referring to tests conducted in 2017 revealing that big Western brands use cheaper ingredients in food products sold in former communist countries. More than half of Slovaks, 54 percent, said last year they would abstain from the May elections because "their vote does not make a difference", according to Eurobarometer.

Contrary to Denmark, voters in other EU countries have "much more utilitarian concerns, (such as) 'does the EU provide enough benefit to us,'" says Sorensen. A recent poll showed that 63 percent of Slovaks saw no advantages to being a member of the EU. — AFP



Wioletta Ruehrer (right), a social worker of the organization Neustart, talks to her client, an Internet hater who is taking part in this program after she posted a racist comment on Facebook, in Vienna on March 19, 2019. — AFP

party in the governing coalition, has been accused by the opposition and by rights activists of stoking tensions with hostile rhetoric towards immigrants and asylum seekers. The anti-racist NGO SOS Mitmensch has collated 20 messages from FPÖ officials in the space of a year which could be considered Islamophobic. The instructors at Neustart says those messages embolden others to repeat the same language. "We often see people who say: 'Politicians say it, why can't I?'" says Tsekas. Last November, a local FPÖ politician was himself sent on an online course run by Neustart after a racist, homophobic Facebook post.

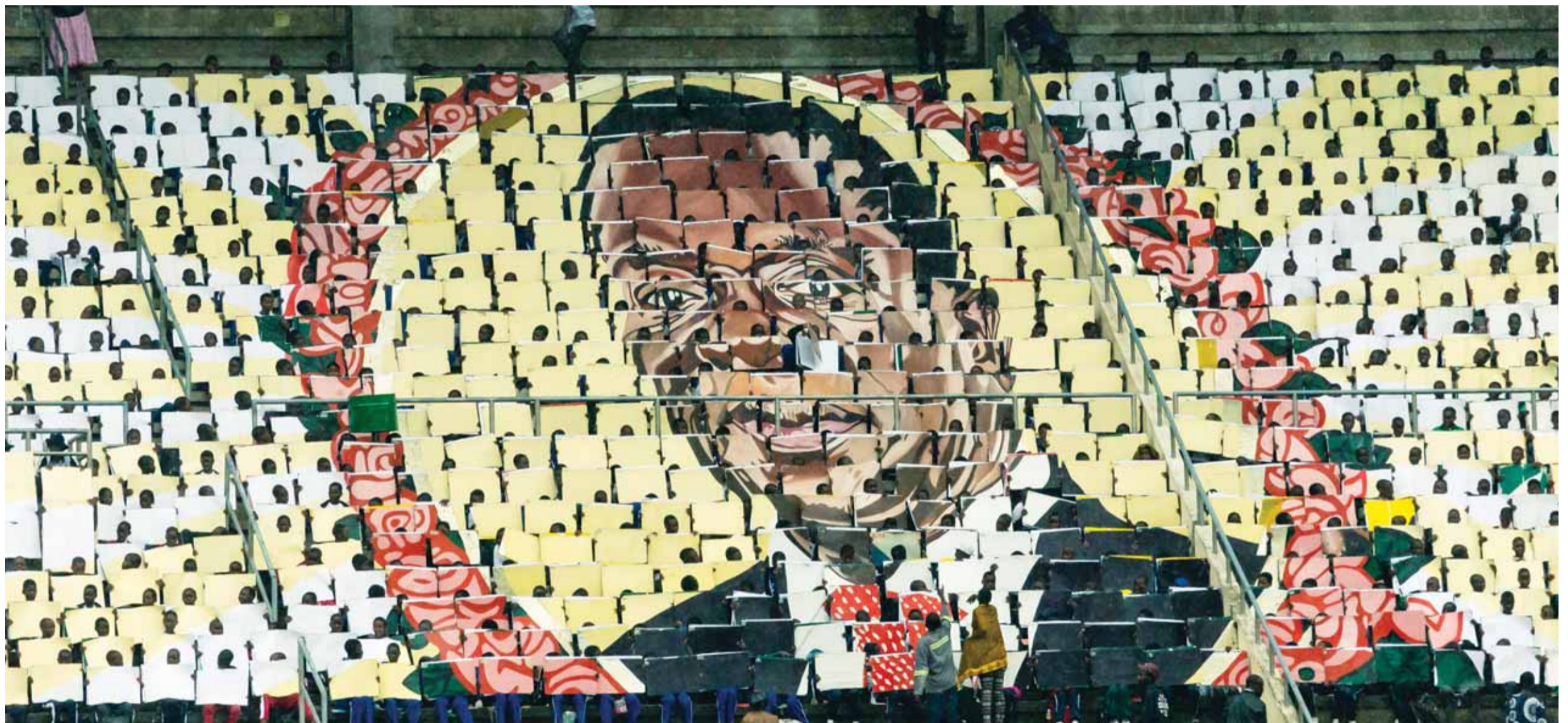
### No brainwashing

Along with homophobic comments, use of racist and Islamophobic language leads to the vast majority of referrals to Neustart so far. Most of those sent for training are men between the ages of 40 and 60 and the first steps are often tricky. Speaking to AFP at her fifth session, Ms H was still of the belief that "there's no freedom of speech, we don't have the right to say what we think". Her adviser Wioletta Ruehrer says this a typical reaction. Her work with Ms H will consist primarily of "understanding her life story, her fears, seeing whether she herself has ever been discriminated against". In this way she hopes to create empathy for the targets of abusive language. Another Neustart client tells of how he was a reluctant participant at the beginning of the course but ended up wanting further sessions. "My opinions, my points of view haven't changed," says the voluble middle-aged Viennese man. — AFP



## Business

MONDAY, APRIL 22, 2019

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buoyed by Banks, telecom sectors**13** Trump blames Fed, but dollar  
edges up amid upbeat data**14** Zain Kuwait launches Zain Kids, in  
partnership with DOCOMO Digital

HARARE: An image of President Emmerson Mnangagwa is formed by hundreds of people during the celebration of Zimbabwe's 39th Independence Day anniversary at the country's National Sports Stadium. — AFP

## Inflation nightmare returns to haunt Zimbabwe

## Prices of goods and services skyrocket as Mnangagwa fails on promises

HARARE: The price of bread almost doubled for Zimbabweans last week, as the inflation nightmare that marked the rule of long-time authoritarian leader Robert Mugabe returns to haunt his successor Emmerson Mnangagwa.

There have been warnings of the mental and physical toll the rampant price increases will have on Zimbabweans after the cost of a loaf of bread rose from \$1.80 to \$3.50, and a tub of butter shot up to \$17 from \$8.50. Mnangagwa pledged to revive his country's moribund economy when Mugabe was toppled in 2017 after 37 years in power.

But after the central bank unveiled a new monetary policy in February, introducing a new local currency, prices of goods and services have skyrocketed at rates unseen in a decade. The disparity between the official and parallel market exchange rates has been rapidly widening, triggering price hikes of up to 300 percent.

The chief of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions, Japhet Moyo, recalls meeting a man who saw the price of medicine for his chronic illness rise so much in two months that it now costs almost his entire salary. In February, the man bought a month's supply of the drugs for \$95. This month he forked out \$300. His

monthly salary is \$320.

"I asked him how he managed to meet the rest of his monthly expenses and he broke down weeping," Moyo told AFP. Moyo is angry at the government for "putting on a brave face and giving the impression that the economy is on a rebound but on the ground things are going in the opposite direction".

**'Back to 2008'**

The crisis has brought back memories of a decade ago when hyperinflation peaked at a grotesque 500 billion percent, wiping out the Zimbabwean dollar. "We are back to 2008," said Tonderai Chitsvari, a resident in the Kuwadzana township of the capital Harare. "It's a miracle how people are surviving".

A shortage of raw materials has caused huge difficulties for the country's manufacturing sector.

"Last year, we spent US\$2.3 billion importing things like fruits and vegetables, soya beans, wheat... toothpaste and pharmaceuticals," said Harare economist Gift Mugano.

"This is a sign that we are not producing even the basics," he added. "We are not talking about manufacturing an aeroplane here. We are talking about saving

scarce foreign currency by growing wheat to bake our bread and soya beans to produce our own cooking oil."

Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries leader Sifelani Jabangwe said the government needs to channel scarce foreign currency to shore up distressed manufacturers. "We need to reduce... imports and promote local production," he added. Formerly a regional breadbasket, Zimbabwe's economy has been in a dire state for more than a decade, with the unemployment level soaring to more than 90 percent.

Many local companies have been forced to move abroad or shut up shop, while those that remained are operating below capacity due to the lack of foreign currency to import raw materials or upgrade machinery. Public anger over the economy contributed to the military intervention in November 2017 that finally brought down Mugabe, then 93.

Mnangagwa took over and went on to win disputed elections in July last year, vowing to turn Zimbabwe into a middle income economy by 2030. But less than three months after the vote, the economic turmoil of the Mugabe-era returned when a new two-percent tax on electronic transactions in October spawned shock price increases and fuel shortages.

In January of this year the president imposed a more than 100-percent fuel price hike—purportedly to ease the shortages—but that sparked countrywide demonstrations that left at least 17 people dead when soldiers opened fire on the protesters.

**'Inhumane, unethical, unpatriotic'**

Mnangagwa marked the country's 39th independence anniversary on Thursday by slamming the new round of price hikes. "Government is alarmed by the recent, wanton and indiscriminate increases of prices which has brought about untold suffering to the people," he said. It "is inhumane, unethical, unpatriotic and goes against the grain of economic dialogue which the second republic has espoused," he told the crowd at a sports stadium in Harare.

Veteran independent economist John Robertson warned of the toll that the economic chaos was having on Zimbabweans. "Standards of living are going down" Robertson told AFP. "It's going to affect their health, both mentally and physically, and reduce productivity."

Moyo said people "are giving into stress. That's why we are having so many cases of people said to have died after a short illness." —AFP

Huawei to launch  
5G at Africa  
Cup of Nations

CAIRO: Huawei will roll out 5G phone network for the first time during this summer's Africa Cup of Nations, Egypt's minister of communications and information technology said yesterday.

The Chinese firm will introduce the technology at the 74,000-capacity Cairo International Stadium which is set to host 10 games including the final during the competition. "Egypt wishes to cooperate with Huawei in the field of artificial intelligence, technology transfer and with 5G," Amr Talaat said.

Huawei is the leading manufacturer of equipment for next-generation 5G mobile signal with almost instantaneous data transfer that will become the nervous system of Europe's economy, in strategic sectors like energy, transport, banking and health care.

However, some Western nations have barred it amid fears Beijing could gain access to sensitive communications and critical infrastructure but Huawei denies all these accusations.

The biennial Cup of Nations takes place between



Signs are displayed at the Huawei stand at the Shanghai Auto Show in Shanghai. — AFP

June 21 and July 19 in the north African country.

Defending champions and original hosts Cameroon are in a tricky group alongside Ghana, Benin and Guinea-Bissau. Egypt was awarded the staging rights in January, following the decision to strip Cameroon of the finals due to delays in preparation. —AFP

Samsung gets reports  
of Galaxy Fold  
screen problems

NEW YORK/SEOUL: Samsung Electronics Co Ltd said it has received "a few" reports of damage to the displays of samples of its upcoming foldable smartphone, raising the prospect of a less-then-smooth entry for the splashy \$1,980 handset.

The Galaxy Fold, on sale from April 26 in the United States, resembles a conventional smartphone but opens like a book to reveal a second display the size of a small tablet at 7.3 inches (18.5 cm). The design, matched by Huawei Technologies Co Ltd's Mate X, was hailed as the future in a field that has seen few surprises since Apple Inc's iPhone in 2007.

Yet ahead of the launch, journalists supplied with review samples reported malfunctions after only a day or two of use. "We will thoroughly inspect these units ... to determine the cause of the matter," Samsung said in a statement.

Shares of the company closed down 3.1 percent, while the broader market was down 1.43 percent.

The malfunctions raised the specter of Samsung's

doomed Galaxy Note 7 phone three years ago. Battery and design flaws in the Note 7 resulted in some units catching fire or exploding, forcing Samsung to recall and cancel sales of the model. The recall wiped out nearly all profit of Samsung's mobile division in the third quarter of 2016.

With the Fold, analysts said malfunctions from the first batch of a test model were of little surprise. Moreover, the handset's in-folding design is likely to be less durable than Huawei's out-folding approach, they said. "In-folding is more difficult to make than out-folding, as it adds higher pressure to screens, which people have worried about," said analyst Park Sung-soon at BNK Securities.

**Do not remove**

Technology journalists took to Twitter to report instances of the screen either cracking or flickering. Bloomberg reporter Mark Gurman tweeted: "The screen on my Galaxy Fold review unit is completely broken and unusable just two days in. Hard to know if this is widespread or not."

Gurman removed a plastic layer on the screen that was not meant to be removed and the phone malfunctioned afterwards, according to his tweets. A wrapper around the device featured "ATTENTION" in uppercase and warned not to remove the layer, showed a tweet from another sample recipient. — Reuters



Business

KAMCO corporate earnings report

# GCC net profit up 3.5% in 2018 buoyed by Banks, telecom sectors

Aggregate earnings for Boursa Kuwait saw biggest y-o-y increase to reach \$5.8bn

**KUWAIT:** Total earnings for GCC-listed companies increased 3.5 percent in FY-18 to \$68.6 billion from \$66.3 billion in FY-17. Aggregate earnings for Boursa Kuwait saw the biggest y-o-y increase at 10.7 percent to reach \$5.8 billion. Saudi Arabia's Tadawul, which made up 41.2 percent of the GCC's total FY-18 net profits, increased its earnings 1.3 percent to \$28.2 billion compared to its FY-17 earnings of \$27.9 billion. ADX was the only GCC market which reported a y-o-y slide in net profits for FY-18, recording a decline of -1.3 percent to \$10.5 billion. Earnings during the year was buoyed by robust FY-18 results from the three biggest sectors by market capitalization: Banking, Telecom and Materials which increased 11.8 percent, 13.5 percent and 11.6 percent, respectively.

DFM posted the biggest net profits increase in absolute terms in the GCC during the year recorded at \$9.1 billion on the back of double-digit growth from the Banking and Real Estate sectors. Qatar followed Dubai as the second biggest contributor to the increase in net profits for the GCC markets. Qatar Stock Exchange's FY-18 net profit rose 6.3 percent to \$11.3 billion compared to \$10.7 billion in 2017. This growth was primarily led by strong growth in Qatari Banking sector earnings which increased by 8.7 percent followed by the Capital Goods sector which recorded an earnings growth of 34.4 percent.

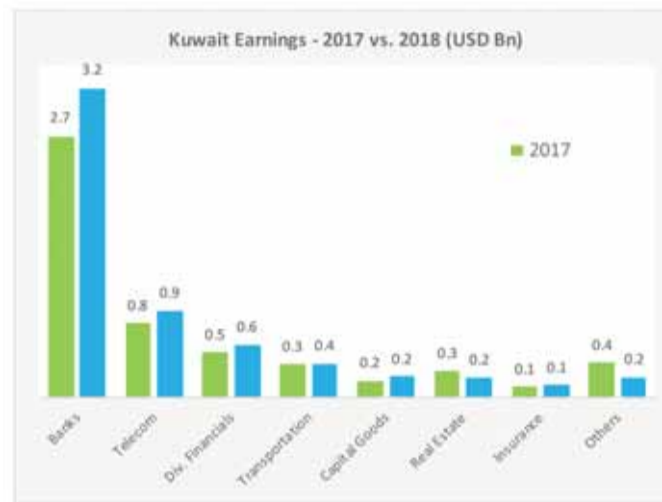
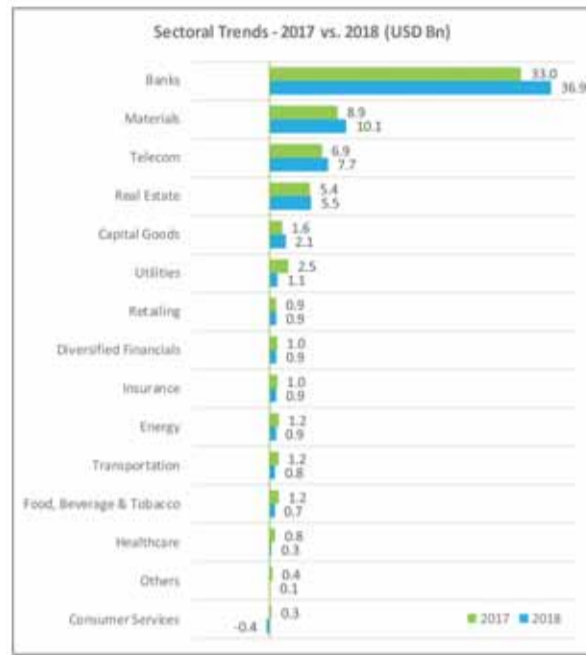
In terms of sectors at the GCC level, large-cap sectors including Banks, Materials and Telecom were the main force behind the rise in FY-18 net profits. GCC banks' net profit for FY-18 rose 11.8 percent to \$36.9 billion from \$33 billion in FY-17. The banking sector in each of the GCC markets reported double digit increase in FY-18 with the only exception of Qatari banks which reported a slightly smaller growth of 8.7 percent. On the other hand, earnings for the GCC Material sector rose 13.5 percent to \$10.1 billion reporting the second highest net contribution in real terms by sector in the GCC markets. However, the sector was dominated by Saudi Arabia with the Kingdom accounting for more than 90 percent of the sector profits.

Among the six biggest sectors in the GCC market by market capitalization (Banking, Materials, Real Estate, Telecom, Capital Goods and Utilities) only one sector, the Utilities sector, reported a decline in earnings for FY-18. The GCC Utilities sector reported 56.2 percent fall in FY-18 net profits to \$1.1 billion from \$2.5 billion in FY-17, the biggest fall in real term net profits by sector in GCC.

Saudi Electricity Co contributed the greater share of the decline in profits of the sector with 74.5 percent tumble in FY-18 profits to \$468 million from \$1.8 billion in FY-17. However, the GCC Consumer Services sector reported the biggest loss by sector in net profits for FY-18 with a total loss \$367.6 million in FY-18. This was mainly driven by DFM's DXB Entertainments which reported a FY-18 loss of \$687.7 million.

The Real Estate sector in the GCC accounted for the fourth largest share of net income and market cap. The sector has caused significant volatility in equity markets in the UAE due to continued oversupply in several segments of the market. That said, Dubai continues to be the key driver of profitability for the sector recording a net profit growth of 20 percent to reach \$3.6 billion, or almost two-thirds of the sector's profitability in the GCC. On the other hand, Qatar recorded the biggest profitability drop of 27.7 percent followed by Kuwait at 25.1 percent.

In terms of quarterly earnings, Q4-18 earnings for the GCC exchanges declined slightly y-o-y by 0.7 percent and reached \$12.8 billion as compared to \$12.9 billion during Q4-17. Dubai reported the biggest y-o-y drop in earnings during Q4-18 at 28.9 percent followed by Oman and Abu Dhabi that recorded declines of 15.7 percent and 5.6 percent, respectively. Earnings growth for the rest of the GCC markets were positive with Kuwait recording the biggest y-o-y growth of 24.1 percent followed by Bahrain at 8.5 percent. Earnings growth in Saudi Arabia and Qatar were also positive at 7.8 and 4.8 percent, respectively. Banks once again buoyed the earnings during the quarter as the banking sector on all the seven GCC exchanges posted positive y-o-y earnings growth during Q4-18. Bahraini banks topped the y-o-y earnings growth chart posting an increase of 30 percent followed by Kuwait at 19.5 percent growth, while Saudi Arabia and Abu Dhabi posted earnings growth of 15 percent and 17 percent, respectively. On the other hand, quarterly earnings pattern in the GCC real estate sector showed wide differences across markets although aggregate y-o-y growth was strong at 28.1 percent.



### Kuwait

Corporate earnings for companies listed on Boursa Kuwait increased by 10.7 percent during FY-18 to reach KD 1.8 billion compared to KD 1.6 billion during FY-17. The biggest impact on higher aggregate stock exchange profits came from the Banking sector which recorded 18.3 percent jump in profits that reached KD 0.98 billion in FY-18 net profits from KD 0.83 billion in FY-17. Among the banks, NBK reported a net profit of KD 370.7 million during the year, a growth of 15 percent primarily due to higher net interest income, net income from Islamic financing, and higher fees and commission income.

Similarly, KFH reported net profit of KD 227 million for FY-18 up 23.5 percent from KD 184 million from the previous year. KFH's robust performance was attributed to a decrease in the cost to income ratio for the fourth year running, a drop in operating expenses and resulting in an 11.1 percent increase in net operating income. NBK and KFH contributed 46 percent of the total banking sector net profits in Kuwait. Furthermore, although relatively small, Warba Bank's profits jumped 71 percent Y-o-Y profit to KD 12.7 million for FY-18 against KD 7.45 million in FY-17.

The Energy sector recorded the highest growth of profits in all the sectors of the Bourse due to the higher Y-o-Y oil prices resulting in a net profit growth of two-thirds to reach KD 24.5 million compared to KD 15.1 million in the same period in 2017. This was mainly driven by NAFESCO which reported a net profit of KD 11.8 million in FY-18 a 17.7 percent increase from FY-17.

The Diversified Financials sector declared the third biggest net profit increase in real terms in the Bourse after the Banking and Telecom sectors, reporting FY-18 net profits KD of 167.4 million a 16.9 percent rise from FY-17's net profits of KD 143.2 million. Noor Financial Investment Co recorded a 77.49 percent jump in profits to KD 25 million from KD 2.84 million in FY-17 driven mainly by settlement of loans with two local banks and a realized gain on partial sale of associate. Furthermore, Al-Madar Finance & Investment Co posted net profit of KD 14.8 million for FY-18 from a loss of KD 2.18 million from the previous year, the increase in the profits for FY-18 is driven by the increase in sales coupled with gains on sale of investment property.

In the Telecom sector, the second largest sector in the Bourse by market capitalization, FY-18 net profits increased 17 percent to KD 275.8 million. This was mainly due to Zain that recorded a net profit growth of 23 percent primarily related to contributions from Zain KSA.

### Saudi Arabia

Aggregate net profits for companies listed in Saudi Arabia increased by 1.3 percent to SAR 105.8 billion in 2018 against SAR 104.4 billion in FY-17. Banking sectors outperformed other sectors as the biggest contributor to net profits during the period by recording a net profit of SAR 50.0 billion. Al-Rajhi Bank reported FY-18 net profit of SAR 10.3 billion up by 12.9 percent from FY-17, driven by higher total operating income, net special commission



income, and income fees from banking services. On the other hand, NCB, the biggest bank in the Kingdom, reported a net profit increase of SAR 10.7 billion in 2018, an increase of 8.8 percent as compared to the previous year.

The Materials sector, the second biggest sector by market capitalization on the exchange, was the second biggest gainer witnessing 17.2 percent increase in the total net profits to SAR 34.8 billion compared to SAR 29.6 billion during the previous year. SABIC reported a 16.8 percent Y-o-Y jump in 2018 net profit to that reached SAR 21.5 billion attributed by increased production and sales volumes supported by higher y-o-y oil prices.

### Dubai

Despite recording its worst fourth quarter earnings in two years, the 2018 earnings for companies listed on DFM grew 8.8 percent to 33.3 billion AED. Amongst the major sectors, Banks, Real Estate & Construction and Telecom sectors contributed to the rise in profitability of the exchange.

Banks saw their profitability go up 14.7 percent y-o-y in FY-18, led by Emirates NBD and Dubai Islamic Bank. Emirates NBD reported a better-than-expected rise in FY-18 profits registering profits jump of 20.3 percent to AED 10 billion due to increase in net interest income, loan growth and improvement in margins. Dubai Islamic Bank's FY 2018 profits increased 13.8 percent to nearly 4.9 billion AED. The significant rise in profitability was attributed to top line income growth of the bank due to core business enhancement as well as optimal cost management.

### Abu Dhabi

The total net profit for listed companies on the Abu Dhabi Stock Exchange for FY-18 decreased -1.3 percent to AED 38.5 billion compared to FY-17 profits of AED 39.1 Bn. Furthermore, Q4-18 profits of the exchange decreased 5.6 percent to AED 8.1 Bn. The Energy Sector and the Services Sector contributed to the fall and dragged ADX's FY-18 net profits down. In the Energy Sector, Dana Gas declared the biggest company loss in ADX, reporting a loss of AED 681 million for 2018, compared with a net profit of AED 304.8 million for 2017. Majority of Dana

Gas' loss stemmed primarily from higher loss of production at the Zora field in the UAE. Meanwhile, Gulf Medical Projects recorded the largest profits drop in the Services Sector with a y-o-y decline of 92.1 percent to AED 113.2 million in FY-18.

### Qatar

Total earnings for Qatari-listed companies increased by 6.3 percent during FY-18 to reach QAR 41.2 billion compared to 38.7 billion in FY-17. Earnings for the Banking Sector made up over 55 percent of the total earnings of the exchange. Banking Sector in Qatar has been on an uptrend since the past few years led by higher lending for the development of infrastructure as the country prepares to host the FIFA World Cup in 2022. The sectors net profits rose 8.7 percent to QAR 22.8 billion in FY-18 compared to QAR 21 billion in FY-17. Commercial Bank of Qatar's reported an impressive 175.5 percent Y-o-Y increase in the net profit which stood at QAR 1.6 billion.

### Bahrain

Total net profit for companies listed on Bahrain Bourse increased 6 percent in FY-18 to reach BHD 771.3 million compared to BHD 728 million in FY-17. Similarly, in Q4-18, total net profits of the bourse also saw 8.5 percent rise to nearly BHD 122.8 million from BHD 113.2 million in Q4-17. Each of the two major sectors which represented over 80 percent of the total FY-18 earnings saw double digit percentage increase in their y-o-y profits. Commercial Banks saw FY-18 profits rise by 15.8 percent to BHD 547 million from BHD 472.9 million in FY-17.

### Oman

Companies listed on the Muscat Securities Market reported almost flat y-o-y profits in FY-18 that reached OMR 620 million despite a 15.7 percent fall in Q4-18 profits. The biggest sector of the exchange, the Banking Sector, saw their full year 2018 earnings increase by 11.6 percent, lifting the rest of the market. The Banking Sector, which represented over 61.2 percent of the total FY-18 profits of the exchange, saw its annual FY-18 profits increase by OMR 39.3 million in real terms.

## EXCHANGE RATES

### AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

#### EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES

US Dollar Transfer	305.200
Euro	344.110
Sterling Pound	402.710
Canadian dollar	229.730
Turkish lira	54.990
Swiss Franc	307.200
US Dollar Buying	297.800

#### ASIAN COUNTRIES

Japanese Yen	2.740
Indian Rupees	4.400
Pakistani Rupees	2.199
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.742
Nepali Rupees	2.742
Singapore Dollar	225.990
Hongkong Dollar	38.881
Bangladesh Taka	3.606
Philippine Peso	5.862
Thai Baht	9.592
Malaysian ringgit	78.056

#### GCC COUNTRIES

Saudi Riyal	81.441
Qatari Riyal	83.881
Omani Riyal	793.242
Bahraini Dinar	810.950
UAE Dirham	83.149

#### ARAB COUNTRIES

Egyptian Pound - Cash	20.700
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Egyptian Pound - Transfer	17.594
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.226
Tunisian Dinar	105.240
Jordanian Dinar	431.200
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	0.204
Syrian Lira	0.000
Morocco Dirham	32.434

### DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

Rate for Transfer	Selling Rate
US Dollar	304.840
Canadian Dollar	228.350
Sterling Pound	95.450
Euro	344.725
Swiss Franc	307.490
Bahrain Dinar	810.685
UAE Dirhams	83.400
Qatari Riyals	84.640
Saudi Riyals	82.185
Jordanian Dinar	431.245
Egyptian Pound	17.628
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.744
Indian Rupees	4.412
Pakistani Rupees	2.160
Bangladesh Taka	3.618
Philippines Peso	5.851
Cyprus pound	18.135
Japanese Yen	3.725
Syrian Pound	1.595
Nepalese Rupees	2.758
Malaysian Ringgit	75.435
Chinese Yuan Renminbi	45.805

Thai Bhat	10.550
Turkish Lira	54.575
Singapore dollars	225.511

### BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
<b>Europe</b>		
British Pound	0.389960	0.403860
Czech Korune	0.005328	0.014628
Danish Krone	0.041829	0.046829
Euro	0.336081	0.349751
Georgian Lari	0.132239	0.132239
Hungarian	0.001149	0.001339
Norwegian Krone	0.031795	0.036995
Romanian Leu	0.065353	0.082203
Russian ruble	0.004790	0.004790
Slovakia	0.009120	0.019120
Slovenia	0.028740	0.033740
Swedish Krona	0.294395	0.305395
Swiss Franc		
<b>Australasia</b>		
Australian Dollar	0.210228	0.222228
New Zealand Dollar	0.198085	0.207585
<b>America</b>		
Canadian Dollar	0.222572	0.231572
US Dollars	0.300750	0.306050
US Dollars Mint	0.301250	0.306050
<b>Asia</b>		
Bangladesh Taka	0.003028	0.003829

Chinese Yuan	0.043963	0.047463
Hong Kong Dollar	0.037094	0.039844
Indian Rupee	0.003833	0.004605
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000017	0.000023
Japanese Yen	0.002648	0.002828
Korean Won	0.000258	0.000273
Malaysian Ringgit	0.070547	0.076547
Nepalese Rupee	0.002682	0.003022
Pakistan Rupee	0.001510	0.002280
Philippine Peso	0.005853	0.006153
Singapore Dollar	0.219847	0.229847
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001401	0.001981
Taiwan	0.010175	0.010355
Thai Baht	0.009226	0.009776
Vietnamese Dong	0.00013	0.00013

<b>Arab</b>		
Bahraini Dinar	0.794050	0.810550
Egyptian Pound	0.017754	0.020354
Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000086
Iraqi Dinar	0.000210	0.000270
Jordanian Dinar	0.425068	0.434068
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000157	0.000257
Moroccan Dirhams	0.021240	0.045240
Omani Riyal	0.785500	0.791180
Qatar Riyal	0.079445	0.084385
Saudi Riyal	0.080207	0.081507
Syrian Pound	0.001293	0.001513
Tunisian Dinar	0.096893	0.104893
Turkish Lira	0.046173	0.057673
UAE Dirhams	0.081575	0.083275
Yemeni Riyal	0.000991	0.001071



## Business

NBK Money Market report

# Trump blames Fed, but dollar edges up amid upbeat data

## British jobs market remains robust despite Brexit disarray

KUWAIT: US President Donald Trump took another shot at the Fed, once again. Trump who was always a big advocate of lower interest rates claimed that the stock market would be "5,000 to 10,000" points higher if it wasn't for the hiking cycle of the Fed. Trump added "Quantitative tightening was a killer, should have done the exact opposite." These comments come days after Fed Chair Jerome Powell told lawmakers that the central bank will not be affected by political pressure. Currently, the market is pricing a 51.9 percent probability of a cut in January of next year.

On the trade front, Brussels has warned that US products ranging from hazelnuts to tractors have the chance of facing tariffs in retaliation for state support to Boeing. The draft list of products published by the European Commission on Wednesday followed a victory for the EU at the WTO, who ruled that Washington had failed to end an illegal tax break to Boeing. The publication of the list came a few days after the US announced similar plans to target up to \$11 billion of EU products in response to WTO rulings against Airbus subsidies. With the Brussels draft covering \$20 billion of US exports, the EU has underlined that any retaliation would in practice be on a smaller scale.

### Strong retail sales

Recent data out of the United States showed a strong rebound in retail sales after slumping in February. Monthly retail sales data for March came at 1.6 percent, significantly higher than the market expectations of 1.0 percent. The report reinforced the impression that weak sales in December were a deviation. The dollar index opened the week at 96.925 and reached a two week high of 97.485 after the upbeat data showcased last Thursday. The dollar index gained as much as 0.58 percent against a basket of currencies, before closing the week at 97.378.

### Labor market and Inflation in UK

Average weekly earnings came in unchanged at 3.5 percent in February as expected. The unemployment



rate remained steady at 3.9 percent, with the number of people working virtually unchanged at a record high of 32.7 million as the figure has increased by 457,000 over the past year. The unemployment rate is at the lowest it has ever been since 1975 as the jobs market remains robust amidst the Brexit disarray.

Consumer prices came in at 1.9 percent in March - matching the level seen last month while missing the 2.0 percent expected. The monthly figures showed that consumer prices eased 0.2 percent in February, missing the 0.3 percent expected and 0.5 percent seen last. The mixture of revival in consumer spending and further falls in unemployment indicates the UK is boding well under Brexit uncertainty.

### Eurozone PMI edges down

The composite PMI for the Eurozone declined unexpectedly yet again. The figure for April came at 51.3 and lower from the previous reading of 51.6. The result was driven by a drop in the service sector, while the manufacturing index remains below the reading of 50.

On the FX front, the single currency traded in a tight range the past week and reached a two week low of 1.1226 on Thursday amidst weaker data. Nevertheless, a quite week in the FX spectrum as investors and traders got more cautious for the Easter holidays.

### Growth in China

The Chinese economy has grown greater than



expected in the first quarter of this year. The National Bureau of Statistics reported an expansion of 6.4 percent year-on-year in the first quarter - ahead of the 6.3 percent expected. The figure matched the 6.4 percent growth seen in the final quarter of 2018, however remains significantly below last year's first quarter figure of 6.8 percent. Aiding the economy - industrial production rose 8.5 percent year-on-year, significantly higher than the 5.6 percent expected, while exports also rose. The CSI 300 index has risen more than 35 percent this year as the economy enjoyed stronger performance and higher confidence. Recently, US President Donald Trump is appearing to back down from his previous threats to escalate his trade war with Beijing - though no official agreement has been made.

### RBA meeting

The Australian Dollar nudged down last Tuesday after minutes of the last RBA policy meeting revealed that a rate cut would be appropriate if inflation remained low and unemployment went higher. The official cash rate remained on hold at its 32nd month record low at 1.5 percent - marking the longest period of stillness in Australian history. The AUD/USD pair dropped to a low of 0.7173 following the release of the minutes, later recovering and closed the week at 0.7153.

### Kuwait

Kuwaiti dinar USD/KWD opened at 0.30415 yesterday morning.

## Renault Al-Babtain's Renault Duster wins customers over with price at KD 3,999

KUWAIT: Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al-Babtain Co, the authorized agent of Renault in the State of Kuwait offers its loyal customers the new Duster - the unstoppable SUV for a starting price of only KD 3,999.

The all-new Renault Duster boasts brand-new exterior styling, delivering a distinctly assertive and robust look, as well as an upgrade in perceived quality with a totally redesigned interior for a comfortable and user-friendly driving experience.

The Duster's roominess, affordability and off-road capabilities have long been recognized as the model's strengths and the all-new models continue to carry these desirable attributes.

The SUV's exterior has been given a more robust look thanks to the addition of a wide chrome-finish grille

which extends to the head lights positioned at the car's front corners. A front skid plate reinforces the Duster's adventurer credentials and ensures that the vehicle never loses its smart looks. Finished with Renault's signature C-shaped lighting with LED daytime running lights the Duster is a modern SUV with a rugged personality.

Inside, the Duster is equipped with new, high-quality, driving aids and new equipment, making it a genuine adventure-ready SUV which offers the versatility and comfort for everyday driving. On stepping inside the cabin, the noticeable difference in quality is instantly recognizable - packed with 'Easy Life' features like Hill Descent Control, Multiview camera and Blind Spot Warning, 4x4 monitor, automatic air conditioning, Remote Engine Start (GCC only), seven-inch touchscreen tablet and Renault smart card with keyless entry system - as well as quality trims and materials.

The all-new Duster is available in both 2WD and 4WD specifications and offers among the market's very best off-road capability. With a choice



of two petrol engines: 1.6L (4x2) mated to a CVT automatic transmission, and 2.0L with automatic transmission (4x4), the Duster is an SUV equipped for any terrain.

Renault Al Babtain encourages its customers to discover the 'best in class' model by visiting the showroom located in Al Rai and enjoy the qualities of the unstoppable SUV.

## Tech, green features, power mix to boost luxury car sales

NEW YORK: US auto sales may be slowing, but carmakers have high hopes for luxury vehicles, which are imbued with increasingly sophisticated gadgetry and sex appeal to seduce a new generation of millionaires.

Luxury car companies brought their "A" game to the New York International Auto Show, which opened Friday with a mix of new models, some featuring envelope-pushing technology and others pitched as green vehicles, to grab attention of new customers who grew up with technology and are sensitive to climate change.

In both cases, these are luxury models with price tags to match.

Mercedes-Benz' new generation of sport-utility vehicles has voice command and answers to "Hey Mercedes" as its artificial intelligence programs adapt to its user's habits.

That feature brings to life something like the experience from the 1980s hit television show "Knight Rider" when David Hasselhoff's character addressed his vehicle as "KITT."

"Voice recognition is absolutely something customers want," said Dietmar Exler, chief executive of

Mercedes-Benz USA. "It's much more convenient. The cars can read your emails or texts and you don't need to take your hands from the steering wheel," he added. "It's safer. You don't look down and try to find something, you can just say it and you control it."

Although many millennials still face heavy college loans, the US economy is also churning out adults who make seven figures and up who were born in the 1980s and 90s. So far this month, there have been successful initial public offerings by tech companies Lyft, Pinterest and Zoom, all led by (now-rich) millennials. And more youth-led ventures are expected to go public soon, including Uber.

### Going green

Eying this rarified niche population, the Italian company Pininfarina stands out. The company introduced its "Battista" electric, zero-emission vehicle at an art gallery in Chelsea, the trendy Manhattan district.

The sleek vehicle has 1,900 horse power and can sprint to 60 miles per hour in less than two seconds. The price? \$2.27 million! A future prospect in this ultra-expensive, ultra-environmentally friendly category is the Genesis Mint, which was shown as a concept car by Hyundai.

"The wealthy clients want just the best of the best," said Brian Miller, a New York dealer for luxury brands, including Rolls Royce, Ferrari and Bugatti, whose latest offering is the ultra-powerful Chiron sports car.

Porsche's 911 Speedster, which also boasts dynamic drive, plays on the lure



The Genesis G70 concept car is one of the ultra-expensive, ultra-environmentally friendly models auto makers are rolling out. —AFP

of exclusivity. Fewer than 2,000 versions of the car will be produced worldwide.

Sales for the German luxury carmaker rose 7.5 percent in the first quarter of 2019 even as the overall market sagged. "It's absolutely healthy and things are very positive for us," a Porsche spokesperson said. "Our sales are growing."

And Nissan plans to produce just 50 of its GT-R 50, the car used in the action film saga, "The Fast and the Furious." "Every detail is made by hand," said Nissan's global sports car program director Bob Laishley.

All the materials on the car are authentic. "If it looks like carbon, it is

carbon. It's the real deal; it's not synthetic." Mercedes-Benz's Exler sees three "dimensions" in the drive for luxury perfection: design, driver experience and technology.

"All three dimensions are becoming more and more important for the overall driver experience," he said. "It's about the whole package." In 2018, sales of luxury cars dipped 0.3 percent to just over 2 million in the United States, a contrast to the 0.6 percent gain in overall US sales.

But some experts think that trend will reverse in 2019, with the richest Americans seen as the biggest winners of US tax cuts signed into law in 2017 by President Donald Trump. —AFP

## Earnings deluge could make or break sentiment

NEW YORK: Next week will go a long way in determining whether investors should be concerned about the dawning of an earnings recession or whether back-to-back quarters of negative growth can be avoided in what is the heaviest week for profit reporting by US companies. A wide swath of S&P 500 sectors are scheduled to report next week, with 155 companies representing over \$9 trillion in market capitalization in the queue, more than 35 percent of the total for the index.

Heavy hitters Facebook and Amazon are due to report as well as a dozen Dow components such as United Technologies, Coca-Cola, Microsoft and Exxon Mobil. "The focus is going to continue to be on earnings and what the message is and so far the message hasn't been that great," said Ken Polcari, managing principal at Butcher Joseph Asset Management in New York.

"If they continue to be what they are, these kind of lackluster reports, the market is going to get exhausted and it is going to back off. It is going to be an important week just for direction."

Refinitiv data shows analysts expect the first year-over-year earnings decline since 2016. As of Thursday morning, they see profits declining 1.7 percent.

Rapidly sliding expectations for second-quarter profit growth have sparked concerns about an earnings recession. Right now estimates are for growth of 2.1 percent in the second quarter, down from the 6.5 percent increase at the start of the year and 9.2 percent on Oct 1. "That is the big question hanging over this thing, is this really an earnings recession?" said Kim Forrest, chief investment officer at Bokeh Capital Partners in Pittsburgh.

Forrest said that while some companies have been able to hold the line on earnings due to their ability to control costs, investors would rather see earnings growing on consumer strength.

Refinitiv data show 77 S&P 500 companies have reported, with 77.9 percent topping expectations, compared to the 65 percent beat rate since 1994 and the 76 percent over the past four quarters.

But in a recent note to clients, Morgan Stanley US equity strategist Michael Wilson said that while companies are likely to beat "the significantly lowered bar" for the first quarter, they believe it won't be the trough for the year.

Wilson noted with the S&P 500 now near the top of their valuation range with a forward price-to-earnings ratio of 16.8, there is not much upside remaining without a resurgence in growth that the market currently anticipates. That return to growth has also been cast into doubt by the less than enthusiastic picture being painted by corporate outlooks. The current ratio of negative to positive preannouncements stands at 2.7, well above the 1.5 average over the past four quarters but in line with the long-term average dating to 1997.

And while that number is elevated over the past year, some view last year's results as being positively affected by tax reform and at a level that is unsustainable this year. —Reuters



## Business

# Zain Kuwait launches Zain Kids, in partnership with DOCOMO Digital

## A safe and fun digital space for children

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, has entered an agreement with DOCOMO Digital, one of the world's pre-eminent mobile commerce enablers, to develop an exclusive digital content environment called Zain Kids, which is one of the first such platforms of its kind in the region.

Zain Kids has been developed to address concerns of unsupervised access to digital content by children, while still providing the most popular digital content, filtered by age, to children across formats. A tailored mix of local and global content based on the preferences of children in Kuwait will be accessible through Zain Kids.

The latest agreement will allow Zain Kuwait's 2.8 million users access to content from DOCOMO Digital's mobile entertainment partners and the ability to pay for this content securely as part of their monthly phone bills, leveraging DOCOMO Digital's digital marketing expertise and direct carrier billing technology. In addition to full parental controls, Zain Kids will also offer parents with a usage dashboard to monitor the time spent online by children. Zain Kids is accessible both over the web and as an iOS or Android app.

- **Modhey Al-Sabah: "It is imperative that young minds are protected from inappropriate content at all costs"**
- **Features full parental control and usage dashboard to monitor time spent online by children**

Modhey Al-Sabah, Zain Kuwait's Chief Government Affairs and Business Development Officer said, "Educating and entertaining our children in the digital environment is of extreme importance to us, and hence it is imperative that these young minds are protected from inappropriate content at all costs."

Al-Sabah continued, "At Zain, we take the mental protection of children very seriously, and as broadband access develops to become a widespread need for daily activity, we must make sure it is also a safe and healthy environment in which children can prosper. DOCOMO Digital shares our passion for securing children online, and we are excited to be the first operator in the region to introduce

such a protected gaming environment." Hiroyuki Sato, CEO of DOCOMO Digital, commented, "Zain Kids offers unique educational content and an engaging environment for children with no compromises on safety, giving parents complete control over the content that is accessed and consumed. We are pleased to see our partnership with Zain Kuwait grow from strength-to-strength, in line with our commitment to expand our footprint across the Middle East."

With over 98 percent of children under the age of eight now reported to be living in homes with at least one mobile device, it is not surprising that the "kids & family" category of apps has been downloaded more than 4.4 billion times globally across Google



Play and iOS stores in the last 12 months. Parents at the same time are increasingly concerned about what content their children are being exposed to online.

The launch of Zain Kids in Kuwait follows the company-wide agreement signed at Mobile World Congress in Barcelona in

2018, between Zain Group and DOCOMO Digital that has seen the successful launch of the Zain Games gaming platform in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Iraq. All these countries will follow Kuwait and offer the Zain Kids content environment in the near future.



In this file photo, an artisan holds the shuttle of a traditional loom while he weaves a cotton bandage in Segou. The season, which runs from November to March, has just ended, but the cotton industry isn't resting on the laurels of its latest success. — AFP photos

## Mali hopes to cotton on to added value

**SIBY, Mali:** For five months straight the farm hands in the Malian village of Siby walk out together to the cotton fields, a clean sack in hand, for a long day of the meticulous work of picking the crop.

In this field not far from the border with Guinea, several teams are out from daybreak to sunset, the first link in a global production chain that takes the cotton from the plantation to consumers.

"For each hectare, we invest more than 100,000 CFA francs (around 150 euros, \$170) and after the harvest we can recoup that investment and have 150,000 CFA francs in profit," said the owner of the field, Daouda Camara. "But we need the cotton to be of good quality," he added.

With record production of more than 700,000 tons the past two seasons, Mali has retaken the title of Africa's cotton champion. The crop supports four million people, a quarter of the population.

The latest season, which runs from November to March, has just ended, but the cotton industry isn't resting on the laurels of its latest success. The cotton farmers confederation set an ambitious objective of raising output to one million tons next season at its latest meeting, which was attended by Prime Minister Soumeylou Boubeye Maiga before he resigned this week over his government's handling of violence in the center of the country.

But political and economic leaders also publicly bemoan that Mali, like other African producers, only processes a tiny fraction of its production. Most of the cotton is exported raw. President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, at a recent conference on emerging African nations, lamented that Mali processes only two percent of its cotton. "Pitiful! Shameful!" he told attendees.

The association of African cotton growers called on him to help convince others leaders to boost the process-

ing of raw cotton into textiles in order to capture more of the added value.

### Inputs: Fertilizer and credit

The role of the state in supporting the cotton industry is already considerable, particularly via the state-owned Malian Textile Development Company (CMDT), which buys cotton from farmers.

Camara said cotton farmers benefit from subsidized fertilizer, unlike farmers of other crops. They also have easier access to credit. "With cotton farming the returns from a good season allow us to get good equipment," he said. The CMDT has made progress in recent years in getting value out of byproducts of separating the cotton fiber from seeds. "Ten years ago the cotton seeds would rot in the courtyard of the CMDT," said Bakary Togola, head of the APCAM association which unites farmers' organizations across the nation. "Today, there are facilities which transform the cotton seeds into oil," he said, even if there are not enough yet. But even rarer are facilities which take the tufts of cotton and spin them into yarn, let alone weave the yarn into cloth, steps in the production chain where there is more economic value to capture.

### 'Flooded' with imports

Experts in the sector say potential investors aiming to transform cotton in Mali face a series of obstacles including high energy costs, a lack of trained workers, and a small domestic market. One only has to look at the Mali Textile Company, also known as Comatex. Created in 1968, the Mali state only now holds a 20 percent stake with 80 percent in the hands of the China Overseas Engineering Group (COVEC), to see it is tough going.

Its factory in the central city of Segou is the only one in the country to process cotton from the beginning to end. "We transform the cotton from CMDT into thread, yarn to be woven, unbleached cloth, printed cloth," said Issa Sangare, Comatex's deputy CEO. Yet the firm is facing severe financial difficulties. "The market is flooded with imported textiles that are cheaper," he said. — AFP



## Al-Ahli Gulf Fund distributes dividends for FY18

KUWAIT: Al-Ahli Gulf Fund, managed by Ahli Capital Investment Company (ACIC) the investment arm of Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) yesterday announced the distribution of dividends for the year ended December 31, 2018 (FY18).

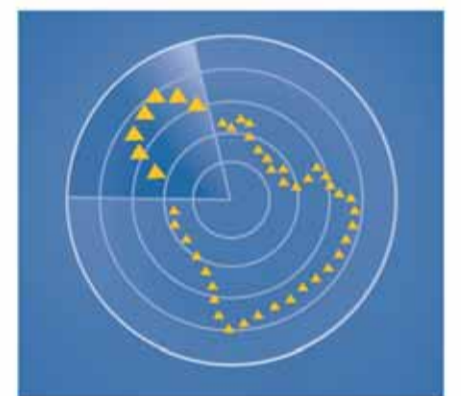
Investors will receive 9 percent based on the Net Asset Value (NAV) for December 31, 2018, with the dividend amounting to 90 fils per unit. All unit holders of the fund as of April 1, 2019, will be eligible to receive the dividend.

Muhsen M Al-Harbi, Chief Executive Officer of Ahli Capital Investment Company said: "Al-Ahli Gulf Fund outperformed the S&P GCC Composite Price Index for the year ended December 31, 2018. While the Index advanced 8.24 percent last year, the Al-Ahli Gulf Fund rose 13.62 percent in the same period. We are proud of this performance and are pleased to make this profit distribution to our investors."

The underlying investments of this fund are continually monitored, reviewed and changed to ensure the optimal selection to achieve the best risk adjusted returns. We believe this fund provides the opportunity for investors to



Muhsen M Al-Harbi



الصندوق  
الأهلي الخليجي  
Al Ahli Gulf Fund

invest in the GCC markets in a diversified manner." Due to its open-ended structure, the fund allows investors to enter and exit monthly. The minimum subscription requirement of only 1000 units allows investors to participate in the Fund with small values. The Fund is designed to achieve long-term capital growth while taking an acceptable level of risk. Al-Ahli Gulf Fund was launched in November 2003 and has one of the longest track records among funds invested in GCC stocks.

## AUB congratulates winners of Al-Hassad draw

KUWAIT: Ahli United Bank announced on the 17th of April 2019 the winners of its weekly draw of Al-Hassad Islamic account which is the very first draw account in Islamic banking in Kuwait that has reshaped the lives of thousands lucky winners. Al-Hassad has have over 850 prizes, over a 12 month period. The weekly draw announced the grand prize winner of KD 10,000 as Turkey Obaid Al-Enezi. 20 other winners won prizes of KD 1,000 and are as follows: Aysah Mohammad Yousef, Ameer Abdul Hameed Al-Sayegh, AbdulAziz Rasheed Al-Azmi, Emad Dhafer Al-Halbeyah, Abdul Hakeem Ibrahim Mubarak, Sameerah Sanaseeri, Sama Ayman Mostafa, Ludwa Mohamed Al-Dakhil, Taiba Abdulla Al-Jasmi Irene Celeste, Ameer Abdul Hameed, Ameer Abdul Hameed Al-Sayegh, Ismaiel Al-Sadi, Fadhel Mohammad Al-Mutawaa, Mohammad Shuaifan, Rodolfo Royo Abuy, Habib Abbas Abdulla, Ali Hasan Al-Haddad, Ebrahim Rashid Al-Mahmeed, Mohsen Ali Mohsen and Fatima Othman Abdulla.

Al-Hassad Islamic Account presents also four quarterly

## Al-Tijari announces winners of Al-Najma weekly account draw

KUWAIT: Commercial Bank conducted the weekly draw on Al-Najma Account and the draw on the "Salary and Cash on Top" campaign. The draws were conducted in the presence of Ministry of Commerce and Industry representative Abdulaziz Ashkanani.

The results of the draw were as follows:

- Al-Najma weekly account - the prize of KD 5,000 and was for the share of Shareefah Fahad Al-Adasani.
- The campaign "Salary & Cash on Top" the prize KD 1,000 and was for the share of Abdulredha Hussain Ghuloum Awath.

The bank stated that the account prizes this year is featured by the highest cash prize and diversity of prizes throughout the year clarifying that Al-Najma Account will offer weekly prize of KD 5,000, monthly prize of KD 20,000 and a semi-annual prize of KD 500,000 in addition to the largest prize - linked bank account payout of KD 1,500,000. Al-Najma Account can be opened by depositing KD 100, and customer should maintain a minimum amount of KD 500 to be eligible to enter all draws on Al-Najma Account prizes. As for the chances of winning, the more balance a customer

mega prizes of KD 250,000 that will help the lucky winners achieve their dreams and aspirations in addition the monthly draw to win a prize of KD 100,000.

One powerful new aspect of the Al-Hassad Islamic Account is the prize draws on the holy occasion of both Eid ul-Fitr and Eid Al-Adha, when the winning customers will receive the Eid prizes of KD 100,000 each. May the Eid always bring prosperity and blessings to the Islamic nation.

Al-Hassad Islamic Account presents also 21 weekly prizes comprised of a grand prize of KD 10,000 and 20 prizes of KD 1,000 each. In addition to the highly attractive package of the prizes, there will be the annual expected profits on, which makes the Al-Hassad account a useful tool: for family and other savings, both for the short term and for the longer term - a fact which well appreciated by a large multitude of new and old customers.

To be eligible to participate in the draw, the customer should have a minimum balance of KD 100, whereby the customer has two chances to participate, with a maximum of 30,000 chances per draw, in addition to annual profits for all participants. Every KD 50 invested for at least 15 days entitles the customer to one chance in the each draw. The longer the customer keeps his balance the bigger the changes of participation in the draw. Draws are held every Wednesday at AUB Kuwait or AUB Bahrain depending on the draw plan. On the occasion Ahli United Bank congratulate its winning customers, and commented that there are many chances to win waiting for our customers.

maintains in Al-Najma Account, the more chances the account holder will get to win, where each KD 25 will give the customer one chance to win, the account also offers additional benefits like the ATM card, a credit card against customer's account and all CBK banking services that customer can enjoy.

As regarding "Salary & Cash on Top" campaign designated for Kuwaiti and expatriate employees as well as the retirees and which is valid until 31 December 2019 and the mechanism of joining this campaign for availing its benefits, the Bank explained that Kuwaiti employees with a salary of KD 500 & above whether newly recruited or in service can transfer their salary to the Bank and avail the benefits of this campaign by getting instant cash gift of KD 250 or an interest free loan 5 times the salary up to KD 10,000, add to this they will automatically enter the weekly draw on KD 1,000.

As for the expatriate customers categorized under Premier Banking Account with a salary KD of 1,700 and above, they will get instant cash gift. The retirees with pension KD 1,000 and above will also get an instant cash gift of KD 150 when transferring their pension to the Bank and automatically enter the weekly draw on a prize of KD 1,000 and avail the benefits of this campaign designated for Kuwaiti and expatriate employees working in private & public sector as well as the retirees.

Further, the campaign provides customers with the opportunity to get additional benefits and take advantage of the advanced and unrivalled services and products the Bank provides to its customers to meet their needs and expectations.



What's On



## 'Contemporary Armenian Fine Art' presents cultural bridge between Kuwait, Armenia



The 'Armenian Art in Kuwait,' in collaboration with Arame Art Gallery, hosted the 'Contemporary Armenian Fine Art' - a unique exhibition featuring around 60 beautiful artworks, created by the most talented and renowned Armenian artists of the present. This event presented a wonderful cultural bridge between Kuwait and Armenia, and an opportunity to discover the long-standing traditions and colorful richness of Armenian art through the thoughtful and bold creations of today's artists. The exhibition represented most styles and currents present in contemporary Armenian art, presenting figurative, surrealist, abstract, impressionist and other artworks. The event took place under the patronage of the Kuwait National Council for Culture, Art and Letters (NCCAL) and the Embassy of the Republic of Armenia to Kuwait.



A team representing LOYAC's Academy for Performing Arts (LAPA) recently presented a stunning performance before the Arabs Got Talent show in the semifinals. The team presented a performance combining Kuwaiti heritage, poetry, effective cinematography and both old and modern performances telling the history of pearl diving in Kuwait.

## ABK participates in AUK job fair

In its effort to attract top talent for the sustained growth of the banking industry, Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) supported the professional development of students by participating in the 15th Annual Career Fair hosted by the American University of Kuwait (AUK). At the career fair which took place recently, ABK presented opportunities available within the organization and students were provided with information about ABK and its approach towards business. Speaking on the Bank's involvement, Ali Akbar, AGM -

Human Resources at ABK said, "Investing in national talent is an integral component of ABK's strategy. We are continuously working towards recruiting the best talent in the country. Through training at 'ABK Academy', we strive to consistently educate youth on the banking industry and ways to develop their skill sets to assist them should they wish to pursue a career in banking." ABK's participation reinforces its commitment to playing an active role in supporting Kuwait's youth during the early stages of their work life.



## TIES hosts Tafseer class

You are cordially invited to our Tafseer class (Divine Wisdom from the last Testament) today at 7pm in which we will focus on verses 1 and 2 of Surat Al-Hashr (The Gathering). In this class, we will learn the first three things that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) did after his arrival in Madinah, their

importance, and some of the clauses of the treaty he concluded with the Jewish tribe of Bani An-Nadheer, and why he eventually expelled them from Madinah. We will also discuss the five things given exclusively to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), why the leader of the Madinah hypocrites harbored intense hatred for Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), and thus continuously plotted against him. Finally, we will discuss the various aspects of martyrdom in Islam, and elicit many lessons regarding the dire consequences of treachery - among others.



Health

# Over 800 climate change activists arrested in UK

**LONDON:** Climate change protesters who have brought parts of London to a standstill said yesterday they were prepared to call a halt if the British government will discuss their demands.

Some 831 arrests have been made and 42 people charged in connection with the ongoing Extinction Rebellion protests. On the seventh day of demonstrations that have occupied key spots in the British capital, organizers said they were willing to switch tactics from disruption to dialogue.

"We are prepared to pause, should the government come to the negotiating table," Extinction Rebellion spokesman James Fox told AFP.

"What the pause looks like is us stopping an escalation. We can discuss leaving if they are willing to discuss our demands."

"At the moment, we haven't received a response from the government... so we're waiting on that."

Extinction Rebellion was established last year in Britain by academics and has become one of the world's fastest-growing environmental movements. Campaigners want governments to declare a climate and ecological

emergency, reduce greenhouse gas emissions to zero by 2025, halt biodiversity loss and be led by new "citizens' assemblies on climate and ecological justice."

"We're giving them an opportunity now to come and speak to us," Fox said.

"If they don't take that opportunity, and if they refuse to come and negotiate with us, then this is going to continue and this is going to escalate in different, diverse and very creative ways."

**Mayor: Time to stop**

Police said they had managed to clear the Oxford Circus and Piccadilly Circus junctions of protesters, who remain in place on Waterloo Bridge and Parliament Square.

"We remain in frequent contact with the organisers to ensure that the serious disruption to Londoners is brought to a close as soon as possible and that only lawful and peaceful protests continue," the police said in a statement.

Calling for an end to the protests, London Mayor Sadiq Khan said more than 9,000 police officers had been responding to the demonstrations, which had left the force as a

whole overstretched. "This is now taking a real toll on our city—our communities, businesses and police. This is counter-productive to the cause and our city," he said. "I'm extremely concerned about the impact the protests are having on our ability to tackle issues like violent crime if they continue any longer. It simply isn't right to put Londoners' safety at risk."

"You must now let London return to business as usual."

In the blazing sunshine on Waterloo Bridge, police lifted protesters and carried them off to waiting police vans. "I'm genuinely terrified. I think about it all the time. I'm so scared for the world. I feel like there is going to be calamity in my lifetime," student Amber Gray told AFP.

"I don't even feel comfortable bringing children into this world knowing that that is coming."

"And I don't want people in the future to say to me, 'why didn't you do anything?'"

Retiree Kathy Hayman said politicians were "ignoring and denying". "I'm amazed really at the lack of consciousness that they have and the lack of responsibility." — AFP



**LONDON:** A climate change activist beats a drum as the group continue to block the road on Waterloo Bridge in London yesterday. — AFP

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# CLINIC PAGE



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**Dr. Abdullah Al Haddad**  
Surgery Department  
Consultant General Surgery, Laparoscopic & Colo - Rectal Surgeon

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

**Tel.: 22269369 - Fax: 22269368**  
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- ◆ Faculty member of (BEST).
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**Scope of clinical Practice.**

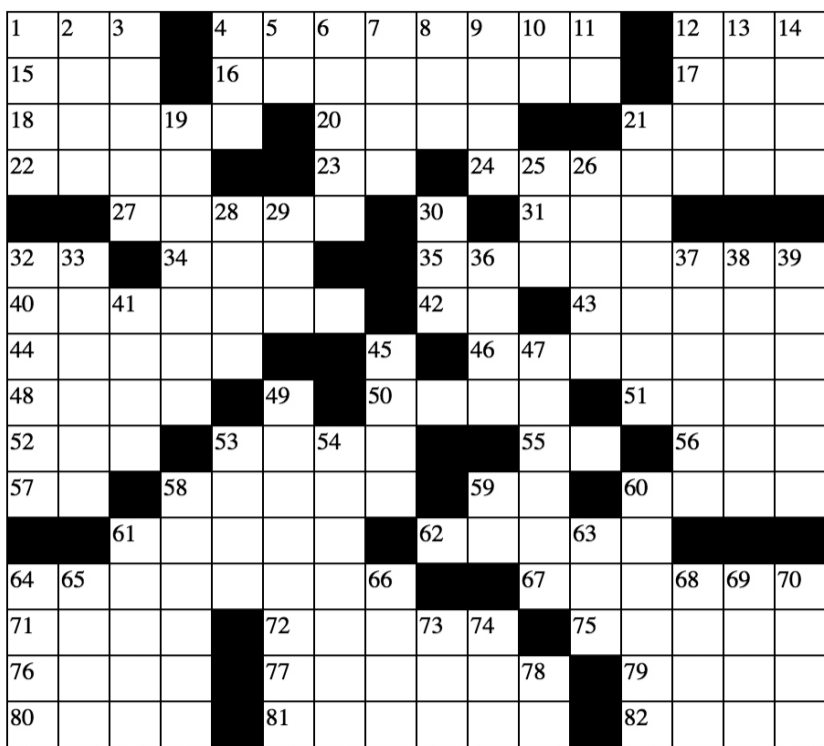
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Stars

CROSSWORD 2189



ACROSS

- The portion of the vertebrate nervous system consisting of the brain and spinal cord.
- Terrestrial carnivores.
- Nocturnal mouse-like mammal with forelimbs modified to form membranous wings and anatomical adaptations for echolocation by which they navigate.
- A local computer network for communication between computers.
- Often cultivated for the decorative foliage.
- A Nilotic language.
- (Babylonian) A demigod or first man.
- An official language of the Republic of South Africa.
- A Chad language spoken south of Lake Chad.
- The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.
- A man who is a stupid fool.
- Remove the pins from.
- The cry made by sheep.
- A radioactive element of the actinide series.
- A slight amount or degree of difference.
- The shore of a sea or ocean.
- A tricycle (usually propelled by pedalling).
- An edge tool with a heavy bladed head mounted across a handle.
- Comb-plate or locomotor organ consisting of a row of strong cilia whose bases are fused.
- Scale-like structure between the base of the wing and the halter of a two-winged fly.
- A treeless grassy plain.
- Make reference to.
- Small buffalo of the Celebes having small straight horns.
- An Egyptian descended from the ancient Egyptians.
- Grass mowed and cured for use as fodder.
- 1,000,000,000 periods per second.
- Any of numerous hairy-bodied insects including social and solitary species.
- An international organization of European countries formed after World War II to reduce trade barriers and increase cooperation among its members.
- A long noosed rope used to catch animals.
- An unexpected slide.
- A member of an agricultural people in southeastern India.
- A nearly horizontal passage from the surface into a mine.
- Complacently or inanely foolish.
- A republic on the southwestern corner of the Arabian Peninsula on the Indian Ocean.
- The basic unit of money in Lesotho.
- Any plant of the genus *Silene*.
- Channel into a new direction.
- English essayist (1775-1834).
- Rope or canvas headgear for a horse, with a rope for leading.
- Medium-sized tree having glossy lanceolate leaves.

DOWN

- Burrowing marine mollusk living on sand or mud.
- A quantity of no importance.
- Snarled or stalled in complete confusion.
- A federal agency established to regulate the release of new foods and health-related products.
- A heavy brittle metallic element of the platinum group.
- (Judeo-Christian religion) Chief spirit of evil and adversary of God.
- Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
- A plant hormone promoting elongation of stems and roots.
- Informal terms for money.
- Half the width of an em.
- An official prosecutor for a judicial district.
- (Scottish) Bluish-black or gray-blue.
- A sensation (as of a cold breeze or bright light) that precedes the onset of certain disorders such as a migraine attack or epileptic seizure.
- Scottish chemist noted for his research into the structure of nucleic acids (born in 1907).
- A roofing tile with a S-shape.
- Lacking a visible order or organization.
- A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
- Genus of tropical plants with creeping rootstocks and small umbellate flowers.
- Large burrowing rodent of South and Central America.
- An agency of the United Nations affiliated with the World Bank.
- North American republic containing 50 states - 48 conterminous states in North America plus Alaska in northwest North America and the Hawaiian Islands in the Pacific Ocean.
- Belonging to or prescribed for celiac disease.
- A collection of things (goods or works of art etc.) for public display.
- An organism especially a bacterium that requires air or free oxygen for life.
- A marksman who shoots at people from a concealed place.
- Move unsteadily, with a rocking motion.
- Work that you are obliged to perform for moral or legal reasons.
- A Chad language spoken south of Lake Chad.
- A motley assortment of things.
- Suggesting the horror of death and decay.
- (Greek mythology) Greek god of war.
- A genus of sea anemone common in rock pools.
- Any of various orchids of the genus *Bletia* having pseudo-bulbs and erect leafless racemes of large purple or pink flowers.
- A light strong brittle gray toxic bivalent metallic element.
- Of or relating to or characteristic of Hades or Tartarus.
- A Hindu goddess who releases from sin or disease.
- A branch of the Tai languages.
- A material effigy that is worshipped as a god.
- A sudden numbing dread.
- Type genus of the *Amiidae*.
- A large mass of ice floating at sea.
- (prefix) Opposite or opposing or neutralizing.
- Remaining after all deductions.
- The compass point midway between northeast and east.
- A trivalent metallic element of the rare earth group.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

As uncomfortable as conflict can be, it is not an inherently bad thing. The waters that rush over stones are literally rubbing them the wrong way, but beauty is the result. These polished, smooth stones are something more than they could be without a powerful force affecting them. You are like one of those stones today. So when you feel someone pushing against your ideas, don't discount that person. This conflict will polish and improve you.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Your friends and companions can get you an inside glimpse of the glamorous life today. If you're going to a concert, follow a friend who tries to get backstage. If you're trying to get out of a boring chore, ask a friend to give you an excuse to say no—you never know where this pal's famous charm can lead you! Rely on the people who care about you for a good time today. They will offer you an easy, effortless way to relax and experience something new.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Giving and getting good advice will be a major part of your day. If you're an especially good listener, you'll learn how to give someone some tough love in a very sweet, soft way. This is a valuable skill that will get you placed at the top of a friend's speed-dial list, so if you're not ready to take on the role of personal therapist, make sure you rein in the advice-giving to just the most important people in your inner social circle.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

The analytical side of your brain is about to do battle with the emotional side of your brain. Which side do you think will win? This prizefight won't be bloody, but it will have a conclusive winner. The losing side will have to face a few unpleasant facts, and the victor won't have much time to gloat. Luckily, you'll be surrounded by fun people and exciting events for the next few days—these factors will help make your realization all but painless.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Someone whose reluctance has been frustrating you will show signs of finally getting with the program today. It seems that this person is just about ready to put an end to a slow-motion lifestyle and pick up the pace. He or she won't exactly start being impulsive or spontaneous but will let go of the side of the pool and start swimming along with the rest of the crowd—maybe even in the deep end. Help make this transition a gentle one.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

If you can tie up all your loose ends this morning, you'll be able to clear your whole day. There are a few little indulgences you've wanted to get involved in, and today offers you an opportunity to take as many of them on as possible. Splurge on yourself, and make sure you take the long way home—the route you never get to take because you're always in such a hurry. You can learn a lot by slowing down a little, so take your time and relax.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

There's no denying that you're a good listener, but are you listening to the people who really need to be heard right now? There's a chance that personal relationships are affecting your priorities. While going along with whatever other people think is convenient and relatively stress-free, it can be shortsighted. Feel free to break out of the mold that other people have created for you! You are your own person, and this is more important than peace right now.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

If you need more clarity about an upcoming decision or a recurring problem, you will find some hope today—but first, you need to get a handle on scheduling and other details. Once all of your time issues are settled, your vision will start to become much more vivid—and you may see that what you used to think were problems are really just intriguing new puzzles to solve. Wrap your mind around all of your options, and before this day is over, you will know what tomorrow could bring.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Your ability to deal with difficult personalities might just come in handy today. Even if the people around you are driving you a bit crazy, you'll be able to channel their off-the-wall antics into some creative inspiration. But if you fall into an antisocial mood this afternoon, you could find the energy distracting. If possible, find an out-of-the-way place to get the rest of your work done. Working from home would be ideal if it's possible.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Investigate a hard-to-believe story today, and you will find that the facts don't quite line up correctly. Handle this discovery as gingerly as possible—be careful not to pounce too quickly on the storytellers. Give them the benefit of the doubt and realize that they might merely be repeating errors that were told to them. Your role today is not to protect everyone around you from falsehoods. Your role is just to find out what the truth is, for your own edification.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

Your routine will start to get on your nerves a bit today when the mundane details and responsibilities of your everyday life become just too monotonous. But don't create conflict just to stir things up. The best way to deal with this type of frustration is to take a deep breath and just try to go with the flow. Think of the routine as a lazy, lovely current on a warm stream. Just drift along.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

This day will require that you take a small leap of faith—and the sooner you get comfortable with taking this leap, the better. You don't always have to know all the facts before you join something. If the other people involved in this thing are people you know and trust, then you should feel more at ease about adding your name to the team roster. The feeling of taking a risk may not be comfortable, but it's a feeling you should get used to as soon as you can.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Computer Jargon 1

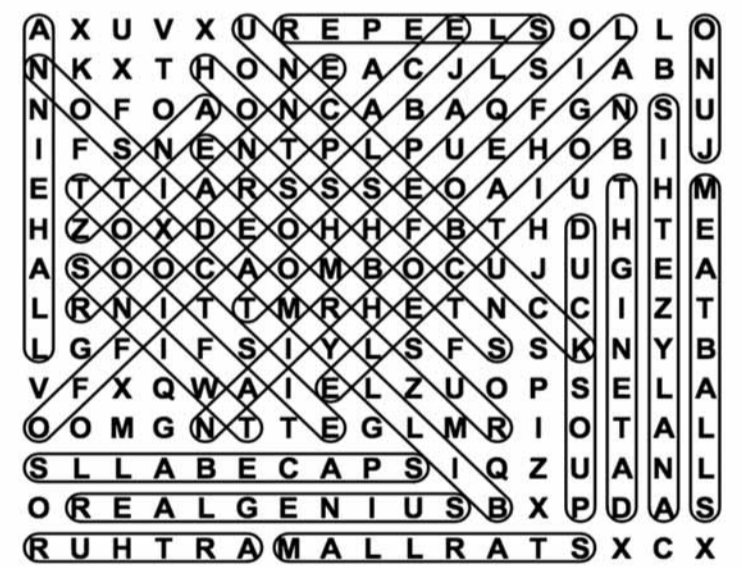
Find and circle all of the computer words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell an additional word.



- |             |            |            |              |           |
|-------------|------------|------------|--------------|-----------|
| APPLICATION | DEFRAGMENT | GOOGLE     | NANOSECOND   | SCANNER   |
| BACKUP      | DIRECTORY  | HTML       | NETWORK      | SECURITY  |
| BINARY      | DISK DRIVE | ICON       | PARTITION    | SHAREWARE |
| BLUETOOTH   | DOS        | INTERNET   | PASTE        | SOFTWARE  |
| BOOT        | DRAG       | JAVASCRIPT | PDF          | SPAM      |
| BYTE        | EMAIL      | KERNAL     | PIXEL        | TASKBAR   |
| CHAT        | ENCRYPTION | LCD        | POWER SUPPLY | THUMBNAIL |
| CLICK       | FILE       | LOGIN      | PROGRAMMER   | UNIX      |
| COOKIE      | FIREWALL   | MEMORY     | ROUTER       | WALLPAPER |
| CURSOR      | FOLDER     | MONITOR    | SAVE AS      | WIRELESS  |
| DATA        | GIF        | MOUSE      |              |           |

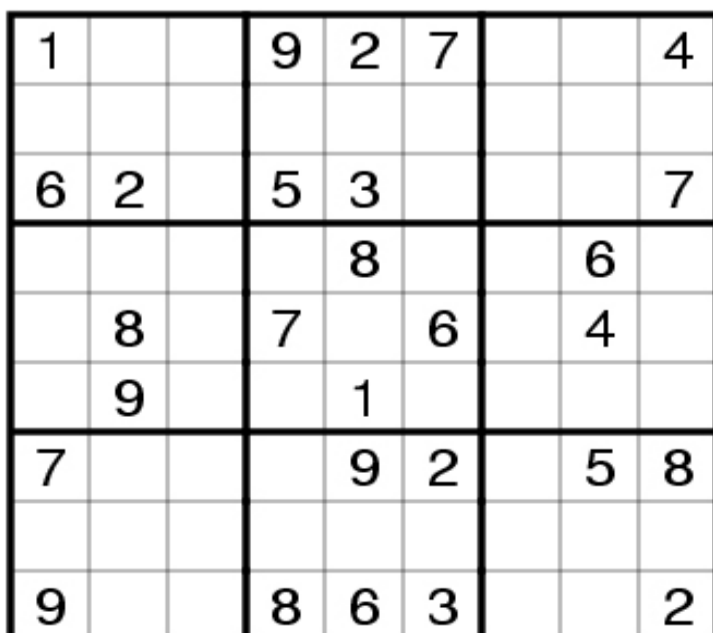
Yesterday's Solution

Comedy Movies 3 - Solution



- |               |               |            |
|---------------|---------------|------------|
| ANALYZE THIS  | HOT SHOTS     | RUSHMORE   |
| ANNIE HALL    | JUNO          | SLAP SHOT  |
| ANTZ          | LIFE OF BRIAN | SLEEPER    |
| ARTHUR        | MALLRATS      | SPACEBALLS |
| BILLY MADISON | MEATBALLS     | TOOTSIE    |
| DATE NIGHT    | OFFICE SPACE  | TWINS      |
| DUCK SOUP     | REAL GENIUS   | UNCLE BUCK |
| ELECTION      | ROXANNE       |            |

Daily SuDoku



hard

Yesterday's Solution



medium



# Lifestyle

MONDAY, APRIL 22, 2019



Actors perform the world premiere of the outdoor theatre production ZARA, around a giant mechanical moving baby named Eva, at the Piece Hall in Halifax, northern England. The performance features a cast of over 100 actors telling the story of a learning disabled mother and her fight to protect her baby. — AFP

## Hejaz Railway... historic monument turned into touristic, trade means



Jordan preserved stations of Hejaz Railway as well as the cars as a heritage dating back to Ottoman's Sultan Abdulhamid II, who instructed construction of railway to carry pilgrims from Damascus, Syria, to Madina, Saudi Arabia, in a 1,320-km-long journey.

Jordanian governments maintained operation of the railway, whose first trip was in 1908, to transport tourists, students and families from the north to the south of the country. The southern part of the railway is used to transport phosphate from mines to Aqaba Port. A museum was established inside Amman Station in 2003 including more than 250 paintings and materials as well as architectural models all displaying the Hejaz Railway. — KUNA



## Pop superstar Adele splits from husband

Global superstar Adele, one of the world's top recording artists, has split from her husband, UK media reported Saturday, citing the British singer's representatives. Pop diva Adele, 30, married charity entrepreneur Simon Konecki in 2016 after five years together. They have a son, Angelo, born in 2012. "Adele and her partner have separated," Benny Tarantini and Carl Fysh said in a statement, according to British media.

"They are committed to raising their son together lovingly. As always they ask for privacy. There will be no further comment." Adele, who boasts 15 Grammy Awards, is one of Britain's most successful pop exports. With sales topping more than 100 million records, the north Londoner is one of the world's best-selling music artists. Her three studio albums "19" (2008), "21" (2011) and "25" (2015) were each huge hits worldwide. — AFP



In this file photo taken on February 15, 2016 singer Adele (right) and her husband, charity entrepreneur Simon Konecki (second right) attend the 58th GRAMMY Awards at Staples Center in Los Angeles, California. — AFP





## Dido not ambitious

Dido isn't "ambitious". The 'Thank You' singer - who has seven-year-old son Stanley with husband Rohan Gavin - has no "dreams" for herself beyond her upcoming tour in support of album 'Still On My Mind' and she never worries about planning for the future. She said: "I have a bit of a mental block about thinking ahead or making plans. 'I've always been so in the moment. You can't predict what's going to happen. 'I don't have any expectations and in a way I don't have dreams for myself. 'I'm not very ambitious. At the beginning, my ambition was just to have a cassette or CD with my songs on it. 'I think my ambition now, if I've got any, is to somehow incorporate doing this into the life that I know makes me really happy. 'To somehow have a world where it is not all or nothing, and you can just put records out a bit more regularly and it's an easy thing." The 47-year-old singer's new album feels like Dido's debut because it is so different to anything she's done before. She explained to Red magazine: "It almost feels like my first record. I'm proud of it, it's a real celebration to what's gone before. 'What I write about are little moments of conflict. There is always light and dark. But when you have a kid, there is no conflict. You just love them and want to hang out with them. I think that got in the way of writing for a while."

## Linkin Park 'are talking about making new music together'

Linkin Park have "started talking about making new music together". The rock group - which features Mike Shinoda, Brad Delson, Dave Farrell, Joe Hahn, and Rob Bourdon - went on a hiatus after the death of former band member Chester Bennington in 2017, but Joe has confirmed they've recently considered the possibility of returning to the recording studio. He told South Korean newspaper Yonhap: "The members are taking care of themselves and their families and are going through the problems in their own way 'And ... Now the band has started talking about making new music together." However, Joe admitted that the timetable for their reunion remains undecided. Asked when they plan to reunite, he confessed: "Maybe in about 10 years? It might be sooner. 'I don't want to set a deadline. We just want to focus on the present and talk about music. We aren't discussing detailed plans. I just want to go back to those days when I made music in the warehouse." Previously, Mike Shinoda admitted the band could return to the music scene with a new singer in place of Bennington, who committed suicide in July 2017. He shared: "I think it has to happen naturally. And if we find somebody that's a great person that we think is a good personality fit and a good stylistic fit, then I could see trying to do some stuff with somebody."



## Elle Fanning wants to be a pop star

Elle Fanning dreams of becoming a pop star. The 21-year-old actress plays a wannabe pop star in 'Teen Spirit', and Elle has admitted that she's also thought about making the transition into the music industry. She explained to Consequence of Sound: "It's definitely crossed my mind. That's not out of the question and I feel like I did get a taste of maybe what pop stars go through with the performance element because also there would be days where I would have to just sing like the song 30 times. 'That element of it I was like, 'Whew'. That's an element people don't think of when they think of pop stars. 'The strength of having to go on tour ... that would be a lot but I don't know, maybe an album or something of songs would be cool. Country songs to surprise everybody!" Elle also revealed she's been a huge music fan since her youth. The actress recalled: "My first concert I ever went to was Gwen Stefani when I was nine, and it was in Budapest. It was just insane. 'I was a little nine year old in glasses. I had curled my hair, I wore this like crazy red dress. I remember exactly what I wore. I was so excited to go. I danced probably harder than I've ever danced. 'Like, my little body, I was so sweaty. I remember I was just like throwing myself. It was crazy. I was like with my grandmother and she was just sitting down and letting me dance. It was just so funny. 'Even now, that was such a visceral experience for being so young, you're like ... you can't believe what's happening in front of you. I do remember that."



## Bebe Rexha gets advice from Alicia Keys

Bebe Rexha turns to Alicia Keys when she needs advice. The 29-year-old star "admires" the fact the 'Empire State of Mind' hitmaker is always willing to help and quick to respond because she knows it would be so easy for her to give her the brush off. She said: "I reached out to Alicia Keys for advice on the music business. Any time I need help, she's willing to give it to me, and that's really hard to come by. She always responds right away and is really respectful. 'I admire that - a lot of successful females could easily be like, 'Oh, no, you're an up-and-coming artist, why should I help?' She's really kind." When it comes to her own career, the 'I'm A Mess' hitmaker would love to emulate the success of Pink because she admires the way the 'Just Like a Pill' singer - who has two children with husband Carey Hart - has found "balance" in her life. She said: "Pink had success, then had her family and managed to balance that. It's something I really look up to because my career is everything, but so is balance. I want to enjoy my life." Before finding success as a solo artist in her own right, Bebe wrote songs for the likes of Rihanna, Eminem, Selena Gomez and Iggy Azalea but admitted she hasn't always been happy with how other artists have interpreted her tracks. Asked if anyone has performed her songs in a way she didn't like, she told Britain's Marie Claire magazine: "Yeah, a lot! Sometimes I've had to pull them back. They have to make it their own - that's what makes an artist an artist - but if I don't think it sounds great on the person's voice, that's different."

## GEORGE PROTEGE HANNAH UNVEILS NEW SINGLE

Boy George's protege Jamie Hannah has unveiled his new track 'Sound of My Youth'. The classically trained musician spent 2018 in the studio honing his talents alongside award-winning producer Benny D who has worked with some of the world's biggest stars (including Stormzy, Lily Allen, and The Killers). It was here that he was introduced to Boy George, and the Culture Club icon previously insisted that he had "never heard a voice like his". The pair soon decided to collaborate together in the studio, and the resulting track 'House of Sun' is set to be released on the 'Karma Chameleon' hitmaker's label this summer. Previously asked about the upcoming release and their work together, Boy George promised: "It's going to be a big summer smash. Jamie has also attracted the attention of Academy Award Winner Dame Emma Thompson, who praised his "potential" and described the track as "spectacular and wonderful". She said: "The potential in this young artist is breath-taking... This song is sensational, spectacular and wonderful." Currently on tour with Heather Small, and with new music already in production, 2018 is shaping up to be an exciting year for this young musician and performer. In an interview with Paper magazine, he told Boy George: "So busy at the moment, I barely have time to sleep! We've been in the studio putting finishing touches to a few tracks for an EP. 'I'm currently on tour with Heather Small of M People around the UK. I have a few other tours in the pipeline to hit the US and UK later in the year. Maybe a few other secrets too..."



## Gary Barlow: Take That need more than two



Gary Barlow insists Take That wouldn't "survive" as a duo. The group started out as a five-piece, but following the departures of Robbie Williams and Jason Orange, they now record and tour as a trio. Though Gary thinks he, Mark Owen and Howard Donald are closer than ever now, he doesn't believe they could carry on if another of the group left out. He said: "We wouldn't survive if there was only two of us, no way. 'When Jason told us he wanted to leave in 2014, we all sat together and said, 'Do we carry on? Is it worth it?' 'That actually brought us closer together because we realized, 'God, we've got to look after this. 'I think that's why it still works - because we all want it to." And Gary admitted decision making is much easier these days because there are fewer "egos" involved. He said: "Everything we create is very inclusive and it never feels like someone is trying to get control over something any more. 'That stuff all happened in the nineties and some of it was really quite fraught. 'I mean, think back to the whole thing with Robbie leaving. There were too many egos involved and I think we all learnt a real hard lesson from that." The 'Patience' hitmaker - who has Daniel, 18, Emily, 16, and 10-year-old Daisy with spouse Dawn - also thinks getting older has helped because he and his bandmates have different outside issues to deal with away from the group. He told Red magazine: "You gain perspective. I found the 90s difficult because I didn't have a wife or a family, so there was nothing to keep me on the ground."

## Carly Rae Jepsen releases Julien

Carly Rae Jepsen thinks her latest track 'Julien' is the "heart" of her new album. The 33-year-old singer is set to release 'Dedicated' - her fourth studio record - next month, and she has revealed her brand new single helped her figure out what "direction" the entire LP would take. Unveiling the song this week, she tweeted: "'Julien' is the song that taught me the heart and direction of this album. Couldn't keep him for myself any longer." The deep track sees Carly singing about being obsessed with a lover as "the last breath that I breathe". She sings: "I tried another, to keep me satisfied. But all you colours are still dancing in my mind." 'Julien' is the third single to be released from the upcoming album - which is set to drop on May 17 - following 'Now That I Found You' and 'No Drug Like Me'. Carly confirmed her fourth LP - her first since 2015's 'Emotion' - earlier this month, and the 'I Really Like You' hitmaker previously revealed she has gone down a different route for the new collection. She said: "I normally write in a bunch of different directions at once. Now, the thing that I noticed, generally with a lot of artists, is that we try to put out the most obvious choices. 'I am trying really hard not to do [that] and instead offer something fresh and different from what I did before. It is all about showing some kind of growth with each project."





# Eastwood to direct The Ballad Of Richard Jewell?

Clint Eastwood has reportedly held talks about directing 'The Ballad Of Richard Jewell'. The 88-year-old icon has been in negotiations with Disney/Fox about his potential involvement with the project, which focuses on the Olympic Park bombing during the 1996 Atlanta Games. The movie specifically centers on the story of a security guard whose life is transformed after the police leaked that he was a suspect in the incident, according to Deadline. Jewell - who found a suspicious backpack in the Olympic Park, before clearing the area and saving lives - quickly went from being considered a hero, to one of the most disliked people in the US. The script has

been penned by Billy Ray, who previously wrote 2013's 'Captain Phillips'. Meanwhile, Clint previously insisted he doesn't have any intention to retire from the movie business, although he is planning to be more selective about his projects in the coming years. He explained: "Maybe I just don't want a certain volume of work, but, no, it hasn't lessened. I love what I do... 'I'll probably keep on going. I feel good, but it depends on material. I probably wouldn't do something just because it was marginal - I have to kind of think it has some validity and has some relationship to today."



## Tara Reid enjoying 'older' roles

Tara Reid is thankful she's "finally" being offered "older roles". The 43-year-old actress found herself in a position where she was "stuck" because she wasn't young enough to take on the parts she'd previously been known for but filmmakers didn't see her as right for 'mom' roles. But the 'Sharknado' star is now working on five new movies and is thankful to be enjoying a career resurgence. She said: "I have a load of new projects in the pipeline. One with Sandra Bullock that's going to be big and a Netflix movie coming out called 'The Fifth Wave'. "I'm finally getting to play older roles and that's what I needed because I was kind of stuck. I looked too young to play the 'mom' yet I was too old for a 'high school girl'. "Everyone saw me as the girl from 'American Pie' but that was in my 20s and I'm in my 40s now. I'm grateful I had that moment but now I'm getting the chance to show another side of me. "And now I have a great team behind me, I couldn't have planned better things. It's my time again and no one is taking it away from me." Tara went to rehab for alcohol abuse in 2008 but is unimpressed by comparisons to her former party-loving pal Lindsay Lohan. She said: "Lindsay was way younger than me, like 13 years younger. "She was arrested and got into trouble on set. I've never been arrested, never been in trouble on set. "When you're off work, you're allowed to play, you're allowed to have fun. But when I work, I work and I don't go out."



## Rodriguez's 'main goal' for Netflix's Someone Great was diversity

Gina Rodriguez says her "main goal" for her new Netflix film 'Someone Great' was inclusivity. The 34-year-old actress served as producer on the streaming service's recent film which follows a music journalist who recruits her two best friends for one last outrageous adventure in New York City after being dumped - and revealed that her biggest aim was to make the cast as diverse as possible. Speaking to Variety, she said: "One of my main goals as a producer was to bring on a very inclusive cast-to have the cast look like the world I walk through." The 'Jane the Virgin' star also expressed how "blessed" she is to have a slew of A-list friends who were happy to be on board with the project. She gushed: "I was blessed to have a lot of great friends participate in this: Rosario Dawson jumped in for me, Lakeith Stanfield was so phenomenal. "I was incredibly grateful to those who did that for me, including RuPaul and Questlove. There was a lot of passion for this project." The 'Big Mouth' star went on to explain that she wants to explore more minority characters and hopes audiences will view more diverse projects with "open hearts and minds". She said: "I want to tell the stories that haven't been told. I want to tell them with people you haven't seen yet, and I want to open hearts and minds to more tolerance." Gina added that she's hopeful her films can be "healing" and is "looking to the future". She explained: "I think that art has the ability to create healing, so those are the kind of movies I want to make. I definitely am looking to my future."



## Lawrence set to star as a war veteran in new movie

Jennifer Lawrence is set to star as a war veteran in her latest movie project. The Oscar-winning star has joined forces with acclaimed theatre director Lila Neugebauer for an as-yet-untitled movie that will see her play the role of a US soldier who suffers a traumatic brain injury in Afghanistan. Jennifer's on-screen character struggles to recover from her injuries upon her return home, according to Collider. The film is being produced by Oscar winner Scott Rudin and Eli Bush, with production set to begin in June in New Orleans. Jennifer could star in the movie alongside 'Atlanta' star Brian Tyree Henry, who has already held discussions about taking on the role of the male lead. Meanwhile, Jennifer revealed plans to take a career break back in 2017. Announcing her hiatus two years ago, the 'Red Sparrow' star said: "I'm taking [a break]. I don't have anything set for two years." And asked what she'll do with her time off, she quipped: "Start making pots." During her break, Jennifer actually got engaged to art gallery director Cooke Maroney. And an insider recently speculated that her wedding will be a "family affair". The source said: "[Jennifer is a] family girl. I would be surprised if the wedding were not a fairly extensive family affair."



## Boyle wanted Bowie biopic

Danny Boyle wanted to make a biopic about David Bowie. The 'Trainspotting' filmmaker and 'Millions' screenwriter Frank Cottrell Boyce had penned a "wonderful" script about the 'Space Oddity' singer - who died of cancer in January 2016 - but the pop icon wasn't interested when Danny approached him about the project in 2012. He said: "Frank and I were working on a David Bowie script. "I talked to Bowie about it at the Olympic Games and went to see him. "He didn't really want to do anything at that time and I didn't really understand why. "It wasn't clear to anybody he was ill. All he was saying was, 'I don't want to do anything in the past. I am working on stuff for the future.' " And the director isn't sure whether he'll ever return to the project. He added to Empire magazine: "I'm not sure if we'll come back to it. But he is a particular British person I'd want to study. "Frank's was a wonderful script about the relationship between him and Iggy Pop." The 62-year-old filmmaker was due to direct the 25th James Bond movie but left the movie last August due to "creative differences" and admitted missing out on the spy saga and not making his Bowie films are the two career decisions that will always "haunt" him. Asked what he regrets not doing, he said: "The Bowie film we talked about... And the Bond actually, because our version of it was good. "Those are the two that kind of haunt you. They could have been really good."

## Curtis inspired by Sheeran



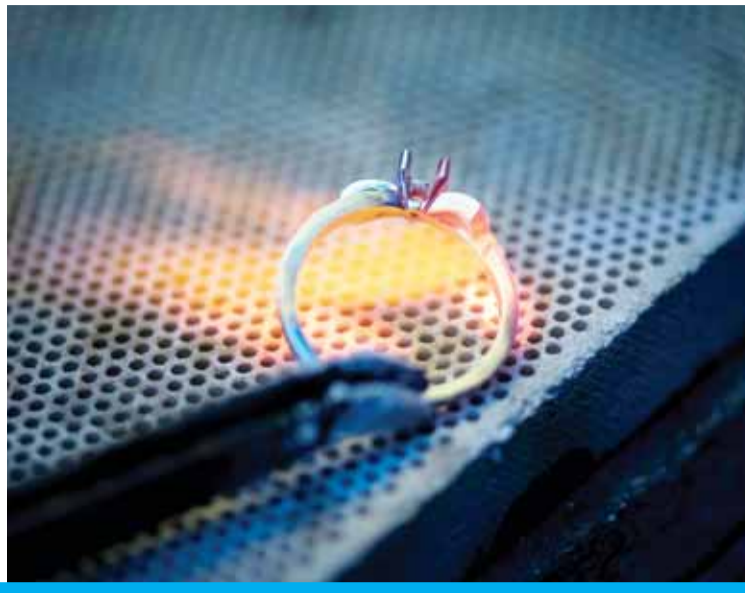
Richard Curtis thinks his Beatles-inspired comedy 'Yesterday' is "really about" Ed Sheeran. The 62-year-old writer's latest film follows Jack Malik (Himesh Patel) who awakes from a blackout to discover he's the only person to know the music of the 'Help' hit-makers and Richard thinks giving the 'Shape of You' singer a cameo in the movie was "perfect casting" because his own life has been so similar to that of the central character. He said: "In a way, the film is really about Ed. "Ed was from round where we live in Suffolk and couldn't be a more normal and delightful fellow. "His girlfriend is somebody he went to school with, which is what the film is about. "It is a gimmicky cameo and in a way it is the best casting possible because he is almost the lead character." While both Richard and director Danny Boyle were keen for the Beatles' music to be the focus of the story, the script sent it in a different direction, but one which still holds universal appeal. Richard told Empire magazine: "We both wanted to make a beautiful film about this music. But the script ended up being about how you live the right life. "Everybody is thinking a lot about impostor syndrome. We've all got it, Danny and I have both got it. "Every single person on Instagram has got it. "We are all presenting the glamorous version of ourselves but thinking, 'That is not really me.' " Danny added: "Jack is a very ordinary, not very successful, singer/songwriter. "He's got a beautiful, everyman quality and he bumps into this myth which transforms him into a world personality. I'm very proud of that dynamic, of trying to find an ordinariness in a person that elevates into something mythic."

## Ma Dong-Seok joins Marvel's The Eternals besides Angelina Jolie

Ma Dong-Seok is set to join Angelina Jolie in the cast of Marvel's 'The Eternals'. The 48-year-old actor - best known to UK audiences from 2013 zombie thriller 'Train To Busan' - has reportedly been cast alongside Jolie, 43, in the upcoming superhero flick, which is to be directed by Chloe Zhao, according to the Wrap. It's not known who either of the stars are in talks to portray, but sources previously said that one part of the motion picture's storyline is expected to involve a love story between characters Ikaris, who is fuelled by cosmic energy, and Sersi, who relishes moving amongst humans. Other details about the hotly-anticipated film are being kept under wraps, but it will be based on the 1976 Marvel comics by Jack Kirby. Fictional species the Eternals are offshoots of the evolutionary process, and they were intended to be the Earth's defenders, which sees them do battle with the Deviants. The motion picture will be Jolie's first superhero film, but she has starred in a comic book movie before - 2008's 'Wanted', which was an adaptation of Mark Millar and J.G. Jones series of the same name. James McAvoy, Morgan Freeman and Terence Stamp also starred in the project, which was directed by Timur Bekmambetov and tells the story of an accountant who joins a secret society which his professional assassin father worked for. Earlier this month, Marvel were said to be searching for an openly homosexual actor to play the lead role in the forthcoming film. 'Ruin' writers Matthew and Ryan Firpo have signed up to pen the script for the movie, and Marvel Studios' president Kevin Feige will produce the picture.— Bang Showbiz







A jeweler works on a ring in an ethical gold jewel workshop in Paris. — AFP photos

## The ethical gold rush: Gilded age for guilt-free jewelry

Forget how many carats—how ethical is your gold? As high-end consumers demand to know the origin of their treasures, some jewelers are ensuring they use responsibly sourced, eco-friendly or recycled gold. Specialized producers now tack a “fairmined” ecologically friendly label on their output, and the Swiss house Chopard last year became the first big name to commit to “100 percent ethical” creations. The Geneva-based firm, which makes the Palme d’Or trophy for the Cannes Film Festival, says it now uses only verified suppliers of gold that meet strict standards to minimize negative environmental impacts of mining the precious metal.

Among the many certificates and standards claiming to codify “responsible” gold mining, two labels stand out. They are “fairmined” gold—a label certified by a Colombian NGO—and the more widely known “fairtrade” label launched by Swiss foundation Max Havelaar. Both support artisanal mines that seek to preserve the environment in terms of extraction methods, along with decent working conditions and wages for the miners. Such production remains limited—just a few hundred kilograms annually. Global gold output by comparison totals around 3,300 tons.

### Good as recycled gold

Concerned jewelers are keen to ensure they can trace the source of their entire supply to an ethical production cycle and to firms certified by the not-for-profit Responsible Jewellery Council, which has developed norms for the entire supply chain. RJC members must adhere to tough standards governing ethical, human rights, social and environmental practices across the pre-

vious metals industry. The French luxury group Kering, which says it has bought more than 3.5 tonnes of “responsibly produced” gold since 2015 for its Boucheron, Pomellato, Dodo and Gucci brands, has committed to 100 percent use of “ethical” gold by 2020.

“We are trying to maximize the proportion of Fairmined and Fairtrade gold—but their modest production is in great demand so the bulk of our sourcing remains recycled gold, (which is) certified ‘RJC Chain of Custody,’” says Claire Piroddi, sustainability manager for Kering’s jewelry and watches. Fairmined or Fairtrade gold is “about 10 to 12 percent more expensive. But recycled gold barely generates any additional cost premium,” Piroddi told AFP, since it was already refined for a previous life in the form of jewelry or

part of a high-tech product.

Going a step further, using only precious metal from electronic or industrial waste is an original idea developed by Courbet, a brand launched just last spring. “We do not want to promote mining extraction or use recently extracted gold, so we sought suppliers who recycle gold used in graphics cards or computer processors. That’s because we know today that more than half of gold’s available reserves have already been extracted,” says Marie-Ann Wachtmeister, Courbet’s co-founder and artistic director. She says the brand’s watchwords are ethical and environmental consciousness.

“In a mine, a ton of terrain might contain five grams of gold, whereas a ton of electronic waste might generate 200 grams,”

Wachtmeister says. “Clients are also demanding an ecological approach more and more—they are aware of their day-to-day impact and consider the origin of what they wear,” she adds.

### No guilt-trip

“The issue of supply really resonates with the public at large,” adds Thierry Lemaire, director general of Ponce, a jewelry firm that was established in Paris’s fashionable Marais district in 1886. The company is RJC-certified and uses only recycled gold. “There is a logic to that—if we want to do our work well, then let’s go the whole hog and respect nature. That can be done today because the entire chain has become

standardized. “Studios such as ours that work for major names on Place Vendôme are all certified,” Lemaire says, referring to an upscale square in Paris.

He represents the fifth generation of family firm Ponce, which produces 45,000 gold rings a year from recycled gold. Working in a pungent atmosphere of heated metal, refiners sit hunched over polishing machines, a large leather hide slung over their knees to catch the tiniest shaving. “Every Friday, we have a great clearout and go over the workshop with a fine-tooth comb to pick up little bits of (gold) dust and shavings,” Lemaire says. “Nothing is lost, it’s a truly virtuous chain.” —AFP



A jeweler processes the gold in an ethical gold jewelry workshop.



## Islam Fashion Festival



In these photos taken on April 20, 2019, models present creations during the Islam Fashion Festival in Banda Aceh. The festival runs from April 19-21. —AFP photos



## Polanski sues US motion picture academy for reinstatement



Oscar-winning film director Roman Polanski is suing the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, demanding his reinstatement nearly a year after the organization expelled him amid the #MeToo movement. Polanski, who in 1977 pleaded guilty in California to statutory rape, argued in a court filing in Los Angeles that the academy wrongly denied him a hearing when it voted in May to oust him amid the nationwide furor sparked by sexual-abuse revelations against famed producer Harvey Weinstein. The complaint, filed to the Superior Court of California, County of Los Angeles on Thursday, says the academy’s board of governors convened on January 26 to re-examine its decision, and confirmed it. Polanski had been a member since 1968.

“The procedures taken to expel Mr Polanski were fair and reasonable,” an academy spokesperson said in a statement cited by Variety. “The Academy stands behind its decision as appropriate.” It did not elaborate. The academy in 2003 had awarded Polanski an Oscar for directing “The Piano.” His many other films include “Rosemary’s Baby” and “Chinatown,” which was nominated for 11 Oscars.

Polanski pleaded guilty in 1977 to having had unlawful sex with a 13-year-old girl, later identified as Samantha Geimer. After serving 42 days in a California prison while undergoing psychiatric evaluation, he fled to France, saying he feared the judge in the case might renege on a plea deal and send him back to jail. Because he fled the US, charges are still pending against him there. He is a dual French-Polish citizen and has spent much of his life in France.

### ‘Cruel action’

Asked for comment, Polanski attorney Harland Braun sent a link Saturday to an article saying that Geimer, who is now 54, supports Polanski’s desire for reinstatement. The Academy’s expulsion of Polanski was “an ugly and cruel action,” she told Vanity Fair last year. But attorney Braun said Polanski just wanted “a fair hearing.” “You have an offense that’s 40 years old, in which he has admitted his guilt, he has apologized to the victim, he has done more time than the law requires and the victim has come forward and begged the courts to put an end to it,” Braun told the Los Angeles Times. “What else do they want from an 85-year-old man?” —AFP



# Classifieds

Monday, April 22, 2019

**Kuwait Times**  
 Now you can browse  
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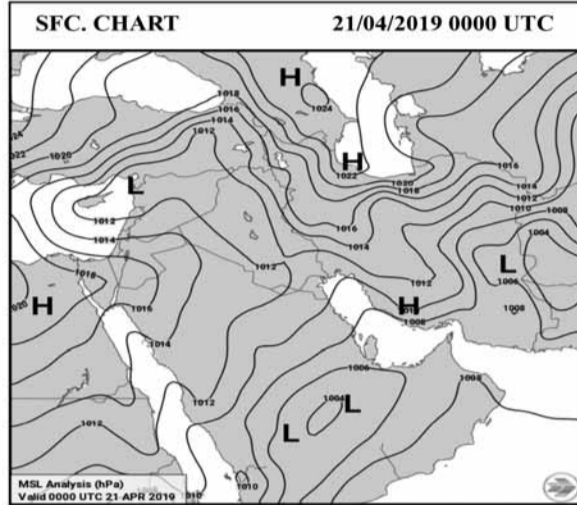
## Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

**BY DAY:** Relatively hot with light to moderate north easterly wind changing to south easterly wind later on, with speed of 12 - 32 km/h.

**BY NIGHT:** Fair with light to moderate freshening later on south easterly wind changing to north westerly wind later on, with speed of 10 - 40 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear with a chance for light rain over

WEATHER WARNING	No Current Warnings
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STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.
KUWAIT CITY	32 °C	21 °C
KUWAIT AIRPORT	32 °C	21 °C
ABDALY	33 °C	15 °C
BUBYAN	- °C	- °C
JAHRA	33 °C	20 °C
FAILAKA ISLAND	31 °C	22 °C
SALMIYAH	30 °C	21 °C
AHMADI	27 °C	22 °C
NUWAISSIB	30 °C	23 °C
WAFRA	33 °C	19 °C
SALMY	29 °C	14 °C



DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Monday	04/22	Sunny and rising dust	28 °C	20 °C	NW	25 - 60 km/h
Tuesday	04/23	Sunny	29 °C	16 °C	NW	10 - 32 km/h
Wednesday	04/24	Sunny	29 °C	17 °C	NW	15 - 45 km/h
Thursday	04/25	Relatively hot	30 °C	18 °C	NW	15 - 40 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	03:53
Sunrise	05:16
Zuhr	11:47
Asr	15:22
Sunset	18:18
Isha	19:39

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	33 °C
MIN. Temp.	18 °C
MAX. RH	68 %
MIN. RH	19 %
MAX. Wind	N 46 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

## Hospitals

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

## Clinics

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

Automated enquiry about the Civil ID CARD is  
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**EMERGENCY**  
**112**



## Airlines

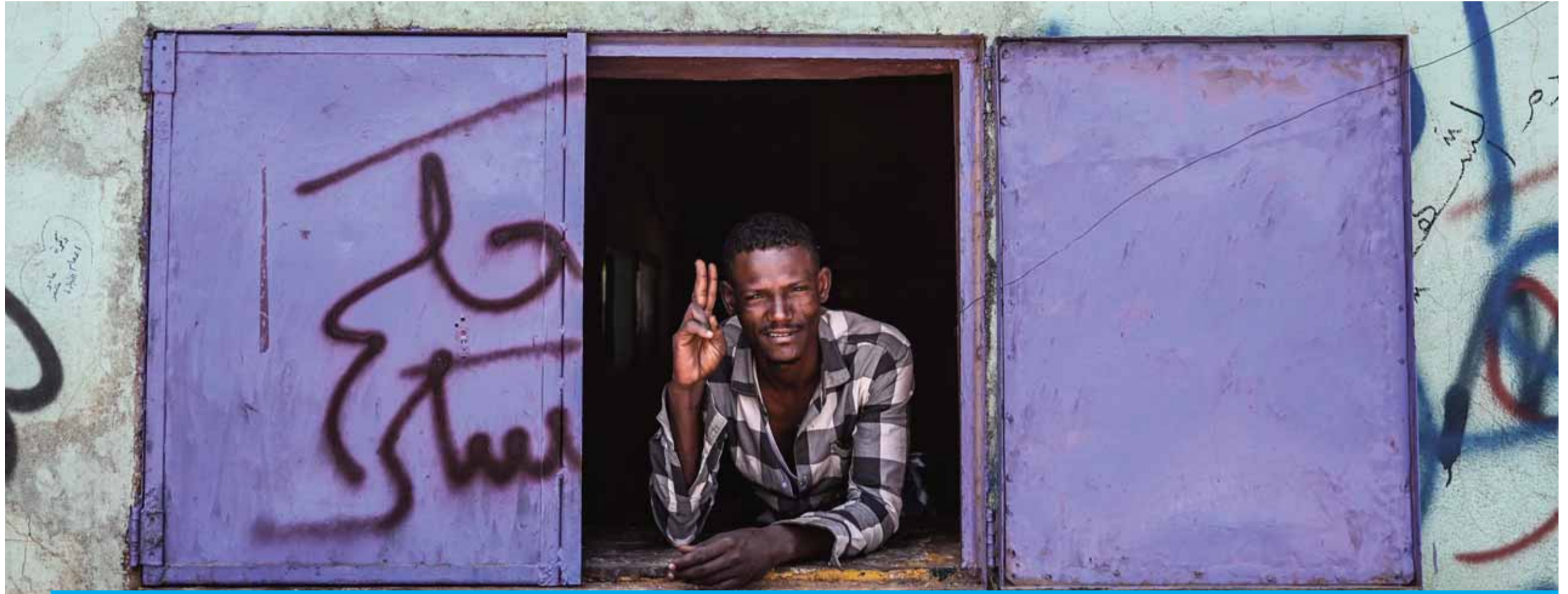
Kuwait Airways	171
Jazeera Airways	177
Wataniya Airways	22 066 536
Turkish Airlines	1884918
American Airlines	22087425
Jet Airways	22924455
FlyDubai	22414400
Qatar Airways	22423888
KLM	22425747
Royal Jordanian	22418064/5/6
British Airways	22425635
Air France	22430224
Emirates	22921555
Air India	22456700
Air India EXPRESS	22438185/4
Sri Lanka Airlines	22424444
Egypt Air	22421578
Swiss Air	22421516
Saudia	22426306
Middle East Airlines	22423073
Lufthansa	22422493
PIA	22421044
Bangladesh Airlines	22452977/8
Indian Airlines	22456700
Oman Air	22958787
Turkish Airlines	22453820/1
Aeroflot	22404838/9

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

**DIAL 161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION**

Arrival Flights on Monday 22/4/2019				Departure Flights on Monday 22/4/2019			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
FEG	441	Asyut	00:05	MEA	405	Beirut	11:55
IGO	1757	Kochi	00:10	JZR	213	Jeddah	12:05
THY	772	Istanbul	00:20	QTR	1075	Doha	12:10
JZR	254	Amman	00:20	JZR	123	Dubai	13:10
KAC	102	London	00:50	AXB	790	CNN	13:10
DLH	625	Dammam	00:50	RBG	554	Alexandria	13:10
KAC	504	Beirut	01:00	JZR	115	Doha	13:25
JZR	722	Alexandria	01:00	THY	767	Istanbul	14:00
JZR	734	Cairo	01:00	IRA	600	Tehran	14:10
RJA	642	Amman	01:20	UAE	872	Dubai	14:15
UAE	853	Dubai	01:40	KAC	673	Dubai	15:00
KLM	446	Bahrain	01:45	KNE	382	Taif	15:00
PGT	858	Istanbul	01:50	GFA	222	Bahrain	15:00
KKK	1268	Istanbul	01:55	JZR	103	Bahrain	15:05
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	QTR	1079	Doha	15:15
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:15	FDB	060	Dubai	15:20
QTR	1086	Doha	02:30	SVA	501	Jeddah	15:45
PGT	860	Istanbul	02:50	KAC	105	London	15:55
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05	KNE	530	Jeddah	15:55
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:05	KAC	563	Amman	16:00
JZR	406	Kochi	03:05	JZR	405	Kochi	16:00
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	KAC	775	Riyadh	16:05
KAC	418	Manila	03:20	KAC	743	Dammam	16:05
QTR	1076	Doha	03:30	KAC	615	Bahrain	16:10
KAC	382	Delhi	04:05	ABY	128	Sharjah	16:15
IGO	1751	Chennai	04:10	KAC	785	Jeddah	16:20
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	04:15	ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:25	OMA	646	Muscat	16:20
JZR	404	Hyderabad	04:30	FDB	052	Dubai	17:10
JZR	502	Lahore	04:35	QTR	1073	Doha	17:25
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:05	KAC	361	Colombo	17:35
FDB	069	Dubai	05:05	KAC	155	Istanbul	17:35
THY	770	Istanbul	05:20	KAC	283	Dhaka	17:40
JZR	402	Mumbai	05:25	UAE	858	Dubai	17:40
KAC	344	Chennai	05:30	KAC	621	Doha	17:50
KAC	552	Cairo	05:45	KAC	381	Delhi	17:55
JZR	112	Doha	05:50	SAW	706	Dammam	18:00
BAW	157	London	06:10	SVA	511	Riyadh	18:10
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:15	JZR	721	Alexandria	18:15
JZR	714	Sohag	06:20	GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
KAC	678	Dubai	06:40	JZR	127	Dubai	18:20
KAC	204	Lahore	06:45	JZR	403	Hyderabad	18:25
JZR	102	Bahrain	07:00	JZR	733	Cairo	18:35
KAC	302	Mumbai	07:05	JZR	253	Amman	19:10
IGO	1755	CNN	07:10	QTR	1081	Doha	19:20
RBG	211	Luxor	07:25	KAC	345	Ahmedabad	19:20
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	MSR	621	Cairo	19:30
MSC	401	Alexandria	08:00	GFA	218	Bahrain	19:50
IRA	601	Tehran	08:10	FDB	064	Dubai	19:50
KAC	384	Delhi	08:10	KAC	331	Sharjah	19:55
QTR	8201	Doha	08:15	ABY	124	Trivandrum	20:00
KAC	352	Kochi	08:20	RJA	641	Amman	20:05
UAE	855	Dubai	08:25	KAC	357	Kochi	20:05
JZR	702	Asyut	08:25	FDB	058	Dubai	20:30
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:50	JZR	401	Mumbai	20:30
OMA	641	Muscat	09:00	UAE	876	Dubai	20:35
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	KAC	353	Bengaluru	20:50
KAC	334	Trivandrum	09:00	DLH	624	Dammam	20:55
QTR	1070	Doha	09:30	OMA	648	Muscat	21:05
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	MEA	403	Beirut	21:15
IGO	1753	Ahmedabad	09:40	KAC	301	Mumbai	21:25
AXB	889	Mangalore/Bahrain	10:20	RBG	210	Sohag	21:35
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	QTR	1089	Doha	21:50
AXB	395	Kozhikode	10:40	DHX	171	Bahrain	21:50
MEA	404	Beirut	10:55	KAC	203	Lahore	22:00
JZR	216	Jeddah	10:55	KLM	445	Bahrain	22:10
QTR	1074	Doha	11:00	ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	22:15
JZR	122	Dubai	11:45	ALK	230	Colombo	22:20
AXB	789	CNN/Bahrain	12:10	KAC	383	Delhi	22:35
RBG	553	Alexandria	12:30	UAE	860	Dubai	22:35
THY	766	Istanbul	12:30	JZR	407	Ahmedabad	22:40
JZR	142	Al Najaf	12:35	GFA	220	Bahrain	22:50
UAE	871	Dubai	12:45	KAC	783	Jeddah	22:55
KAC	742	Dammam	12:55	KAC	551	Cairo	23:00
				ETD	310	Abu Dhabi	23:05
				QTR	1083	Doha	23:20
				SVA	515	Riyadh	23:25
				AXB	396	Kozhikode	23:45





A Sudanese vendor flashes the V for victory sign during a protest near the army headquarters in the capital Khartoum yesterday. — AFP

## Thousands protest in support of jailed Morocco activists

**RABAT:** Thousands of people demonstrated yesterday in the Moroccan capital Rabat, calling for the release of dozens of activists jailed for up to 20 years over their role in a protest movement. "The people want the release of the detainees" demonstrators shouted as they marched behind a banner supporting activists linked to the Hirak movement. Earlier this month a court upheld the ruling against 42 people linked to the Al-Hirak al-Shaabi - or "Popular Movement" - protests which took hold of the marginalized Rif region in October 2016.

The rally, dubbed the "march of the Moroccan people: stop political injustice", was organized by detainees' families along with political and rights groups. AFP reporters saw thousands of people in the streets, some clutching photographs of those serving jail terms ranging from one to 20 years. "We call for an end to political arrests and for the release of all detainees (linked to) social movements and a response to their legitimate demands," said activist Boubaker Al-Jawhari.

The sentences first handed down last June were upheld on April 6 by the Casablanca court of appeal, sparking criticism from rights groups. Moroccan

authorities insist the judicial process has followed international standards. Social unrest in the Rif region was sparked by the death of a fisherman and escalated into a wave of protests demanding more development, and against corruption and unemployment.

The movement's leader Nasser Zefzafi and three others received prison terms of 20 years for threatening the security of the state. Prison authorities say the activists were moved on April 11 from Casablanca to a facility in northern Morocco to be "close to their families". "They were transferred to the worst prisons in the kingdom" and "started a hunger strike," said Ahmed Zefzafi, father of Nasser.

Addressing a press conference after yesterday's demonstration, he called on "decision-makers to find a way out of this crisis". Prison authorities said Friday the detainees' health was being very closely monitored. Other family members confirmed that their detained relatives are protesting against the conditions they are being held in. Beyond the 20-year sentences, other prison terms confirmed on appeal ranged from one to 15 years. Eleven others were pardoned last year by King Mohammed VI. — AFP



RABAT: Moroccans shout slogans and hold posters bearing portraits of convicted activists during a demonstration yesterday. — AFP

## Sri Lanka on edge as blasts at churches...

Continued from Page 1

By yesterday evening, the toll stood at 207 dead and 450 people injured. Police said 35 foreigners were among the dead, including British, Dutch, Portuguese, Chinese and American citizens. US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo confirmed that "several US citizens" were killed. Among the churches targeted was the historic St Anthony's Shrine, a Catholic church in Colombo, where the blast blew out much of the roof. Bodies lay on the ground of the church, covered in patterned scarves and white sheets, some of them stained with blood. Shattered roof tiles and shards of glass littered the floor, along with chunks of plaster blasted from the walls by the explosion.

Documents seen by AFP show that Sri Lanka's police chief Pujith Jayasundara issued an intelligence alert to top officers 10 days ago, warning that suicide bombers planned to hit "prominent churches". "A foreign intelligence agency has reported that the NTJ (National Thowheeth Jama'ath) is planning to carry out suicide attacks targeting prominent churches as well as the Indian high commission in Colombo," the alert said. The NTJ is a radical Muslim group in Sri Lanka that was linked last year to the vandalization of Buddhist statues.

Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe, speaking late yesterday, acknowledged "information was there" about possible attacks and that an investigation would look into "why adequate precautions were not taken". Rucki Fernando, a Christian Sri Lankan, told AFP: "We haven't experienced anything like this in the last 10 years. There is a lot of fear, not just in the Christian community, but among everyone."

Sri Lanka's Minister of Economic Reforms, Harsha de Silva, described "horrible scenes" at St Anthony's church. "I saw many body parts strewn all over," he tweeted, adding that there were "many casualties including foreigners". Witness N A Sumanapala was near the church when the blast happened. "I ran inside to help. The priest came out and he was covered in blood," he told AFP. "It was a river of blood."

A second blast hit St Sebastian's Church in Negombo, north of the capital during Easter mass. Gabriel, who declined to give his family name, told AFP his brother was injured in the explosion. "We are all in shock. We don't want the country to go back to that

dark past where we had to live in fear of suicide blasts all the time." Soon after the first two church blasts, police confirmed that the Zion church in the east-coast town of Batticaloa had been hit, along with three high-end hotels in the capital - the Cinnamon Grand, the Shangri-La and the Kingsbury.

A manager at the Cinnamon Grand, near the prime minister's official residence in Colombo, said a suicide bomber blew himself up at the hotel's restaurant. "He came up to the top of the queue and set off the blast," he told AFP. Later in the afternoon, two people died in a strike at a hotel in the south of Colombo, and a suicide bomber killed three police officers as they raided a house in a northern suburb of the city.

Wickremesinghe urged people to "hold our unity as Sri Lankans" and pledged to "wipe out this menace once and for all". The Archbishop of Colombo, Malcolm Ranjith, described the attackers as "animals" and called on authorities to "punish them mercilessly". US President Donald Trump tweeted his condolences about the "horrible terrorist attacks", and Pope Francis in his Easter address at the Vatican spoke of his "affectionate closeness with the Christian community, attacked while it was at prayer". Embassies in Colombo warned their citizens to stay inside, and Sri Lankan Airlines told passengers to arrive at the airport four hours ahead of flights because of ramped-up security.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said there was "no place for such barbarism in our region", and Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan said the bombings were "an assault on all of humanity". Modi told voters that they needed to elect him to a second term as only he can beat the "terrorists" threatening India. "Should terrorism be finished or not?" he told an election rally in the western state of Rajasthan. "Who can do this? Can you think of any name aside from Modi? Can anybody else do this?" Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern of New Zealand, where a gunman shot 50 people dead in two mosques last month, said in a statement: "Collectively we must find the will and the answers to end such violence."

Only around six percent of mainly Buddhist Sri Lanka is Catholic, and the country is a patchwork of different religious and ethnic groups, dominated by Buddhist Sinhalese. Recent years have seen growing sectarian tensions, including accusations of hate crimes by extremist Buddhist monks against minority Muslims. There have been no attacks in Sri Lanka linked to foreign Islamist groups, but in January, Sri Lankan police seized a haul of explosives and detonators following the arrest of four men from a newly formed radical Muslim group. — Agencies

## Sudan leader vows to hand...

Continued from Page 1

their devices once more creating a sea of light outside the army headquarters, where they have been encamped since before Bashir's April 11 downfall. Clapping and waving Sudanese flags, the crowd waited for their leaders to announce a civilian council that they want to take power from the military rulers as loudspeakers played nationalist and revolutionary songs.

"High! High! Sudan is up high," huge crowds of protesters chanted. "Our revolution is civilian and protected by the people," they vowed. They also chanted "freedom" and "Whether it (the regime) falls or not, we are staying", as they again pledged to keep up the pressure on the country's new military council. Burhan said a team of police, army and security agents found a cash haul including seven million euros (\$7.8 million), \$350,000 and five billion Sudanese pounds (\$105 million) during a search at Bashir's home. Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates meanwhile offered \$3 billion (2.7 billion euros) yesterday in financial aid to the cash-starved country.

## King restores citizenship of...

Continued from Page 1

Yesterday's decision comes after a Bahraini court on Tuesday sentenced 138 people to prison terms and revoked their citizenship, at the end of a mass trial denounced by rights group Amnesty International. Those convicted belonged to a group of 169 people accused of forming a "terror" group with links to Iran's Revolutionary Guards. This was the biggest group of people to have been convicted and to have lost their citizenship as a result of a single trial since 2012, according to the Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy.

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights on Thursday expressed alarm about the court's decision. "Tuesday's convictions give rise to serious concerns about the application of the law, particularly through a mass trial that reportedly lacked the procedural safe-

The northeast African nation is one of the world's most impoverished countries and faces an acute foreign currency shortage - a key factor which helped trigger nationwide protests against Bashir. A military council has been put in place for a planned two-year transition period, but despite talks with protesters the two sides have struggled to agree on the shape and form of a civilian leadership. "The council is committed to give power to (the) people," Burhan insisted, in his first interview on state television since taking power. He also said that a delegation would travel to Washington soon to seek Sudan's removal from the US list of state sponsors of terrorism.

The Sudanese Professionals Association (SPA), at the forefront of the protests, has defiantly said it will unveil its own civilian council later yesterday. "We are waiting for the announcement today," Romaysaa Omar, one of the protesters at the sit-in area, told AFP. "All Sudanese people are in favour of the council to be announced by the SPA." On Saturday, protest leaders and the military rulers held talks about a power handover and agreed to continue discussions.

"We clarified our main demand, which is the transfer of power to civilian authorities," Siddiq Yousef, a senior member of the Alliance for Freedom and Change, the umbrella group leading the protest movement, told state television after Saturday's talks. — AFP

guards necessary to ensure a fair trial," rights commissioner Michelle Bachelet said in a statement. "Deprivation of nationality must not be arbitrary, especially on discriminatory grounds," she said, stressing that "arbitrary deprivation of nationality places the individuals concerned and their family members in a situation of increased vulnerability to human rights violations."

Bahraini authorities have repeatedly denied taking discriminatory measures against citizens of the kingdom, and say they are facing violence from Iran-backed groups despite denials from Tehran of any involvement. Since 2011 all opposition groups have been banned and disbanded. In January, Bahrain's supreme court upheld a life term against Sheikh Ali Salman, the head of the main Shiite opposition group Al-Wefaq, for allegedly spying for rival Qatar. Prominent rights defender Nabeel Rajab in December lost his final appeal against a five-year jail term for writing tweets deemed offensive to the state. And last year King Hamad signed off on a decree allowing military courts to try civilians accused of "terrorism". — AFP



Sports

# Yankees win but lose Judge to injury, Rangers shell Cole, cruise past Astros

## Castillo, Reds take down reeling Padres

**NEW YORK:** Aaron Judge homered in the first inning but exited five innings later with a left oblique injury as the New York Yankees rolled to a 9-2 victory over the Kansas City Royals on Saturday afternoon at Yankee Stadium. After hitting a single in the sixth with his team up 6-1, Judge appeared to feel something as he swung and ran gingerly to first base. After trainer Steve Donahue checked him over, Judge exited the game and was replaced by Tyler Wade. Speaking to reporters after the game, manager Aaron Boone said that Judge was getting an MRI exam. Asked if Judge could avoid a trip to the injured list, Boone replied, "Probably not, No." Masahiro Tanaka (2-1) surrendered a homer to Whit Merrifield in the sixth among the four hits he gave up, but rebounded from a sub-par outing yesterday against the Chicago White Sox with seven strong innings. Judge and Clint Frazier homered in the opening two innings off Royals starter Heath Fillmyer (0-1), and Mike Tauchman and DJ LeMahieu hit New York's first set of back-to-back homers this season in the fourth.

**BREWERS 5, DODGERS 0**

Christian Yelich hit two more home runs—giving him eight in his last six games and a league-best 13 on the season—as host Milwaukee ended a three-game losing streak with a convincing victory over Los Angeles. Yelich went deep in both the third and sixth innings against Dodgers starter Hyun-Jin Ryu (2-1). Ryan Braun also hit a home run for the Brewers, who had lost their last three games against the Dodgers going back to a series at Los Angeles last weekend. The high-powered Dodgers offense was held to just two hits in the game and just one hit over five innings against Brewers spot starter Chase Anderson (2-0).

**INDIANS 8, BRAVES 4 (GAME 1)**

Max Moroff belted a solo homer in the fourth inning and added an RBI single as part of a six-run fifth as host Cleveland doubled-up Atlanta in the opener of their doubleheader. Carlos Santana had a run-scoring single among his three hits for the Indians, while Moroff, Greg Allen, Tyler Naquin, Leonys Martin and Jason Kipnis each drove in a run in a fifth inning that saw Cleveland send 11 batters to the plate and score all six runs with two outs. Corey Kluber (2-2) bounced back after giving up six runs in two of his previous three starts, going seven innings and giving up four runs on five hits and two walks while striking out eight. Braves starter Julio Teheran (2-2) gave up five runs in 4 2/3 innings.

**BRAVES 8, INDIANS 7 (GAME 2)**

Ronald Acuna Jr. ripped a two-run double to cap a five-run uprising in the ninth inning and Atlanta salvaged a split of the doubleheader and spoiled the season debut of Francisco Lindor. With the Braves trailing 7-3, Ozzie Albies ripped a two-out, two-run single down the first-base line in the ninth. Adam Cimber (1-1) issued his third walk of the inning before departing in favor of Tyler Olson, who walked Freddie Freeman with the bases loaded to bring Atlanta within one. The late uprising made a winner out of Luke Jackson (2-0), who retired the side in the eighth inning. Lindor batted in the leadoff position and went 1-for-5 and scored a run—part of the Indians' five-run spurt in the second inning. The three-time All-Star shortstop was activated prior to the doubleheader after being sidelined since the end of spring training with an ankle injury.

**RED SOX 6, RAYS 5**

Boston's Andrew Benintendi hit a grand slam and drove in the game-winning run with a ninth-inning sacrifice fly to lead Boston to a win over host Tampa Bay—despite the Rays setting a team record with four triples in the game. The Rays had runners on first and second with two outs in the bottom half of the ninth, but Boston catcher Christian Vazquez picked off Tommy Pham at first base to end the game. Reliever Matt Barnes (2-0) earned the win. Ryan Brasier recorded his fifth save and Mookie Betts had two hits for the Red Sox, who won their second straight. Jose Alvarado (0-1) took the loss as the Rays lost their third in a row.

**PHILLIES 8, ROCKIES 5**

Bryce Harper and Andrew McCutchen homered, Phil Gosselin drove in three runs with a double, and Philadelphia topped Colorado in Denver. Aaron Nola (2-0) struck out nine in 5 2/3 innings for the win, giving up nine hits and walking one while surrendering three runs. Hector Neris got the last five outs for his third save. Charlie Blackmon homered and fell a double short of the cycle and Raimel Tapia also went deep for the Rockies, who had their five-game winning streak snapped. Antonio Senzatela (1-1) gave up four runs on seven hits in six innings. He struck out three and walked one.

**PIRATES 3, GIANTS 1 (5 INN.)**

Cole Tucker hit a go-ahead two-run home run in his major league debut as Pittsburgh extended its winning streak to five games with a rain-shortened win over visiting San Francisco. The game was called after a 3-hour, 8-minute delay. In just his third at-bat in the big leagues, Tucker crushed a 2-2 pitch against Giants left-hander Derek Holland (1-3) onto the grass berm beyond the center field wall. The blast, into a stiff breeze, came in the bottom of the fifth, minutes before the infield was covered because of an arriving rainstorm. The Giants' Steven Duggar had tied the game 1-1 in the top of the fifth on an RBI single against Pirates starter Jameson Taillon (1-2). San Francisco lost its fourth consecutive game and fell for the fifth time in its past six contests.

**CARDINALS 10, METS 2**

Miles Mikolas gave up two runs in eight innings and drove in two runs with a second-inning single to help host St. Louis rout New York. Mikolas (2-1), who led the National League with 18 wins last season, allowed four hits, struck out four and walked two on 100 pitches. Jose Martinez had three hits and three RBIs, Yadier Molina had two hits and two RBIs, and Paul DeJong had two hits and two runs for the Cardinals in the second game of the three-game series. Mets right-hander Chris Flexen (0-1) was recalled from Triple-A Syracuse to start in place of Jacob deGrom, who was placed on the 10-day injured list on Friday with elbow discomfort. He had had an easy first inning, but gave up three runs in the second and two more in the third.

**RANGERS 9, ASTROS 4**

Texas knocked two-time All-Star Gerrit Cole out of the game after 4 1/3 innings and rolled to a win over in-state rival Houston in Arlington, Texas. The Rangers scored five runs in the first inning as Cole (1-3) gave up nine runs (eight earned) and nine hits, striking out eight and walking three in what he told reporters was, "probably the worst (start) of my career." Danny Santana had three hits and Joey Gallo had two—including his eighth home run of the season—for the Rangers, who got four shutout innings from starter Adrian Sampson before he struggled in the fifth and left the game two outs shy of qualifying for his first major league win. Shawn Kelley (3-0) got the final two outs in the fifth and pitched a scoreless sixth to earn the victory.

**DIAMONDBACKS 6, CUBS 0**

Eduardo Escobar, David Peralta and John Ryan Murphy each homered, and Arizona got a solid outing from starter Zack Greinke to top host Chicago. Christian Walker added a career-high four hits and scored a run for Arizona, which earned its fifth win in the past six games. Chicago's four-game winning streak came to an end as Greinke (3-1) pitched six innings to register his first career victory at Wrigley Field. Diamondbacks right-hander Taylor Clarke earned a three-inning save in his major league debut. Cubs right-hander Yu Darvish (1-3) gave up three runs—including back-to-back solo homers in the first-on five hits in five innings. He walked three and fanned seven.

**MARLINS 9, NATIONALS 3**

Miami clinched its first series win of the season, beating three-time Cy Young winner Max Scherzer and visiting Washington. Besides the loss, there was more bad news for Washington as third baseman Anthony Rendon left the game



**NEW YORK:** Billy Hamilton #6 of the Kansas City Royals follows through on a triple during the third inning against the New York Yankees at Yankee Stadium in New York City. — AFP

after he was hit on his left elbow by a 95 mph fastball thrown by Marlins starter Jose Urena (1-3). Rendon went 0-for-1, ending the majors' longest active hit streak at 17 games. Scherzer (1-3) gave up 11 hits—one short off his career worst—and seven runs, six earned. He struck out nine and walked none.

**TWINS 6, ORIOLES 5 (GAME 1)**

Eddie Rosario hit two home runs for the second consecutive game and Byron Buxton had a two-run double to lead visiting Minnesota past Baltimore in the first game of a double-header. Rosario, who also reached over the fence at the 364-foot sign in left-center field to rob Chris Davis of a leadoff home run in the sixth, became just the third Twins player to have back-to-back multi-homer games, joining Hall of Famer Kirby Puckett (1987) and Don Mincher (1963). His eight home runs are the most by a Minnesota player in the first 17 games of the season, breaking a tie with Tony Oliva, who had seven in 1966. Jose Berrios (3-1) gave up four runs, including three home runs, on eight hits over six innings to improve to 4-0 all-time against the Orioles. He walked three and struck out five. Reliever Jimmy Yacabonis (1-1) took the loss, giving up three runs on two hits and a hit batter while recording only two outs in the sixth inning.

**TWINS 16, ORIOLES 7 (GAME 2)**

Rosario hit another home run and Minnesota tied a franchise record with eight home runs to complete the double-header sweep with an easy win in the nightcap. Mitch Garver (five RBIs), Nelson Cruz (four hits, four runs scored) and Jonathan Schoop (four RBIs) each hit two home runs, while C.J. Cron also homered. Rosario's five home runs over three games tied the Twins' franchise mark for any three-game span—originally set by Harmon Killebrew (Sept. 21-22, 1963) and later tied by Brian Dozier (Sept. 4-6, 2016). Martin Perez (2-0) picked up the win for the Twins, giving up four runs on six hits and a walk over six innings while striking out two. Alex Cobb (0-1), making his first start since coming off the injured list after a bout of back spasms, tied his career high by allowing nine runs on 10 hits in 2 2/3 innings.

**BLUE JAYS 10, ATHLETICS 1**

Rowdy Tellez and Brandon Drury hit back-to-back home

runs in a five-run fourth inning as Toronto overcame an injury to starting pitcher Matt Shoemaker to thump host Oakland. Even though he left after three innings with a knee injury, Shoemaker teamed with Sam Gaviglio (2-0) and Elvis Luciano on a six-hitter for Toronto's second consecutive win of the series. Mike Fiers (2-2) took the loss for the A's, who also were beaten 5-1 by the Blue Jays in the opener of the three-game set on Friday night. The blowout ended with former Blue Jays slugger Kendrys Morales making his second career relief appearance. Facing his old teammates, he gave up one run on a single, two walks, a hit batter and a sacrifice fly in his one inning.

**REDS 4, PADRES 2**

Right-hander Luis Castillo held slumping San Diego to one run on four hits over six innings as visiting Cincinnati won for the third straight time at Petco Park. The Padres have lost six in a row and five straight at home. They are down to .500 after an 11-5 start to the season. Castillo (2-1) recorded nine of the Reds' 14 strikeouts on the night while issuing one walk. Right-hander Raisel Iglesias struck out the side in the ninth to pick up his fourth save. The Reds scored three runs (two earned) on six hits and two walks in five innings against left-handed Padres starter Eric Lauer (2-3).

**MARINERS 6, ANGELS 5**

Seattle hit four home runs, giving the Mariners 11 in the first three games of the series, and again beat Los Angeles in Anaheim, Calif. The Angels have lost six in a row overall and all five games against Seattle this season. Mariners center fielder Mitch Haniger homered off Trevor Cahill (1-2) to lead off the game, and Edwin Encarnacion, Domingo Santana and Daniel Vogelbach also homered in the game—giving the team 53 thus far. Seattle has homered in all but one of 24 games this season. The Angels' offense, however, kept them in the game, getting 10 hits against Mariners starter Yusei Kikuchi (1-1), who went five innings and allowed four runs to get the victory. Albert Pujols hit an RBI double and solo home run as he tied and then passed Babe Ruth on the career RBIs list. Pujols is now fifth in MLB history with 1,993. Next up is Lou Gehrig at No. 4 with 1,995. — Reuters



## Late Sheikh Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud shooting tourney concludes

By Abdellatif Sharaa

**KUWAIT:** The tournament of late Sheikh Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah concluded Saturday evening, declaring the end of the shooting sport club's season for this year. The closing ceremony was attended by tournament sponsor representative Sheikh Abdallah Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah, President of Arab and Kuwait Shooting Federations Eng Duaij Khalaf Al-Otaibi, Deputy Chairman of the Board Mohammad Mustafa Karam, Arabian Kuwait Shooting Federations Secretary General Obaid Al-Osaimi, Assistant Secretary Eng Mohammad Al-Ghurba, Assistant Treasurer Adnan Al-Ibrahim and board members Eng Hussam Alroumi and Dr Nidal Ahmad Al-Sayyed Omar. Engineer Duaij Al-Otaibi welcomed the guests, as he lauded the major support the club receives from Sheikh Salman Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah, who is the founder of the sport of shooting in Kuwait. He said the tournament witnessed strong competition between shooters including those from Bahrain and UAE.

He said the tournament included all Olympic shootings in the skeet, trap, 10m pistol and rifle, 50m pistol and rifle, 25m rapid pistol, that besides the Olympic archery.

Sheikh Abdallah Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah, Eng Duaij Al-Otaibi and board members distributed prizes and medals as follows:

**In skeet men:**  
First: Mansour Al-Rashidi, second: Abdallah Al-Turqi Al-Rashidi, third: Saud Habeeb.

**Trap men:**  
First: Abdelrahman Al-Faihan, second: Khalid Al-Mudhaf, third: Taal Al-Rashidi.

**Trap women:**  
First: Sarah Al-Hawal, second: Shahad Al-Huwal, third: Hajar Fawzi.

**Skeet women:**  
First: Fatima Al-Zaabi, second: Eman Al-Shamma, third: Sheikh Al-Rashidi.

**10m air pistol men:**  
First: Othman Al-Fualakawi, second:

Mohammad Al-Kharsan from Bahrain, third: Hassan Al-Mulla.

**10m air rifle men:**  
First: Ali Hussein from Bahrain, second: Ali Sammar also from Bahrain, third: Saud Al-Subaie.

**10m air pistol women:**  
First: Huthama Al-Baghli, second: Amira Awadh, third: Sundas Al-Hamad.

**10m air rifle women:**  
First: Marwa Al-Ameeeri from Bahrain, second: Mariam Erzouqi, third: Fatima Abdelmalek.

**50 meter prone rifle men:**  
First: Mishrif Nazzal, second: Eqab Al-Shimmari, third: Abdalrazek Abdelrahman.

**25m rapid pistol men:**  
First: Hassan Al-Mulla, second: Suhail Al-Shimmari, third: Abdelmajid Abdelkhalif.

**50m pistol men:**  
First: Abdelmajid Jumah, second: Abdelaziz Al-Mulla, third: Othman Al-Falakawi.



**Olympic archery:**  
First: Abdallah Taha, second: Bader Al-Mutairi, third: Faisal Al-Rashidi.

Musallam, third: Salem Al-Saeed.

**Compound archery:**  
First: Abdallah Malallah, second: Mohammad

**Open category archery:**  
First: Mohammad Mannaa, second: Saqer Hadi, third: Nashat Faisal.



## Sports

# Australia beat Belarus to make first Fed Cup final since 1993

## Doi joy as Japan avoid Fed Cup drop with Dutch win

**BRISBANE:** Australia powered into its first Fed Cup final since 1993 yesterday with Ashleigh Barty and Samantha Stosur clinching the deciding fifth rubber in Brisbane against Belarusian pair Victoria Azarenka and Aryna Sabalenka.

Their battling 7-5, 3-6, 6-2 win set up a title match against either France or Romania in November. The tie was sent into the crucial doubles match after Azarenka crushed Stosur 6-1, 6-1 in the reverse singles, following Barty sweeping past Sabalenka 6-2, 6-2. Belarus, a losing finalist in 2017, was scheduled to pit Lidziya Marozava and Vera Lapko against the Australian duo, who were playing together for the first time. But with so much on the line team captain Tatiana Poutchek opted instead for the more accomplished pairing.

But they fell short to give seven-time champions Australia a crack at their first title since last winning in 1974. "I could not have picked two more perfect athletes to compete. Ash and Sam are superstars," said elated Australian captain Alicia Molik.

Barty called making the final "unbelievable" while Stosur said it was "super exciting". "We knew it was going to be a tough one and we just so happy with how we played," added Stosur. "All the girls have worked so hard throughout the year and we really stick together."

Watched on Pat Rafter Arena by Evonne Goolagong, who led Australia to that last Fed Cup win, the home team grabbed an early break against the Sabalenka serve in the opening game. Belarus evened it up in game six and they exchanged breaks again before the Australians attacked the Azarenka serve to break and go 6-5 in front, with Stosur securing the set with an overhead smash.

The second set went with serve until a powerful Sabalenka forehand off the Stosur serve gave Belarus the edge and Sabalenka served out the set to take the tie to the wire. A net volley from Stosur gave Australia the crucial advantage off the Azarenka serve in the

fourth game of set three and they held their nerve for a famous victory.

Earlier, ice-cool world number nine Barty produced a commanding performance to beat Sabalenka, ranked one place below her. She got a break in game five of the first set, when the Belarusian fired down four double faults, including on break point. Sabalenka's serving wobbles continued with Barty exploiting the weakness to take the set.

A tight second set also went with serve until the fifth game, and in a mirror image of the first Barty again broke when Sabalenka double faulted as the pressure mounted and sealed the match with an ace.

"A really clean match today. I stuck to my game plan well and was able to execute under pressure," said Barty, who is now on a 13-match Fed Cup winning streak. Former US Open champion Stosur has often struggled on home soil, although success hasn't been completely elusive. On her last appearance Down Under in January she won the women's doubles title at the Australian Open.

But the nerves were fluttering in her singles match against two-time Australian Open winner Azarenka, who quickly took charge, racing to 4-1 lead. Stosur fired down seven double faults as Azarenka won the set in just 29 minutes and the second followed a similar pattern. "It was about either we stay and fight for another match or go home," said Azarenka. "So I was very focused."

In Osaka, Misaki Doi thrashed Bibiane Schoofs 6-3, 6-2 yesterday as Japan completed a 4-0 Dutch white-wash in a one-sided Fed Cup world group two relegation playoff. The Netherlands, who just three years ago reached the Fed Cup semi-finals, slipped into the Europe/Africa group one after an abject display in Osaka. Doi and Nao Hibino had put Japan firmly in control of the tie on Saturday, despite the absence of world number one Naomi Osaka.



**BRISBANE:** Ashleigh Barty of Australia hits a return to Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus during their second round match of the Fed Cup tennis semi-final between Australia and Belarus at the Pat Rafter Arena in Brisbane yesterday. — AFP

World 104 Doi finished the job with a clinical performance against Schoofs, before Shuko Aoyama and Eri Hozumi added insult to injury for the Dutch by beating Lesley Kerkhove and Demi Schuurs 6-3, 3-6, 10-6 in the dead doubles rubber.

The final singles match was subsequently scratched.

"It took a while to find my rhythm but the crowd got behind me and gave me a lift," said Doi after overpowering Schoofs with a barrage of backhand winners.

"To stay in the world group gives us something to aim for. It's a victory that gives hope to women's tennis in Japan." — AFP

## Pakistan's Abid wants World Cup advice from Indian great Tendulkar

**LAHORE:** Pakistan's newly selected opener Abid Ali yesterday expressed confidence that despite strained political relations India's legendary batsman Sachin Tendulkar will give him a hug and a few batting tips at next month's World Cup.

The 31-year old has been a prolific run scorer in Pakistan's domestic cricket and broke into the national one-day squad for the World Cup after smashing a century on his debut against Australia in Dubai last month.

Abid is almost the same height as Tendulkar and bats in a similar style, but has a long way to match the Indian maestro's phenomenal record of most Test runs

(15,921), most one-day runs (18,426), most Test hundreds (51) and most one-day centuries (49) to name a few. "It's my wish and hope that I meet Sachin Tendulkar," Abid told a group of journalists. "Definitely, I would like to hug him and I am sure that just like all great players meet youngsters I am sure that he will not turn me down."

"I am sure that if I want to get any information on cricket from Sachin, he will give a positive reply," Abid said it will be a memorable day when he meets his idol. "It will be the best day in my life when I meet him (Tendulkar) because he was one of the best batsmen."

"West Indian Viv Richards was also a great so I want to meet all the great players and learn from them," said Abid. Tension between India and Pakistan rose to a near-war level since February 14 militant attacks on Indian side of Kashmir which left 44 army personnel killed. India claimed it responded with an attack on a militant base in Balakot in the Pakistan side of Kashmir which was followed by Pakistan shutting down its airspace and later shooting down two Indian air force planes, capturing a pilot.

The Indian pilot was later released as a sign of goodwill and peace. There were calls that India should not play the 2019 World Cup match with Pakistan scheduled for Manchester on June 16. Despite the bitterness, players from both sides enjoy cordial relations.

Indian captain Virat Kohli presented his bat to Pakistan's fast bowler Mohammad Amir during the World Twenty20 in India three years ago as a sign of appreciation of his talent. Abid said he had followed Tendulkar's batting style from his early days.

"Actually I have followed Sachin's technique from day one of my career and after watching him I tried to play like him. He was a great player, just like our own Inzamam-ul-Haq and Mohammad Yousuf."

"I adopt their good things and leave any bad thing. If I meet him I will try to talk to him and get some advice, mentally and technically, so that it helps me improve my batting," Abid said he will do his best to be known as a good batsman. "Tendulkar's record is awesome," said Abid of the Indian master who retired in 2013. "I will do my best as and when I get a chance to play for Pakistan and make a name for myself." — AFP

## 'Champion for years to come' Osaka out to conquer clay

**BERLIN:** World number one Naomi Osaka hopes to bounce back from her recent defeats and conquer a new surface as she launches her clay court season in Stuttgart. The reigning Australian and US Open champion has enjoyed a dazzling rise to the top of women's tennis in the last 12 months, becoming the first Japanese woman to win a Grand Slam and the first Asian player to top the WTA singles rankings.

Having suffered early round defeats in Dubai, Indian Wells and Miami, Osaka is hoping to return to her best form in Stuttgart and chalk up a first major success on clay. After winning her first professional title at the Indian Wells Open in March 2018, the 21-year-old shot to worldwide fame when she shocked Serena Williams in the final of the US Open last September.

She then held her nerve in a gruelling Australian Open final against Petra Kvitova to win her second major in January.

At just 21, she is already one of the most recognisable names in the women's game. Since signing a sponsorship deal with Nike earlier this month, her face has adorned an enormous billboard overlooking Tokyo's iconic Shibuya crossing.

Osaka, who represents Japan but was raised in the USA by her Japanese mother and Haitian father, has also been heralded as a multicultural star for the global age. Just last week, she was included in TIME magazine's list of the 100 most influential people of 2019. "No one represents our more globalized, multicultural future better than (Osaka)," wrote 18-time Grand Slam champion Chris Evert on the TIME list, adding that Osaka would be a "champion for years to come".

Thus far, Osaka has proven herself a champion on only one surface, with all three of her career titles coming on hard court. In Stuttgart, she is out to open a new frontier and overcome what she has admitted is a certain trepidation about clay court tennis.

"I have always felt like I could maybe be an all-court player," she told the Guardian in January. "I think mentally, I don't like clay. I always tell myself I don't like clay, so I never really embrace anything about it and that is something I have to change."

Yet it is not just the perils of a change in surface which Osaka will be battling in Stuttgart. Since claiming the world number one spot in January, she has also had to adapt to the added pressure of being the woman to beat on the WTA circuit.

She split with her coach Sascha Bajin directly after winning the Australian Open, and has not made the quarter-finals of any competition since. "I feel like I've dealt with the stress of people asking me if I have pressure because I have the number one next to my name," she said after defeat to Hsieh Su-wei at the Miami Open last month.

"I thought I was doing fine with that, but I guess I'm not." The star-studded field in Stuttgart means that Osaka could face several players who are currently breathing down her neck in the rankings.

All of the current top five are expected to play in southern Germany next week, and many of them have scores to settle with Osaka. World number three Kvitova will be out to avenge her Australian Open final defeat, while Osaka also beat Simona Halep and Karolina Pliskova on the way to her Indian Wells triumph last year. — AFP

## 76ers rally past Nets in feisty contest

**BROOKLYN:** Mike Scott hit a 3-pointer with 18.6 seconds remaining to lift the visiting Philadelphia 76ers past the Brooklyn Nets 112-108 to take a 3-1 lead in the Eastern Conference opening-round playoff series on Saturday. Joel Embiid led the Sixers with 31 points, 16 rebounds, seven assists and six blocked shots. Embiid, who had been listed as doubtful, started for the Sixers after missing Game 3 with left knee soreness. Tobias Harris added 24 points while Ben Simmons had 15 points, eight rebounds and eight assists. Caris LeVert led the Nets with 25 points while Allen and D'Angelo Russell had 21 apiece. The Nets were without forward Ed Davis, who had a sprained right ankle. The game became quite chippy with 7:42 left in the third after Embiid committed a hard foul on Allen. There was a lot of pushing and shoving between multiple players on both teams. Dudley and Philadelphia's Jimmy Butler were each ejected in the aftermath of a scuffle and Embiid was given a flagrant 1 foul.

### ROCKETS 104, JAZZ 101

James Harden had 22 points, 10 assists and six steals to rally Houston to victory over Utah in Salt Lake City for a 3-0 series lead. Harden went 0-of-14 from the field through the first three quarters. He missed 15 straight shots overall before scoring on a dunk with 7:34 left in the fourth quarter. Harden finished 3-of-20 from the field but made hay at the free-throw line by sinking 14 of 16 attempts. Donovan Mitchell scored 34 points to lead the Jazz. Derrick Favors added 13 points, while Rudy Gobert chipped in 10 points, eight rebounds, and seven blocked shots, but Utah couldn't overcome 14 turnovers and 13 missed free throws.

### NUGGETS 117, SPURS 103

Nikola Jokic racked up 29 points, grabbed 12 rebounds and added eight assists as visiting Denver rolled over San Antonio in Game 4 to even the Western Conference first-round playoff series at two games apiece. Game 5 in the best-of-seven set will be Tuesday in Denver, with the second-seeded Nuggets' win Saturday allowing them to reclaim the home-court advantage. The victory snapped a 14-game losing streak for the Nuggets in the Alamo City, dating back to March 2012. Jamal Murray added 24 points for Denver. Small forward Torrey Craig, inserted into the starting lineup for the first time since Jan. 28, hit for 18 points. LaMarcus Aldridge led the Spurs with 24 points and nine rebounds, with DeMar DeRozan adding 19 points before being ejected late in the game.—Reuters



**NEW YORK:** Terence Crawford punches Amir Khan during their WBO welterweight title fight at Madison Square Garden in New York City.—AFP

## Crawford stops Khan to retain WBO welterweight title

**NEW YORK:** American Terence Crawford retained his WBO welterweight title Saturday, stopping Amir Khan in the sixth round when the Englishman was unable to continue because of an accidental low blow.

Crawford, who was making the second defense of his title, had little trouble controlling the fight and winning by a technical knockout against the overmatched Khan. Crawford has now won nine of his last 11 fights by stoppage and Saturday's surprise ending happened after he hit Khan with a hard left to the groin 47 seconds into the sixth round at Madison Square Garden in New York.

Khan buckled and was in obvious pain as he went over to his corner. During the injury stoppage, Khan's trainer Virgil Hunter asked his boxer if he wanted to continue and Khan said no. Khan could have taken a five-minute break to regain his composure but chose not to. Crawford denied it was a low blow but the referee saw it differently.

"It wasn't a low blow," Crawford said. "I was rushing a little. Trying to box more and catch him in the trenches." Three division world champion Crawford improved to 35 wins and no losses. Crawford, who is considered one of

the best pound-for-pound fighters in the world, sent Khan to the canvas in the first round with an overhand right followed by a left to the temple. He delivered a similar overhand punch in the last 10 seconds of the round which wobbled Khan's legs again.

The next couple of rounds saw the 146-pound Crawford throwing almost all his punches at Khan's head. By the fourth round, Crawford was in complete control and Khan's swollen face was showing the marks of getting hit with clean punches. Crawford started going to the body in the fourth and in the fifth he got his jab working again, popping Khan's head back with a series of quick shots. Khan wasn't Crawford's first choice. He wanted to fight International Boxing Federation champ Errol Spence and reiterated that on Saturday.

"The only one fight they are talking about is Spence. Whenever he is ready, I am here," said Crawford. "The only thing I can do is fight (the) person they put in front of me. We are going to make it happen, sooner or later."

Khan defended his decision to not continue or take the full five minutes of the time out. "I am a warrior," he said. "I would never give up in a fight like this. I was in pain. I could feel it in my stomach. My legs seized. I couldn't continue. You have to knock me out for me to give up." For Khan, the 2004 Olympic silver medalist, it was another disappointing world title fight. He is 2-2 in his last four fights. Three years ago, he was brutally knocked out by Canelo Alvarez in a middleweight title fight. Saturday's fight dropped his record in world title fights to 6-4 overall. Between the Alvarez fight and Saturday's TKO loss, Khan won two straight bouts against lesser opponents. — AFP



## Sports

# Benzema's treble fires Real past Bilbao as Bale jeered again

## Victory moves Madrid four points behind Atletico

**MADRID:** Karim Benzema made it 30 goals for the season yesterday as he led the way again for struggling Real Madrid with a hat-trick that shot his side to a 3-0 win over Athletic Bilbao. Benzema has been one of the few bright sparks in an otherwise dreary campaign for the European champions and it was his second-half treble that proved the difference at the Santiago Bernabeu.

Victory moves Madrid four points behind Atletico in second, while Bilbao stay seventh, with their chances of sealing a spot in the Europa League dented. However Zinedine Zidane's side stay 13 points behind La Liga leaders Barcelona, who beat Real Sociedad 2-1 on Saturday.

Benzema's advance in the absence of Cristiano Ronaldo and surge since the reappointment of Zidane comes in stark contrast to Gareth Bale, who was whistled when introduced as a substitute here and frequently during his 20 minutes on the pitch.

For all the impatience of the home crowd, it was Bale who won the corner for Benzema's second and then teed up his team-mate's third in injury-time. But his sixth season at Real Madrid will surely be his last, with Zidane saying little in press conference either to express support or suggest he wants the Welshman to stay beyond the summer.

Bale and Benzema with the gargantuan task of filling the void left by Ronaldo's departure for Juventus last summer and while Bale seems to have shrivelled under the weight of expectation, Benzema has thrived. The 31-year-old has now claimed all of Madrid's last eight goals in La Liga, a run that includes five matches, while

in his last seven games, he has scored 10.

Benzema said at the start of the season he wanted 35 goals in all competitions and, despite his opportunities being reduced by his team's early exit in the Champions League, he is now only five short of his target with the same number of games left to play.

Zidane has already said he expects Benzema to be a Madrid player again at the start of next season and on this evidence it is easy to see why.

The striker's clinical performance aside, the reigning European champions lacked spark in the final third and, the emphatic scoreline flattered them.

They were particularly underwhelming in the first half and Bilbao's Inaki Williams might have scored early in the second had the 22-year-old Jesus Vallejo not made an excellent last-ditch intervention.

It was from the counter-attack that Madrid scored as Toni Kroos was allowed to stroll forward unattended and feed Marco Asensio out wide. Asensio crossed for Benzema to head home.

The game was reduced to almost a walking pace around the hour, with the Madrid fans roused only to jeer the introduction of Bale, who came on with Isco, with 20 minutes left.

But it was his run in behind that won the corner for Benzema's second, another header, this time at the back post, before a comical mix-up in the Bilbao defence gifted him his hat-trick.

Iago Herrerin rushed out to intercept a speculative ball over the top but made a mess of his headed clearance, the ball falling to Bale to tee up Benzema, 30 yards out but with the goal open. — AFP



**MADRID:** Real Madrid's French forward Karim Benzema (R) challenges Athletic Bilbao's Spanish defender Inigo Lekue during the Spanish League football match between Real Madrid and Athletic Bilbao at the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium in Madrid yesterday. — AFP

## Bayern grind down 10-man Bremen to stay ahead of Dortmund

**BERLIN:** Niklas Sule's late goal saw Bayern Munich break a brave resistance from ten-man Werder Bremen to snatch a crucial 1-0 win and stay ahead of Borussia Dortmund in the Bundesliga title race.

Bayern toiled in the searing Bavarian sun against Bremen, eventually grinding out the victory to go four points clear at the top. The win puts pressure on title rivals Dortmund, who need to win a tough away game in Freiburg if they are to remain within a point of Bayern.

Bremen held Bayern at bay for much of the game, but suffered a lethal blow just before the hour mark, when Milos Veljkovic was sent off for a second yellow card. Chances came and went for Bayern as the clock ticked down, until Sule finally broke through with a deflected shot from the edge of the area 15 minutes from time.

## Juventus need more to conquer Europe

**MILAN:** Massimiliano Allegri insisted that Cristiano Ronaldo was the future of Juventus and the Portuguese superstar said he was "1,000 percent committed to staying" but despite sealing an eighth consecutive Serie A title the Turin giants need to find more if they want to conquer Europe next season.

Allegri's side claimed an eighth consecutive Scudetto—the 35th in their history—on Saturday to help ease some of the pain of their shock Champions League quarter-final exit at the Juventus Stadium to Ajax tomorrow.

A come-from-behind 2-1 win over Fiorentina was enough to give Juventus a 20-point lead on nearest rivals Napoli with five games to play. "The exit from the Champions League hurts, but this title says it all about what we managed to do—eighth in a row with five games to spare," said Allegri.

"Now let's enjoy the party, then I'll meet club management and we'll talk and analyse what didn't work this season." The Italian club have overtaken French club Lyon for the record of consecutive victories in the top five European leagues.

But again they have been unable to turn their domestic domination to Europe, winning their last Champions League title in 1996 and losing five finals since. The club spent 100 million euros (\$117 million) on five-time Champions League winner Ronaldo last summer, hailing the 34-year-old record goal scorer as the missing piece in their jigsaw.

But this season they won less than the previous campaign, lifting Serie A and the Italian SuperCup but ending their four-year Coppa Italia reign. Juventus have lost only two matches, against Genoa on March 17 and SPAL last weekend, when they could have won the title with a record six games to spare.

The Juventus coach estimated that the title had been in the bag since February 2 when Paulo Dybala scored the only goal in a win over Bologna. "That success was crucial because it came at a delicate moment, caught between the challenge with Atletico Madrid and the direct clash of Naples," said Allegri.

The 51-year-old blamed "too many injuries and unforeseen events" and the players being unable to react to setbacks. In recent weeks the club has been hit by injuries to Dybala, defender Giorgio Chiellini, Sami Khedira, Mario Mandzukic, and Douglas Costa.

The challenge next season for Allegri will be to find the right cast for Ronaldo. He scored six goals in the Champions League to bring his record tally to 126, including an incredible hat-trick against Atletico Madrid that lifted them into the quarter-finals, and is their leading scorer in Serie A with 19. — AFP

"I had a couple of shots against Dortmund which were a bit NFL-like, so it was nice to score the winning goal today," Sule told Sky. Third-placed RB Leipzig, meanwhile, have one foot in next season's Champions League after a 2-1 win over Borussia Muenchengladbach put them 10 points clear of their fifth-placed opponents.

"We won't let go of our top four place now," Leipzig coach Ralf Rangnick told Sky. Having scored a penalty in the first half, Marcel Halstenberg added another shortly after half-time to put Leipzig in full control.

Alassane Plea pulled one back for Gladbach, but the home side ultimately missed the chance to break into the top four, and remain a point behind Eintracht Frankfurt, who play today.

At the other end of the table, Stuttgart look doomed to a bottom-three finish after they suffered a humiliating 6-0 thrashing by fellow strugglers Augsburg. Augsburg obliterated their relegation rivals with a delightful display of attacking football. Goals from Rani Khedira, Andre Hahn and Philipp Max saw them establish a 3-0 lead before the half-hour mark.

Max added another in the second half, and a Marco Richter double completed the rout and sealed the fate of Stuttgart coach Markus Weinzierl who was sacked later. Augsburg's win lifts them ten points clear of the

relegation play-off place, and also confirms survival for Mainz, who beat local rivals Fortuna Duesseldorf 3-1.

Jean-Philippe Mateta put Mainz into the lead after just 36 seconds, but Dodi Lukebakio levelled the scores with his second goal in two games. Lukebakio later missed a penalty, and Mainz took advantage of the let-off, sealing the win with second half goals from Mateta and Karim Onisiwo.

Elsewhere, Bayer Leverkusen and Hoffenheim kept themselves in the race for Europe with wins over Nuremberg and Schalke respectively. Goals from Lucas Alario and Kevin Volland saw Leverkusen labour to a 2-0 win against Nuremberg, while Hoffenheim romped to a 5-2 win in Gelsenkirchen.

In-form Algerian midfielder Ishak Belfodil opened the scoring, and Andrej Kramaric doubled the lead just before half-time. Schalke briefly rallied thanks to a Daniel Caligiuri penalty and Guido Burgstaller picked up a late consolation goal, but second-half strikes from Adam Szalai, Nadiem Amiri and Belfodil saw Hoffenheim cruise to victory and tighten their grip on sixth place.

"We said that if we won our five remaining games, we could target a Champions League place, and now it is only four games," said Hoffenheim coach Julian Nagelsmann. — AFP



**ST LOUIS:** Ivan Barbashev #49 of the St. Louis Blues checks Adam Lowry #17 of the Winnipeg Jets in Game Six of the Western Conference First Round during the 2019 NHL Stanley Cup Playoffs at the Enterprise Center in St. Louis, Missouri. — AFP

## Schwartz's hat trick helps Blues eliminate Jets

**ST LOUIS:** Jaden Schwartz had a hat trick, and rookie goaltender Jordan Binnington made 18 saves as the host St. Louis Blues eliminated the Winnipeg Jets with a 3-2 victory in Game 6 of their first-round Western Conference playoff series Saturday. The Blues will face the winner of the Dallas-Nashville series in the next round of the playoffs. St. Louis became the first home team to win a game in the series, and the first winning team that didn't need to overcome a deficit. Dustin Byfuglien and Bryan Little scored for Winnipeg, and goalie Connor Hellebuyck stopped 33 of 36 shots. Both of the Jets' goals came in the second half of the third period, after they were down 3-0.

### STARS 5, PREDATORS 3

Alexander Radulov and Jason Dickinson each scored two goals as visiting Dallas won Game 5 of its first-

round Stanley Cup playoff series with Nashville. The win gives the Stars a 3-2 edge in the series, putting them a victory away from advancing to the second round for just the second time in 11 seasons. The Central Division-winning Predators, meanwhile, are in danger of missing the second round for the first time in four seasons. Jamie Benn had three assists for the Stars, while Tyler Seguin contributed a goal and an assist. The top line of Radulov, Benn, and Seguin combined for 16 of the Stars' 26 total shots. The trio has 16 total points in the series.

### CAPITALS 6, HURRICANES 0

Nicklas Backstrom finished with two goals and two assists, and Alex Ovechkin added a goal and two assists as Washington pounded Carolina in Game 5 of their Eastern Conference first-round series. The Capitals took a 3-2 lead in the series and can close out the Hurricanes in Game 6 on Monday night in Raleigh, N.C. The winner of this series will meet the New York Islanders. Tom Wilson finished with a goal and an assist as Washington's top line—Ovechkin, Backstrom and Wilson—delivered in a big way with four goals and five assists. Evgeny Kuznetsov and John Carlson also added two assists apiece. Goalie Braden Holtby finished with 30 saves, 15 of which came in the second period, to earn the win. — Reuters



### Matches on TV (Local Timings)

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE	
Chelsea FC v Burnley FC beIN SPORTS HD 2	22:00
ITALIAN CALCIO LEAGUE	
SSC Napoli v Atalanta beIN SPORTS HD 4	20:00
GERMAN BUNDESLIGA	
Wolfsburg v Eintracht Frankfurt beIN SPORTS HD 5	21:30

## Kante warns Chelsea to curb their second half slumps

**LONDON:** N'Golo Kante has warned Chelsea to cut out their sloppy second halves as the Blues look to boost their bid to finish in the Premier League's top four against Burnley today.

Maurizio Sarri's side advanced to the Europa League semi-finals on Thursday with a 4-3 win over Slavia Prague. But what should have been a stroll into the last four after the hosts raced into a 4-1 half-time lead ended up as a tense finish when Chelsea let Slavia score twice early in the second half. It is not the first time Chelsea have shown a lack of concentration after the interval this term, with Liverpool scoring twice in the second half to beat them 2-0 just days earlier.

Everton did exactly the same in another Chelsea defeat in March and France midfielder Kante admits his team can't afford to continue that alarming trend if they are to qualify for next season's Champions League via a top four finish. Fifth-placed Chelsea are behind fourth placed Arsenal on goal difference, leaving the west Londoners with no margin for error when Burnley visit Stamford Bridge. That gap will extend to three points if Arsenal beat Crystal Palace on Sunday, while sixth placed Manchester United could also leapfrog the Blues if they win at Everton on Sunday.

Chelsea's target is to climb above third-placed Tottenham, who are just one point above them and lost to Manchester City on Saturday.

Insisting Chelsea are working to resolve those second half shortcomings, Kante said: "It's just something that has happened many times this season and something we need to manage a bit better. But we still have to work on that."

Chelsea are chasing a top four finish, but if they fall short, winning the Europa League would offer a secondary route into the Champions League.

And Kante believes completing that Europa League mission would turn Chelsea's turbulent first season under Sarri's leadership into a success.

"We can make the season beautiful by winning the Europa League," Kante said. "That's the only title we can win now, so it would be great to win the Europa League."

"I think at the beginning of the game it was a good feeling to score three goals like this. The most important thing was to qualify. "We'll go into the semi-final with confidence and we hope to qualify for the final."

Chelsea playmaker Eden Hazard should be fit in time for the Burnley clash after coming off against Slavia with a second half knock.

Blues defender Antonio Rudiger is expected to miss out again due to a knee issue.

Burnley head to the Bridge with their Premier League safety almost secured and Clarets boss Sean Dyche is intrigued to see how teenage winger Dwight O'Neil copes with his growing reputation.

O'Neil has been linked with Arsenal, Everton and Newcastle after playing a key role in Burnley's climb away from the relegation zone.

"He's certainly in a balanced environment here, where I can't see him running away with any outside noise," Dyche said. "He seems to be quite steady and enjoying his football. That's what I want him to do, play with a smile on his face and enjoy the challenge." — AFP



**25** Yankees win but lose Judge to injury, Rangers shell Cole, cruise past Astros

**26** Crawford stops Khan to retain WBO welterweight title

**27** Benzema's treble fires Real past Bilbao as Bale jeered again



## Everton pile more agony for Solskjaer

United have conceded in 12 consecutive games for the first time since 1998



LIVERPOOL: Manchester United's Belgian-born Brazilian midfielder Andreas Pereira (R) plays the ball past Everton's French defender Kurt Zouma (L) during the English Premier League football match between Everton and Manchester United at Goodison Park in Liverpool yesterday. — AFP

LIVERPOOL: Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's problems since taking over as permanent Manchester United manager intensified with a humiliating 4-0 loss away to Everton yesterday. Defeat at Goodison Park—United's sixth in eight games—also dealt a huge blow to the Red Devils' hopes of playing in the Champions League next season.

Goals from Richarlison, Gylfi Sigurdsson, Lucas Digne and Theo Walcott inflicted the largest defeat on United since they lost by the same scoreline at Chelsea three years ago. But, after starting his reign with eight consecutive victories, the best start ever made by a manager at the club, former United striker Solskjaer is now collecting some other, very unwanted, statistics.

This latest loss means United have now

leaked 48 league goals, the most they've conceded in a season, since letting in 63 back in the 42-game 1978/79 campaign. Yesterday's loss also means United have conceded in 12 consecutive games for the first time since December 1998 while, under Solskjaer, the Reds have lost five consecutive away games for the first time in 38 years.

United looked second best even before the hosts scored twice inside the opening half-hour, conceding a succession of corners from which Everton threatened. It was another type of set-piece, a long throw-in by Digne, from which Everton took the lead after 12 minutes when the full-back launched the ball deep into the United area.

Dominic Calvert-Lewin helped the ball on with the flick of his head and Richarlison sent

a spectacular scissor-kick finish flying past David de Gea. After a humbling 3-0 Champions League exit at Barcelona in mid-week, it was not the start Solskjaer had been looking for. Everton soon made the situation worse for the visitors.

After 27 minutes, Everton cleared a United corner and immediately broke on the counter-attack, with winger Bernard playing a delightful ball inside to Idrissa Gueye. He, in turn, released Sigurdsson who, with Nemanja Matic backing off, unleashed a magnificent 25-yard shot which bounced just in front of the diving de Gea on its way into the bottom corner.

Richarlison might have given Everton the lead even earlier. His 10th minute shot drew an amazing reaction save from de Gea. From

the rebound the Brazilian hurried his follow-up effort wide.

With the recalled Romelu Lukaku booed every time he touched the ball by his former fans at Everton, United had little response to an impressive effort from the home side. In between the goals, United star Paul Pogba's long diagonal pass freed Marcus Rashford who could only poke his effort over from a tight angle.

Everton effectively killed the game in the 56th minute. De Gea punched clear a Sigurdsson corner to the unmarked Digne who sent a superb, first-time volley flying back past the United keeper from 20 yards.

Three minutes later, and from the same left wing, another Sigurdsson corner almost crept in at de Gea's near post before the Spaniard

stuck out a boot to clear off his line. Even though Richarlison had limped off through injury, the agony was not over for United with the Brazilian's replacement Walcott continuing the rout in the 64th minute.

Sigurdsson again carved out the opening with a brilliantly-timed through ball which allowed the former England international the space to sprint into the area and beat the advancing de Gea. Not until the 86th minute, and a comfortably saved Anthony Martial strike, did United have a shot on target.

Meanwhile Everton, who had not beaten a 'big six' rival in 25 attempts before last month, have now won consecutive home matches against Chelsea, Arsenal and United while keeping three clean sheets in the process. — AFP

## Liverpool back on top with win at Cardiff

CARDIFF: Liverpool continue to put the pressure on Manchester City as a hard-fought 2-0 win at relegation threatened Cardiff moved them back top of the Premier League yesterday. Georginio Wijnaldum's opener just before the hour and James Milner's penalty secured a ninth consecutive win in all competitions for Jurgen Klopp's side and moved them two points ahead of City, who have a game in hand, at the top of the table.

City travel to Manchester United on Wednesday in what appears the toughest hurdle left for the English champions to clear and deny Liverpool a first Premier League title in 29 years. The Reds remain poised to pounce if Pep Guardiola's side fail to pick up maximum points in their remaining four games.

While Liverpool were cruising into a second successive Champions League semi-final in mid-week, Cardiff gave their chances of survival a huge boost with a 2-0 win at Brighton to close within three points of safety.

If Neil Warnock's men are to defy the odds to stay up, it is upcoming games against already relegated Fulham and Crystal Palace they will need to win, but they did not make life easy for Liverpool. The visitors should have taken the lead midway through the first-half when their front three clicked together for the first time when Mohamed Salah fed Sadio Mane and the Senegalese's pass put Roberto Firmino clean through on goal. However, the Brazilian blazed over with just Neil Etheridge to beat.

Salah has found his form in front of goal at the right time for Liverpool's bid for a Premier League and Champions League double. However, after scoring in three of his past four games, Salah could not keep that streak going as he fired too close to Etheridge when played in by Jordan Henderson.

Cardiff's massed ranks of defence allowed Liverpool to enjoy nearly 75 percent possession, but the home team did not pose a threat of their own until they nearly took a shock lead just

before the break.

Victor Camarasa's mishit shot fell kindly for Oumar Niasse and the on loan Everton striker nearly brought even more a smile to fans of his parent club on a day they beat Manchester United 4-0, but his shot was turned over by Alisson Becker. There was little reason for Liverpool to panic at half-time as their previous four Premier League games had also been won with second-half goals and so it proved once more. Trent Alexander-Arnold bagged his 10th assist of the season as the England international's corner was pulled back for Wijnaldum to lash into the net first time.

Liverpool's midfield has begun to chip in with crucial goals at the right time of the season and Henderson should have provided another moments later when he fired wastefully over with the goal at his mercy. Klopp vented his frustration at Henderson's miss and it was nearly costly when Cardiff captain Sean Morrison had a glorious chance to level 26 minutes from time. Morrison seemed to have the simple task of heading into an empty net as Alisson got caught underneath a corner, but he mistimed his header and the ball instead bounced to safety off his back.—AFP



CARDIFF: Liverpool's Egyptian midfielder Mohamed Salah (L) is fouled by Cardiff City's English defender Sean Morrison (R) to earn a penalty leading their second goal during the English Premier League football match between Cardiff City and Liverpool at Cardiff City Stadium yesterday. —AFP