

**2** His Highness the Amir receives speaker, MPs



**13** Gulf Bank records KD 57 million in net profit for 2018, an increase of 18%



**22** Rapper 21 Savage arrested, faces deportation from US



**28** Brady wins sixth Super Bowl as Patriots out-muscle Rams



## Amir holds official talks with visiting Qatari leader

### Sheikh Tamim attends funeral of media personality



**KUWAIT:** HH the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives a signed Qatari national team football jersey from Qatari Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani yesterday. Qatar won the Asian Cup last week. — Amiri Diwan

**KUWAIT:** HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah held official talks with visiting Amir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani at Bayan Palace yesterday. The talks were attended by

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, in addition to senior state officials.



**Sheikh Tamim attends the funeral of media personality Ahmed Al-Misfer at Sulaibikhat cemetery yesterday. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat**

According to Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah, the talks revolved around bilateral relations, issues of common concern and latest regional developments. Sheikh

Tamim later attended the funeral of media personality Ahmed Al-Misfer at Sulaibikhat cemetery, where he paid his condolences to the deceased's family members. — KUNA

## Kuwait on course to nationalize private sector

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's development plans revolve around efforts to localize the country's burgeoning private sector, said Minister of State for Economic Affairs Mariam Al-Aqeel. These efforts aim to create more job opportunities for nationals in the private sector, the minister told the press on the sidelines of an industrial conference in Kuwait yesterday. Once that goal comes to fruition, development projects will begin to get off the ground, leading to more foreign investment in Kuwait, the minister explained. Aqeel added that human capital is an integral part of the aforementioned plans, given the immense impact it has on economic growth.

Continued on Page 24

## Trump comments spark demands for US exit from Iraq

**BAGHDAD:** Iraqi politicians yesterday hit back at Donald Trump after the US president said he plans to keep American forces in the country to spy on Iran. In an interview with CBS television, Trump reaffirmed his determination to pull the United States out of "endless wars" in Syria and Afghanistan but said American troops would stay on in Iraq, partly "to be looking a little bit at Iran". "We spent a fortune on building this incredible base. We might as well keep it," he said, referring to Ain Al-Asad airbase in western Iraq that he visited in December. "If somebody is looking to do nuclear weapons or other things, we're going to know it before they do," he said in the interview aired on Sunday.

His comments sparked a new round of demands in Baghdad for US forces to leave the country. "The Iraqi

constitution rejects the use of Iraq as a base for hitting or attacking a neighboring country," President Barham Saleh said. Saleh said US forces were in the country legally under an agreement between the two countries, but that "any action taken outside this framework is unacceptable". "Don't overburden Iraq with your own issues," Saleh said. "The US is a major power...but do not pursue your own policy priorities, we live here."

Iraq's government plays a delicate balancing act between its two main allies, Washington and Tehran, which are bitter enemies. The US has been leading a coalition to crush the Islamic State group which grabbed swathes of Syria and Iraq in 2014, and multiple offensives have since ousted the jihadists from all but a sliver of territory in eastern Syria. Baghdad's position has also been complicated by Trump's shock December decision to pull troops out of neighboring Syria, prompting pro-Iran factions to step up calls for an accelerated US withdrawal from Iraq.

Sabah Al-Saadi, a member of parliament in the bloc led by influential anti-American Shiite cleric Moqtada Sadr, has proposed a bill demanding a US pullout.

Continued on Page 24

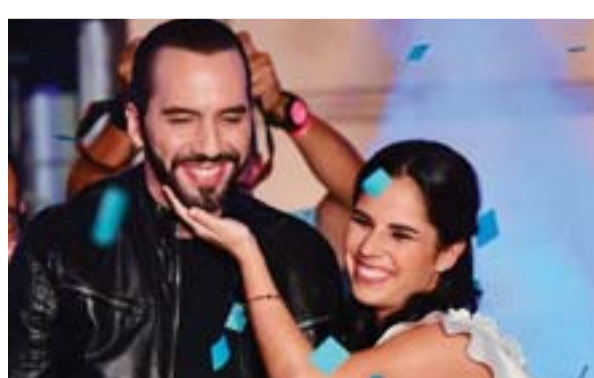


**BAGHDAD:** Iraqi President Barham Saleh speaks at the Rafidain Center for Dialogue (RCD) Forum yesterday. — AFP

## Salvadorans elect outsider Bukele as new president

**SAN SALVADOR:** Salvadorans on Sunday elected Nayib Bukele, the popular former mayor of San Salvador, as the Central American country's new president - a result that ends the near 30-year grip on power of its two largest parties. The country's Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE) awarded him 53.78 percent of votes with 87.67 percent counted - a lead it considered "irreversible". The 37-year-old president-elect of Palestinian descent, of the conservative Grand Alliance for National Unity (GANU) party, wore jeans and a leather jacket as he celebrated with supporters - thousands chanting his name and waving flags in the capital's central Plaza Morazan.

"It's a victory for the Salvadoran people, today we won in the first round and we have made history," said Bukele, who despite being a firm favorite was expected to face a second round of voting. He has promised to increase investment in education and fight corruption - but his main task will be to confront insecurity in a country ravaged by gang violence. He will also have to form an alliance with the rightwing opposition, which



**SAN SALVADOR:** El Salvador presidential candidate Nayib Bukele of the Great National Alliance (GANU) celebrates alongside his wife Gabriela Rodriguez after winning the presidential elections on Sunday. — AFP

dominates congress, and govern with them until at least 2021 when the next legislative elections are held.

Bukele's opponents - Carlos Calleja of the rightwing Nationalist Republican Alliance (ARENA), and Hugo Martinez of the leftist Farabundo Marti Front for National Liberation (FMLN) - quickly recognized the win. For nearly three decades, their parties have had a firm hold on Salvadoran politics. "We recognize the results of these elections.

Continued on Page 24

## Iran women see new opportunities amid old barriers

**TEHRAN:** Saba was just 25 when she left her design job in New York to work on a project renovating an art gallery back in her hometown Tehran. Within months, she won three more contracts to do up galleries and the lobby of an apartment complex. "I had dreamt of building my own company, but I hadn't expected it to happen any time soon. If I had stayed in New York, I wouldn't have had this chance," said Saba, now 27. She says the position of women in Iran has changed a lot over the past decade. "People now trust women in management positions. Still it's hard, especially on a construction site. But it's hard anywhere. It's hard in New York," she told AFP.

As the Islamic republic marks its 40th birthday, few issues are more politically sensitive or full of contradictions than the status of women. After the revolution, Islamic laws gave women a lower legal status than men, requiring them, for example, in many cases to gain permission from their father or husband to



**TEHRAN:** In this file photo taken on Feb 7, 2018, Iranian women walk down a street in the capital. — AFP

leave the country. They are considered to have half the value of men in various legal aspects such as inheritance and testimony in court.

But the Islamic republic also encouraged education for women, who now outnumber men at universities - a development that has transformed expectations and overturned centuries-old traditions. "Going to university was a path forward for girls like us who did not want to end up like our mothers in a

Continued on Page 24

## Local

## Amir meets National Assembly Speaker, lawmakers



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah met at the Amiri Terminal yesterday National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem and a number of MPs. —Amiri Diwan photos



## Kuwaiti FM thanks EU's contributions towards peace in region

**BRUSSELS:** Kuwait's Foreign Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah yesterday appreciated the European Union's (EU) longstanding concern over Arab affairs, thanking the bloc for their contributions towards peace in the region. Heading Kuwait's delegation to the fifth EU-Arab League ministerial meeting in the Belgian capital Brussels, the minister said the EU's support is imperative given the volatility across much of the wider Arab region. The EU, however, has to contend with serious dilemmas of its own, including critical matters such as the 'migrant crisis and the scourge of terrorism,' the Kuwaiti foreign minister said during the meeting. He went on to highlight the significance of the talks ahead of the inaugural European-Arab summit later this month in Egypt, which the minister described as an opportunity to take bilateral cooperation to higher levels, citing

sectors such as the economy, which still have room for more progress. The Kuwaiti foreign minister hoped that the talks would yield "positive results, putting both regions on the path to further prosperity and development." Kuwait's delegation to the talks comprised bevy of diplomats and senior foreign ministry officials.

The fifth European Union-Arab League ministerial meeting had kicked off with calls for boosting joint cooperation for the sake of global peace and security. "It is an intense moment in our relations," EU High Representative Federica Mogherini said in her opening remarks, noting that the ministerial will prepare for the first ever Arab-EU summit that will be held at the end of this month in Egypt. She stressed that cooperation between Europe and the Arab world was "never so important and never so necessary and this ministerial, the first to be held in Brussels, will be an important step to prepare for the summit." Mogherini urged Arab-Europe cooperation to resolve the Palestine question and prevent the collapse of the two-state solution and also to find a political solution to the Syrian crisis.

Meanwhile, Mohammad Al-Dirdiri, Chair of the Arab League Ministerial Council and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sudan said in his opening remarks: "This meeting proves that the only way is to find a joint approach to work together and for the common good of our peoples and face the challenges in our region and in the world."

"We need to work permanently if we are to achieve

peace and economic goals for our peoples. This should be done on the principle of non-interference in affairs of other countries," he said. Dirdiri noted that (we) have great ambitions for the upcoming summit and optimistic as it can lay the framework for close partnership between the EU and the Arab world. He stressed that Palestine is the key question and "we would like to reiterate here on the two-state solution with Jerusalem as the shared capital."

In the meantime, Ahmad Abul Gheit, Secretary General of the Arab League, said that good relations between the EU and Arab states are aimed at addressing common challenges and developing common cooperation. He noted that the Europe-Arab relations are based on a common and long history and on convergence of views on many issues, noting that the first EU-Arab summit in Egypt will lay the foundation for solid institutional cooperation between the two sides.

Abul Gheit called for Arab-Europe cooperation to deal with the high number of crises and problems that threaten (our) region. "There is a key issue that is the Palestine question. The peace process has been blocked for some time by Israel, which has rejected the two-state solution and like cancer extended its reach for an expansionist policy," he pointed out. He lamented that unilateral measures have been taken by some countries like the transfer of their embassy to East Jerusalem, which is still occupied.

The two-state solution is the only way out in Palestine,



BRUSSELS: Kuwait's Foreign Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah attends the fifth EU-Arab League ministerial meeting. —KUNA

he stressed, calling for a political solution in Syria and an end of interference by neighboring countries. He also urged for a political solution in Yemen and appealed for joint efforts to deal with the problems in Libya. "Terrorism remains a major threat to the Arab region. We should keep fighting terrorism and cooperation is necessary to deal with illegal migration," the Arab League chief added. —KUNA

# Qatari Amir concludes official visit to Kuwait



**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Amir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani, in presence of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. — Amiri Diwan photos



**His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah welcomes Amir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani.**

**KUWAIT:** Amir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani and his accompanying delegation left Kuwait yesterday following an official visit, where he held official talks with His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. The

Qatari Amir was seen off at the airport by His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-

Sabah, Head of the Accompanying Mission of Honor and Deputy Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah and several other senior state officials. Sheikh Tamim was received upon his arrival to Kuwait by His

Highness the Amir, His Highness the Crown Prince, Speaker Ghanem, His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak and other senior state officials. His Highness the Amir also held a luncheon in Sheikh Tamim's honor.— KUNA



**His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah welcomes Amir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani.**



**Children greet His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Amir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani.**



**His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah signs a Qatari national team football jersey.**



**His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Amir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani.**



**His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sees off Amir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani upon his departure.**

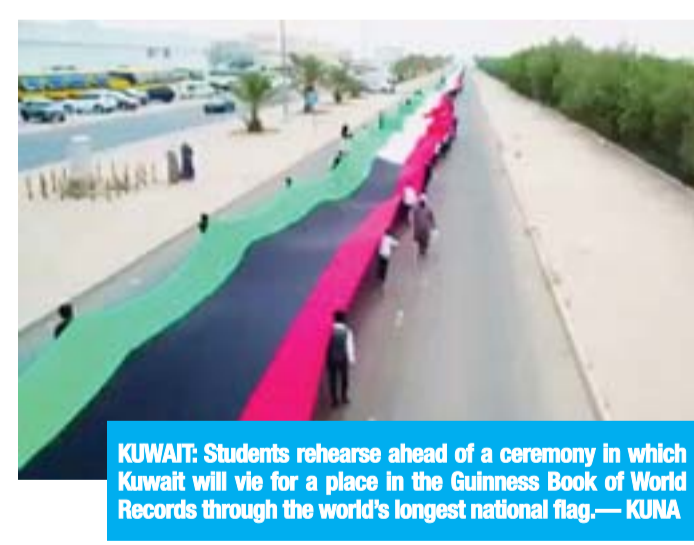


**His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Amir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani share a conversation.**

## Kuwait vies for longest flag world record

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait is vying to claim a place in the Guinness Book of World Records through the world's longest national flag, which comes within the framework of Kuwait's national celebrations. In this regard, Mubarak Al-Kabeer Educational Directorate of the Ministry of Education is preparing to enter the Guinness Book of World Records by organizing a celebration of carrying the longest national flag with a length of 2,019 meters, with participation of more than 4,000 students and teachers on Sunday February 10.

The ceremony will be held under the auspices of Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education Dr Hamid Al-Azmi, with the participation of Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Interior, Civil Defense and international arbitrators. As part of preparations for this national occasion, Chairman of Mubarak Al-Kabeer Educational Directorate Mansour Al-Dehani has formed a number of committees to work on arranging and preparing for the ceremony, which will witness the attendance of parents of students and many citizens and residents. This celebration coincides with Kuwait's 58th Independence Day, 28th Liberation Day and the 13th anniversary of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's assumption of power.— KUNA



**KUWAIT:** Students rehearse ahead of a ceremony in which Kuwait will vie for a place in the Guinness Book of World Records through the world's longest national flag.— KUNA



**KUWAIT:** The French Ambassador to Kuwait Marie Masdupuy visited Kuwait Times yesterday and discussed matters of mutual concern with Editor-in-Chief Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan. —Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

## Zain sponsors 16th TRANS Middle East Kuwait 2019 Exhibition

**KUWAIT:** Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, announced its sponsorship of the 16th TRANS Middle East Kuwait 2019 Exhibition and Conference hosted for the first time in the State of Kuwait by the Kuwait Ports Authority (KPA) at the Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel. The exhibition is considered the Middle East's biggest maritime ports, shipping, and transport logistics event.

The event also witnessed the participation of over 400 international and regional governmental officials and academics. Zain's support to this exhibition came in line with its keenness on being an active participant in the various local and regional projects that contribute to shouldering and advancing national economy, being a leading national company in the Kuwaiti private sector. The event offered many investment opportunities and developmental projects in the maritime ports, shipping, and transport logistics sectors that contribute to developing Kuwait's infrastructure.

The 16th TRANS Middle East Kuwait 2019 Exhibition and Conference, hosted for the first time in the State of Kuwait by the Kuwait Ports Authority (KPA), is considered the biggest event specializing in maritime ports, shipping, and transport logistics sectors in the Middle East region. The exhibition offered many investment opportunities, and hosted nearly 30 international speakers who exchanged experiences with the attendees. The event also witnessed the participation of over 400 international and regional governmental officials and academics.



**KUWAIT:** Deputy Chairman of the Kuwait Ports Authority Mahmoud Al-Dousari, Zain Kuwait's Chief Commercial Officer Meshaal Mohammed and Zain's team at the company's booth.

## Local

# GCC states look to export extra generated electricity to Europe

## Bidding extended for retired citizens' health insurance program

By A Saleh

**KUWAIT:** The Gulf Cooperation Council Interconnection Authority (GCCIA) CEO Ahmad Al-Ibrahim said the GCC grid had an extra 60,000 megawatts of electricity during the winter, noting that GCC states are working on exporting the extra power to European countries as soon as interconnection is made between Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Egypt. Ibrahim added that the final decision on this project will be made by 2020, when the related studies are completed. He noted that a memorandum of understanding had been signed on interconnecting Europe and Africa through Egypt.

Separately, Oil Minister and Minister of Electricity and Water Khaled Al-Fadhel discussed during a recent meeting with Ministry of Electricity and Water (MEW) undersecretary Mohammed Bushehri and assistant undersecretaries the possibility of changing the name of the electrical distribution grid sector's 'technical control department' to 'power efficiency department' to work on rationalizing power consumption in the industrial sector and other sectors. In this regard, informed sources said that Fadhel urged MEW's planning and training sector to prepare a full study about the pro-

posal. The sources also noted that Fadhel asked to accelerate the procedures related to executing the renewable energy projects to reach the target set by HH the Amir to provide 15 percent of the needed power from those sources by 2030.

**Health insurance tender**  
The Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) extended the deadline to file bids for a tender to provide health insurance services for retired citizens (Alfa) till Feb 12 instead of Jan 29, well-informed sources said. Notably, the Ministry of Health (MOH) has extended the tender's deadline five times and increased the retired citizens' health insurance installment from KD 780 to KD 800 for each of the 134,000 retired citizens. The sources said two listed companies - Gulf Insurance Company (GIC) and Al-Ahleia Insurance Company - are competing over the tender after Warba Insurance Company withdrew. The sources also noted that MOH

increased the bank guarantee for the tender from KD 10 million to KD 30 million, which is beyond the financial capabilities of most insurance companies operating in the local market.

### Domestic helpers

The Public Authority for Manpower is now ready to take the domestic helpers department under its jurisdiction by the beginning of the new fiscal year (2019-2020) in April, said the authority's deputy director for manpower protection affairs Abdullah Al-Motoutah, noting that the transfer will be done on March 31, 2019. The department is currently under the

Ministry of Interior.

### Internet service providers

Minister of Commerce and Industry Khaled Al-Roudhan is scheduled to meet the main telecommunication and internet service provider companies this

week, said informed sources, adding that the meeting would be dedicated to discussing the possibility of reaching a compromise with the services ministry after it decided increasing the rent value of areas and towers these companies use by 400 percent, which was decided at the end of 2018 and took effect in January. The sources added that a number of the companies suggested reducing the areas they use, which will have a negative impact on the ministry's revenues. Other companies are expected to demand suspending the increase pending further studies, with hopes to reduce the new fees.

### Barely enough

Well-informed educational sources said the total number of social studies graduates who applied to work as social and psychological workers in Ministry of Education (MoE) schools is only 10, which is barely enough for 10 schools, and thus the shortage is expected to last for five more years. The sources added that MoE had demanded more financial incentives for these jobs to attract more citizens, but none had been so far approved and many schools are suffering in view of the Kuwaitization policy and termination of contracts of many expats in this field.



## Helpers department moves to manpower authority in April

the cause of the fire in both cases.

### Sentence annulled

The court of cassation yesterday annulled a sentence to fine a female citizen for tweeting the supplication 'Hasbeya Allahu Wa Ne'ma Al-Wakeel' (Allah is sufficient for me and the best disposer of affairs), commenting on the Al-Sadeq Mosque attack, and fully acquitted her. Notably, a citizen who had been accused in the case and was then acquitted had filed a case against the woman, but her lawyer Hura Al-Habib argued that no harm was meant and that her client meant no personal offence against the plaintiff, but was rather praying for the safety of Kuwait in general.

### Suicide reported

A Kuwaiti man's body was recovered by the coroner after he hanged himself in his room. His family noticed he was absent for some time, so they went to his room and found him hanging from the ceiling. Al-Rai report-

ed yesterday. Police and paramedics arrived at the scene and recovered the body.

### Prostitutes caught

Four women - two Spanish, a Romanian and a Czech - arrived in Kuwait to engage in prostitution. The Spanish women were charging KD 150 per hour, the Romanian KD 180 and the Czech KD 100, reported Al-Rai. Vice detectives received information about the Spanish women's illicit activities in Mahboula, and learned they received clients who made prior appointments and charged KD 150. The women are well known on pornographic sites. An undercover source made an agreement with one of them, then gave police a signal to storm the apartment and arrest the women. The Romanian and Czech women had arrived on tourist visas and stayed in Bneid Al-Gar, where they received customers by online appointments. Their apartment was stormed following a signal from an undercover source. All four were taken to concerned authorities.

### Legalese

## Pride of Kuwait



By Attorney Fajer Ahmed

Last week we celebrated His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's 13th anniversary of assumption to power, and although there are many things to be grateful and proud of about being a Kuwaiti, our Amir is whom we are proudest of the most. We are blessed as Kuwaitis and citizens of Kuwait to have an Amir who is wise, kind and loving to his people. His love also extends to the world, as he has been honored as the Humanitarian Leader of the world by the United Nations, a title that has only been awarded to him.

Although the importance of his work cannot be defined, and what he gives back to the people of Kuwait is priceless, I decided today to write about the legal roles of an Amir of Kuwait under the Kuwaiti constitution. What does the Kuwaiti constitution say about the position of the Amir of Kuwait? As a lawyer, I love reading the Kuwaiti constitution, and I always say that the Kuwaiti constitution is very progressive for a constitution that was issued in 1962 and compared to the constitutions of neighboring countries.

My opinion is that the constitution is progressive not only because of all the freedoms and rights it grants its citizens, but also the balance between the powers of the state including the Amir, judiciary, governmental cabinets and the National Assembly (legislative power). Here are a few articles in the Kuwaiti constitution that mention the important role of the Amir of Kuwait.

### Article 51 [Legislative Power]

The legislative power is vested in the Amir and the National Assembly in accordance with the Constitution.

### Article 56 [Prime Minister]

(1) The Amir, after the traditional consultations, appoints the Prime Minister and relieves him of office. The Amir also appoints ministers and relieves them of office upon the recommendation of the Prime Minister.

### Article 60 [Oath of the Amir's office]

Before assuming his powers, the Amir takes the following oath at a special sitting of the National Assembly: "I swear by Almighty God to respect the constitution and the laws of the state, to defend the liberties, interests and properties of the people, and to safeguard the independence and territorial integrity of the country."

### Article 67 [Chief-of-Command]

The Amir is the Supreme Commander of the armed forces. He appoints and dismisses officers in accordance with the law.

### Article 75 [Pardon, Amnesty]

(1) The Amir may, by decree, grant a pardon or commute a sentence.  
(2) However, general amnesty shall not be granted except by a law and then only in respect of offenses committed prior to the proposal of the amnesty.

### Article 79 [Exclusive Legislation]

No law may be promulgated unless it has been passed by the National Assembly and sanctioned by the Amir.

Very grateful for His Highness the Amir of Kuwait, the peace we live in and the amazing society and community that we all have access to.

For questions or queries, please email us at [info@ftl-legal.com](mailto:info@ftl-legal.com).

## Firemen battle Jleeb makeshift warehouse blaze

By Hanan Al-Saadoun, Meshaal Al-Enezi and Agencies

**KUWAIT:** Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh firemen led by Major Abdelaziz Al-Kandari fought a blaze reported at a makeshift warehouse in the area yesterday. The warehouse contained tires, tents, refrigerators and air conditioners. No injuries were reported. Meanwhile, firemen put out a blaze reported in a makeshift chalet used by the security department in Naseem. No injuries were reported as well. Investigations were opened to reveal

## Tech device overuse has detrimental effects on children

**KUWAIT:** The overuse of mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets and lack of parental control could have detrimental effects on lives of children, a group of Kuwaiti experts have concurred. The usage of electronic devices have led to a remarkable surge in the number of children who suffer from neck and shoulder pains, headache, obesity and sleeping problems, family therapist Dr Ahmad Abdulmalek said in a speech at the fifth conference on modern childhood, which kicked off in the Kuwait National Library Sunday. He lamented that such kind of health problems used to be linked to aging and elderly people, but now spread among children due to the use of mobile devices.

Due to the numerous health hazards they cause, the latest studies published by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommended that children under the age of two years should not be given any screen time at all, noted Abdulmalek. He added that the AAP also suggested that over three-year-olds could be given an hour a day screen time, but not at sleeping or eating times, and under the watchful eyes of the parents.

Furthermore, Professor of Psychology at the Kuwait University Anthal Al-Howaila warned that the electronic gadgets could gravely affect people in general and children in particular. The new technology is misusing people, invading their spaces, destroying their human relations and isolating them from each other, she regretted. She pointed to a steadily growth in number of children suffering from isolation and depression due to the lack of human-to-human interaction and overuse of mobile devices. Howaila urged



KUWAIT: Experts attend the 5th conference on modern childhood, which was held in Kuwait National Library. — KUNA

families to raise the awareness of their children about the dangers of those devices and to provide them with real-world alternatives. She advised families to help their children focus on fostering their hobbies, making friendships and healthy relations with peers and practicing sports.

Meanwhile, Professor of Social Science and Anthropology Dr Yaacoub Al-Kandari echoed a similar view. He noted a recent research paper he compiled showed that the more the child uses smartphone, the more he or she becomes socially isolated. He stressed that the use of these technology impedes social relations, family and peers interactions, sports practicing and learning.

In the meantime, head of the National Society for

Child Protection Dr Siham Al-Furaih stated that the electronic devices such as smartphones and tablets have become an inescapable reality. These are double-edged sword and if parents failed to take necessary precautions and controls they could turn into absolute curse on children, Furaih cautioned. She recalled that Kuwait's child protection law no. 21 of 2015 obliged parents to safeguard their children against any danger and not to use them for profiteering. The law had set tough penalties, including fines and imprisonment times, on parents who expose their children to dangers, turn them into commodities to make profits or those who fail to protect them or educate them about the impending dangers, including those related to the use of new technology, Furaih said. — KUNA

## Burgan Bank attends IBS annual graduation ceremony

**KUWAIT:** Burgan Bank, a leading career destination, recently celebrated the graduation of its employees during the annual Institute of Banking Studies (IBS) ceremony that took place at the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Supporting up-to-date professional developmental opportunities to enable its employees to thrive in a competitive environment, the bank congratulated each graduate on the successful completion of their certified programs.

Held under the patronage of Mohammad Yousef Al-Hashel, Governor of the Central Bank of Kuwait and Chairman of the IBS, the event was successfully orchestrated and certificates were distributed to employees who successfully completed the programs. These programs provided employees with a wide range of courses as part of their induction training course to nurture in-house talent and market skills. Additionally, Burgan Bank's Group Chairman and Board Member of the Institute of Banking Studies, Majed E Al-Ajeel later on expressed appreciation for the banking professionals for their hard work and new achievements, characteristics that are a pivotal part of the bank's growth strategy.



The 2018-2019 comprehensive training schedules included specialized programs in Certified Credit Management (CCM), Advanced Certificate in Credit Management (ACCM), Certified Bank Branch Manager (CBBM), Certified Assistant Branch Manager (CABBM) and Risk Management Certification (RMC). The IBS certified programs are devised and characterized based on job-based design, rigorous administration and testing. As a result, the certificates earned by the graduates are considered a measurement of their high aptitude, talents and testimony to securing their rightful place in the dynamic world of banking and finance.

Built to advance in-house proficiency, CCM's main objective is to prepare participants for presenting credit appraisals in a credit committee environment, while ACCM helps senior credit officers with next-level

work experience on how to apply innovative financial products to the specific needs of any project. CBBM's project purpose is to enhance their key competencies, knowledge and prepare them mentally to fulfill their role as a Retail Branch Manager. CABBM is accredited by the IFS University in the UK, which helps the Branch Assistant manager perform his/her duties in accordance to best international business practices and standards. RMC gives up-to-date knowledge and skills to create a risk professional who applies best practices to take calculated risk and not avoid risk.

Burgan Bank will continue to develop its personnel into full-fledged, experienced bankers through world-class, credible platforms that further harness their potential and maintain the highest global standards by which it operates across the group.

Local

# Health Ministry seeks latest developments in surgical performance to meet challenges

Kuwait Post-Graduate Assembly in Surgery underway



KUWAIT: CEO of Central Circle Company Dr Ziad Al-Alyan, Ministry of Health Undersecretary Dr Mustafa Redha, Chairman of the Supreme Organizing Committee Dr Mousa Khourshid, and others in a group photo. —Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



CEO of Central Circle Company Dr Ziad Al-Alyan discusses the latest technologies with Ministry of Health Undersecretary Dr Mustafa Redha.

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: On behalf of Health Minister Sheikh Dr Basel Al-Sabah, Undersecretary Dr Mustafa Redha affirmed the ministry's commitment to keeping up with the latest international developments in surgical performance. In his speech on Sunday during the opening of the 17th annual Kuwait Post-Graduate Assembly in Surgery (AKUPAS) and 6th annual Kuwait Surgical Society (KSS) meeting at Four Seasons Hotel, Redha said the health ministry is keen to shed more light on the latest developments in order to meet the challenges, especially in the areas of obesity and surgery, gallbladder surgery and tumors, and to use the latest technologies to develop surgical performance.

He added that the ministry is proud of the distinguished surgical performance of colleagues from the technical, administrative and nursing staff, who work to provide healthcare based on scientific

evidence and respect the safety and rights of patients in this field. Redha pointed out that the ministry will work to benefit from the results and recommendations of the conference and update the policies and protocols of surgical performance and healthcare at all levels and provide them within the strategy and national plan of action to meet the challenges facing the health sector.

**Special conference**

Dr Asma Al-Rashed, General Bariatric and Metabolic Surgeon at Amiri Hospital and chair of the women surgeons' committee in Kuwait, expressed her happiness in participating and moderating the sessions of the annual conference. She

told Kuwait Times that this year the conference was special, as it invited five female surgeons. "This is a milestone - to get Kuwaiti women surgeons to be involved and participate, not only in attending the conference, but also chairing and moderating the sessions, as one of the surgeons - Dr Ibtisam Al-Bader - is a part of the supreme organizing committee of the conference," she said.

"The conference hosts doctors from Arab, Gulf and various countries in the field of general surgery, orthopedic surgery, obesity, abdominal wall surgery and tissue tumor surgery to discuss and exchange their experiences in these fields. In terms of the topics that were covered, the doctors spoke

about bariatric treatment of obesity, medical effects and related issues," Rashed noted.

**Medical education program**

Meanwhile, the conference focuses on establishing the core of a continuing medical education program in the field of general surgery, its precise specialties and successful steps that are in line with all the different levels of surgery, ranging from medical school students to fellows and board doctors and ending with consultants with specializations.

The 17th AKUPAS and 6th KSS meeting took place from February 2 to 4 under the patronage of the ministry of health. This year the scientific program included bariatric surgery, colorectal and hernia surgery and surgical ethics. The aim of this meeting is to provide practicing surgeons with advances in diagnosis and treatment of surgical diseases, as well as updates on the most recent consensus on controversial issues.



**Kuwait Surgical Society meeting kicks off**



CEO of Central Circle Company Dr Ziad Al-Alyan poses for a group photo with Central Circle Company staff.



Ministry of Health Undersecretary Dr Mustafa Redha delivers a speech.



Dr Asma Al-Rashed



A general view of the audience at the event.

**Kuwait Times**  
ESTABLISHED 1961  
THE FIRST DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF

STAY CONNECTED

- Read Kuwait Times now on your phone for **FREE**
- Send Subscribe to **+965 944 88888**
- Enjoy the first daily paper in Kuwait on your phone

P.O. Box 1301 Safat, 13014 Kuwait  
Tel: 24833199 - 24833358 - 24835616/7 | Fax: 24835620 - 24835621  
E: info@kuwaittimes.net



Somalia port bomb leaves 9 dead in Shabaab attacks

Lesser-known 2020 hopefuls build their base, one Iowa voter at a time

Page 9

Page 8



ABU DHABI: This handout picture released by the Vatican press office yesterday shows Pope Francis (C-R) walking alongside Egypt's Azhar Grand Imam, Sheikh Ahmed Al-Tayeb (C-L), as they arrive at Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque. — AFP

## Pope calls for end to wars in Mideast

### Al-Azhar imam calls on Muslims to 'embrace' Christians

ABU DHABI: Pope Francis yesterday called for an end to wars in the Middle East during the first visit by the head of the Catholic church to the birthplace of Islam - the Arabian Peninsula. Francis, who has made outreach to Muslim communities a cornerstone of his papacy, is on an historic three-day visit to the United Arab Emirates. He is scheduled to hold an open-air mass today for 135,000 of the Muslim country's million Catholic residents, set to be the largest ever public gathering in the Gulf state.

Yesterday, the pope held talks in Abu Dhabi with Sheikh Ahmed Al-Tayeb - imam of Cairo's Al-Azhar, Sunni Islam's prestigious seat of learning - before delivering an address at an interfaith meeting. In his address, the pontiff pushed the need for justice, equality of citizens' rights and an end to all wars, including in Yemen. The United Arab Emirates and neighboring Saudi Arabia are key allies of the Yemeni government, which is locked in a war against Iran-backed rebels that has pushed Yemen to the brink of famine.

The pope said all religious leaders had a "duty to reject every nuance of approval from the word war". "I am thinking in particular of Yemen, Syria, Iraq and Libya," he said at the interfaith meeting attended by Sheikh Ahmed and UAE leaders. Yemen is the scene of what the UN calls the world's worst humanitarian crisis, triggered by the intervention of Saudi Arabia, the UAE and their allies in a war between the government and Houthi rebels. More than 10 million Yemenis now risk imminent starvation. The UAE, which prides itself on its religious diversity in the Gulf, is also a member of the US-led coalition battling the Islamic State group in both Syria and Iraq.

Sheikh Ahmed, who stressed in a speech that religion must never be used to justify violence, and the pope signed yesterday a document that Al-Azhar and the Vatican will work together to fight extremism. Sheikh Ahmed called on Muslims in the Middle East to "embrace" local Christian communities. "Continue to embrace your brothers the Christian citizens everywhere, for they are our partners in our nation,"

he said during a televised speech. Then he addressed Christians saying: "You are part of this nation. You are citizens, you are not a minority. You are citizens with full rights and responsibilities."

Sheikh Tayeb also called on Muslims in the West to integrate in their host nations and respect local laws. Egypt has relied on Azhar's clerics in its battle against militant Islam. Al-Azhar hosted Pope Francis in 2017 to improve relations between Catholics and Muslims.

#### Citizenship rights

Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed, one of the most powerful rulers in the seven emirates, yesterday gifted the pope a deed for the plot of land on which the first church in the UAE was built. Pope Francis in turn gave the crown prince a framed medallion of the meeting between St Francis Assisi - the pope's namesake - and the Sultan of Egypt Malek Al-Kamel, in 1219.

While the pope did not openly discuss politics, he called for "the full recognition" of rights for people

across the Middle East, a potential reference to communities including Shiites in Saudi Arabia, refugees and migrants, stateless peoples and other minorities. The pontiff called for "concrete opportunities for (interfaith) meeting, not only here but in the entire beloved region, a focal point of the Middle East". "I look forward to societies where people of different beliefs have the same right of citizenship and where only in the case of violence in any of its forms is that right removed," he said.

#### 'Year of tolerance'

The UAE has dubbed 2019 its "year of tolerance", but rights groups have criticized the country for its role in Yemen, where an estimated 10,000 people have been killed since the Saudi-led alliance including the UAE joined the government's fight against the Houthis in 2015. Rights groups, which have slammed the UAE over its intolerance of dissent, have also urged the pope to raise the issue of Ahmed Mansoor, an Emirati activist serving a 10-year prison term. — Agencies

### After surviving IS, Yazidi women ask to go home

OMAR OIL FIELD: Among thousands fleeing the crumbling dream of an Islamic State group "caliphate" in eastern Syria are alleged jihadists but also survivors of some of their worst atrocities. "I'll never forget," 40-year-old Bissa says softly, as she recounts being "bought and sold" by six different jihadists. "We did everything they wanted to do with us. We couldn't say no," says the Iraqi woman from the Yazidi religious minority, after fleeing her IS captors.

Bissa was one of at least seven Yazidi women and girls to finally escape captivity last week, after years as "sex slaves" at the hands of the extremist group. Speaking to AFP in territory held by US-backed forces, the women — and at least one teenager abducted when she was 13 — say they just want to go home. "They would sleep with us against our will," Bissa tells AFP, wearing a dark red headscarf and appearing years beyond her age, her face and hands etched with lines.

More than 36,000 people have fled a crumbling IS holdout near the Iraqi border in recent weeks, among them 3,200 alleged jihadists. But now in territory held by the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), none perhaps have tales so harrowing as the Yazidi women. In 2014, IS jihadists rampaged across swathes of Syria and neighboring Iraq — including the northern Iraqi region of Sinjar, home to a large Yazidi community. The Kurdish-speaking Yazidis follow an ancient religion rooted in Zoroastrianism, but IS considers them to be "apostates". In Sinjar, IS fighters killed the men, forcefully enlisted boys as soldiers and kidnapped more than 6,000 women.

After Bissa was captured, she was "bought and sold" by six different jihadists — including three Saudis and a fighter who said he was Swedish. She was repeatedly brutalized, but was too scared to escape. "They said whoever tried... would be punished by a different man sleeping with her every day," she says inside an SDF centre near the Omar oil field. But 17-year-old Nadine, who jihadists kidnapped from Sinjar when she was just 13, says she twice tried to escape. Both times the jihadist group's police caught her.

"They flogged me with a hose. It left marks on my back, and I couldn't sleep on it," she says. "The second time, they said I couldn't eat for two days," she added. After they abducted Nadine, IS jihadists took her across the border to the group's then de facto Syrian capital of Raqqa. Over four years, she says, six different men bought her — Saudis and a Tunisian. She had to adapt to their brutal interpretation of religion, and adhere to their strict dress code of covering from head to toe in public. "I love color, and I used to wear trousers," Nadine tells AFP.

Inside the SDF centre, she wears a black-and-white bead bracelet around her wrist, bearing the name of her little brother in English. But she can't bring herself to remove her black face veil. "I got used to it. I can't yet take it off," she says. "But I will do so when I see my mum." After escaping, Nadine says several cousins are still being held in an IS pocket in eastern Syria.

#### 'Saved my children'

At the height of its rule, IS controlled territory the size of Britain, but today it has lost all but the eastern patch to various offensives — including by the SDF, backed by air strikes of the US-led coalition. Between 2015 and 2018, at least 129 Yazidi women and girls were handed over to the Kurdish Women's Protection Units (YPJ), who are part of the SDF. "We're definitely... fighting IS to free more captives — and not just Yazidis,"



Sabha, a 30-year-old woman and one of at least seven other Yazidi women and girls to finally escape captivity from Islamic State (IS) group fighters just a week prior after years as "sex slaves" at their hands, sits with her daughter at the SDF command centre near the Omar oil field in the countryside of the eastern Syrian Deir Ezzor province. — AFP

YPJ spokeswoman Nasreen Abdallah told AFP.

At the YPJ centre, Sabha, 30, waited with to take her 10-year-old daughter to hospital, after a kettle of boiling water fell on her legs. Also a Yazidi woman, Sabha fled the last patch of IS territory with her six children, after the man she was forced to marry was killed in an air strike. Five of her children are from a first husband killed by IS after they overran Sinjar. But her 18-month-old girl was fathered by a Kurdish jihadist from the

Iraqi region of Kirkuk, who said he spent 15 years of his life in Britain.

Sabha says the jihadist beat her and threatened to kill her children if she disobeyed. "All I could think of was how to get out," says Sabha, wearing a green headscarf. "I'd wish him dead so I could escape." Today, Sabha looks forward to going home to her family, she says. "But what makes me most happy is that I saved my children." — AFP

International

# Indian state chief stages sit-in against Modi over graft probe

‘The BJP leadership are doing the worst kind of political vendetta’

**KOLKATA:** The chief minister of a big Indian state led a sit-in yesterday in a standoff with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government over a corruption investigation she condemned as a vendetta, as political tension rises ahead of a general election. Mamata Banerjee, the firebrand chief minister of West Bengal, began the protest overnight in the state capital, Kolkata, after federal police swooped on the home of a police commissioner as part of an investigation into Ponzi schemes that defrauded thousands of small investors.

Banerjee, who leads a regional party trying to forge a front against Modi's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), accused the federal government of trying to undermine state powers. West Bengal, which sends the third largest number of legislators to the lower house of parliament, has become a battleground state as the Hindu nationalist BJP looks to make in-roads in the east to make up for any losses in its northern heartland.

Over the past several months, disputed have erupted between the BJP and Banerjee's Trinamool Congress and there have been allegations that hard-line Hindu groups are trying to stir up tension with minority Muslims to win votes. "The highest levels of the BJP leadership are doing the worst kind of political vendetta," Banerjee said in a tweet. "They are misusing power to take control of the police and destroy all institutions."

Hundreds of her supporters gathered at Banerjee's protest venue yesterday, shouting encouragement. The chief minister sat on a wooden platform, surrounded by ministers and party leaders, and held a meeting of her cabinet. But the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), which is controlled by the federal government, said state police prevented its agents from carrying out

their work on Sunday and even briefly detained them.

"A clash like this, between law enforcement agencies, is not only unfortunate but is also dangerous for the country's federal and political system," Home Minister Rajnath Singh told parliament. Modi has to call the election by May. Polls suggest his alliance may emerge as the largest group in parliament but short of a majority. Regional parties like Banerjee's could play a crucial role in any coalition building.

Opposition parties led by the Congress party said they backed Banerjee in her fight with Modi's administration. Congress chief Rahul Gandhi said Modi and his party were waging an "unrelenting" attack on political institutions. "The entire opposition will stand together and defeat these fascist forces," he said. — Reuters

### 'Minimum income' for poor

India's opposition leader Rahul Gandhi said yesterday that his party will introduce a "minimum income guarantee" for the poor if it returns to power in elections this year. The election, due by May, will see the scion of the Gandhi-Nehru dynasty seek to unseat Narendra Modi as prime minister in the country of 1.25 billion people still ravaged by poverty.

"We cannot build a new India while millions of our brothers & sisters suffer the scourge of poverty," Gandhi, head of the opposition Congress party, said on Twitter. "If voted to power in 2019, the Congress is committed to a Minimum Income Guarantee for every poor person, to help eradicate poverty & hunger. This is our vision & our promise," he said.

Gandhi did not elaborate on his promise but Indian media reported it would be along the lines of universal basic income (UBI), a concept attracting growing interest around the world. UBI — supported by Facebook



JAMMU: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi gestures during a public rally in Jammu in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir. — AFP

founder Mark Zuckerberg among others as a way to reduce inequality — involves people being given a flat lump sum by the state instead of subsidies and social security payments.

It has been tried out in several countries including Finland and Kenya, and has been promised by the ruling party of the small northern Indian state of Sikkim as well as Italy's new populist government.

Gandhi's announcement was also seen as an attempt to steal a march on Modi ahead of the announcement on Friday of his government's final budget before the election. This is widely expected to include sweeteners to voters, including to farmers who have been hit hard by falling prices for their produce and unpredictable weather, with thousands killing themselves in recent years. — Agencies

## US, S Korea meet on eve of Trump-Kim preparatory talks

**SEOUL:** The US special envoy for North Korea met Seoul's top security advisor yesterday, a day before discussions with Pyongyang officials on the much-anticipated second summit between Donald Trump and Kim Jong Un. Stephen Biegun briefed Chung Eui-yong on Washington's stance ahead of a working-level meeting with the North's delegation — expected to take place in the border truce village of Panmunjom — to discuss the agenda of the summit.

Chung, the South Korean national security advisor, "conveyed our government's assessment of the current situation and what needs to be done in the future", the South's presidential office said in a statement. Security allies Seoul and Washington have at times pursued divergent approaches toward Pyongyang, with South

Korea's dovish President Moon Jae-in pursuing engagement while the United States insists pressure must be maintained until it denuclearizes.

But a senior South Korean presidential official told the Yonhap news agency that "South Korea and the US have been working well together, and we have high expectations for the meeting between Pyongyang and Washington". In an interview with CBS on Sunday, Trump said the date and venue of his upcoming second summit with the North Korean leader had been agreed — and would likely be announced before or during his State of the Union address on Tuesday.

Vietnam is seen as the most likely venue for the meeting, which is expected to take place late this month, and follows their landmark first summit in Singapore last June. That meeting — the first-ever between the leaders of the US and North Korea — produced a vaguely-worded document in which Kim pledged to work towards "the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula". But progress has since stalled with the two sides disagreeing over what that means. Last week, US Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats told Congress that "North Korea is unlikely to give up all of its nuclear weapons and production capabilities". — AFP



SEOUL: US envoy for North Korea Stephen Biegun (R) arrives at Incheon international airport. — AFP

## Mongolians send kids to countryside to escape smog

**ULAANBAATAR:** Mongolia has extended school winter holidays in the world's coldest capital and many families have sent children to live with relatives in the vast, windswept grasslands to escape choking smog and respiratory diseases such as pneumonia. The temperature is expected to drop to minus 32 degrees Celsius (minus 26F) in Ulaanbaatar on Monday night, as residents burn coal and trash to try to keep warm and concentrations of smog particles known as PM2.5 routinely exceed 500 mg per cubic meter, 50 times the level considered safe by the WHO.

Mongolia, a former Soviet satellite landlocked between Russia and China, has invested public money and foreign aid to tackle pollution, but improvement has been slow, with residents saying inaction has been compounded by a corruption scandal that has paralyzed parliament. In a crowded township more than 40 miles from Ulaanbaatar, Jantsandulam Bold's five grandchildren are breathing more easily after fleeing the capital.

"Fresh air and sun are most important for kids to grow healthy and robust," says Jantsandulam, 57, making milk tea for her grandchildren in her home, a thickly padded felt hut known as a "ger", or in Russian, a "yurt". "This little one had flu when he came here but the fresh air has treated him well," she said, pointing at her five-year-old grandson.

The children are nearing the end of a two-month break, with schools due to reopen next Monday. About 60 percent of Mongolia is covered by grassland, where the mining of copper, gold, coal and other minerals provides employment, while the Gobi desert envelops the South. But almost half the population live in Ulaanbaatar.

Reuters calculations based on US Embassy data show annual average PM2.5 concentrations hit 100 micrograms in Ulaanbaatar in 2018. They soared to 270 in December. PM2.5 in China's most polluted city of Shijiazhuang stood at an average 70 micrograms last year, down 15.7 percent from 2017. The World Health Organisation recommends a concentration of no more than 10 micrograms. The WHO said 80 percent of Ulaanbaatar's smog was caused by coal burning in "ger" districts, where thousands of rural migrants, used to a nomadic lifestyle, have pitched huts. It estimates air pollution causes more than 4,000 premature deaths a year.

A joint study by the UN International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and Mongolia's National Centre for Public Health said children living in one smog-prone district of Ulaanbaatar had 40 percent less lung function than those living in the countryside. "Air pollution aggravates respiratory diseases and children under five are most vulnerable as their organs are still not mature," said Bolormaa Bumbaa, a doctor at Bayangol District's Children's hospital in Ulaanbaatar.

Families have already set up a pressure group known as Moms and Dads Against Smog, but after the protests they organized in Ulaanbaatar were ignored, the group decided to focus on encouraging residents to take action to protect themselves, said Mandakhjargal Tumur, a group coordinator. "I don't believe the government will do enough to reduce pollution in coming years," she said. "That's why we are now focusing on raising awareness."

At the Bayangol hospital, Ulzii-Orshikh Otgon, 34, was forced to bring her 10-month-old daughter Achmaa in with pneumonia for the second time in a month. — Reuters

## Abu Sayyaf members surrender over church bombing

**MANILA:** A senior Abu Sayyaf operative and four members of the militant group believed to be behind the deadly bombing of a church in the southern Philippines surrendered to authorities over the weekend, the national police chief said yesterday. Kammah Pae, whom authorities believe to have aided an Indonesian couple in the Jan 27 suicide attack, gave himself up to government troops, Oscar Albayalde said.

"He was forced to surrender," Albayalde told a media briefing. "He probably didn't want to die during the military offensive." Philippine troops killed three suspected Abu Sayyaf militants and suffered five fatalities in a firefight on Saturday in Patikul, a town in the province of Sulu as troops pursued those behind the church attack. Albayalde said Kammah denied involvement in the twin bombings at the Jolo cathedral that killed 23 people, including civilians and soldiers, but eyewitnesses' accounts showed he escorted the Indonesian couple.

Security forces also retrieved an improvised explosive device (IED) and components from his home, Albayalde added. The five suspects will face multiple murder charges, among others, Albayalde said. However, the investigation into the church bombing in Sulu, a known stronghold of the Abu Sayyaf group, is "far from over," he added. Abu Sayyaf is a militant organization notorious for kidnappings and extremist factions and has pledged allegiance to Islamic State.

"There are more pieces of evidence that need to be carefully examined," Albayalde said. Before Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte suggested on Tuesday that the twin explosions may have been a suicide attack, military and police said the bombs within and outside the church appeared to have been detonated remotely. A few days later, Duterte's interior minister, Eduardo Ano, said that suicide attack was carried out by an Indonesian couple with the help of Abu Sayyaf. That would be in line with a claim of responsibility by Islamic State via its Amaq news agency early yesterday. —Reuters



BEIJING: Paramilitary police officers stand guard near a Starbucks cafe in Beijing Railway Station. — AFP

## Rights groups urge UN to probe China crackdown in Xinjiang

**GENEVA:** Rights groups urged the United Nations yesterday to send investigators to China's northwestern Xinjiang province to probe the mass detention of ethnic Uighur and other Muslim minorities. "The abuse in Xinjiang today is so severe that it cries out for international action," Human Rights Watch chief Kenneth Roth told reporters in Geneva.

HRW and more than a dozen other human rights and civil society organizations including Amnesty International and the World Uighur Congress, published an appeal for the UN's human rights body to send an international fact-finding mission to the region. Up to a million Uighurs and members of other mostly Muslim minority groups are being held in extrajudicial detention in camps in Xinjiang, according to a group of experts cited by the UN.

Dolkun Isa of the World Uighur Congress told reporters via video link from Oslo that his group believes the numbers detained in Xinjiang had reached "maybe three million". Beijing says the "vocational education centers" help people steer clear of terrorism and allow them to be reintegrated into society. But critics say China is seeking to assimilate Xinjiang's minority population and suppress religious and cultural practices that conflict with

Communist ideology and the dominant Han culture. In their statement, the organizations insisted that the sites were in fact "political education" camps, where people are sent "for their perceived disloyalty to the government and the Chinese Communist Party."

### Reports of torture, suicides

"In these camps, they are subjected to forced political indoctrination, renunciation of their faith, mistreatment, and in some cases torture," the statement said. "There have been reports of deaths inside the facilities including suicides of those unable to bear the mistreatment," Amnesty International head Kumi Naidoo said in a video statement. HRW's Roth lamented "the still muted global outcry."

"China gets away with this extraordinarily brazen abuse because first, few people know who the Uighurs are," he said, adding that the lack of outcry was also linked to the fact that "China has shown itself willing to use its economic clout to suppress criticism." Roth pressed UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres "to say something". "He has been notably silent on one of the most important, ... the most brazen human rights abuses, ... because he is worried about upsetting the Chinese," Roth said.

UN rights chief Michelle Bachelet has addressed the situation, voicing concern last September before the Human Rights Council at "deeply disturbing allegations of large-scale arbitrary detentions of Uighurs and other Muslim communities in so-called reeducation camps across Xinjiang." She has said her office is seeking access to Xinjiang to check reports about the camps, with Beijing insisting UN officials can come only if they agree to stay out of the country's internal affairs. — AFP

## International

# Somalia port boss killed, car bomb leaves 9 dead in Shabaab attacks

## A deadly day for the restive nation

**MOGADISHU:** Somalia's Al-Shabaab militants yesterday shot dead the Maltese manager of a port, while detonating a car bomb in the capital which killed nine people and wounded several others. In a deadly day for the restive nation, a gunman shot Maltese national Paul Anthony Formosa, manager of the port of Bossasso in semi-autonomous Puntland state for P&O Ports, a subsidiary of the Dubai-based DP World.

Shortly thereafter a powerful explosion from a car bomb rocked the busy Hamarweyne market in the capital Mogadishu, killing nine people in the latest attack from the Al-Qaeda affiliate plaguing the country. "An armed man shot and killed Paul Anthony Formosa who was the construction project manager for DP World. He was killed inside the port and the security forces also shot the killer on the spot", local security official, Mohamed Dahir, told AFP.

The Dubai government confirmed the death in a statement on Twitter and said the circumstances of the incident was being investigated. "Three other employees have been injured in this morning's incident, and all are currently receiving medical treatment," read the statement. The attack was claimed by Al-Shabaab, which said in a statement it was "part of broader operations targeting the mercenary companies that loot the Somali resources."

The DP World subsidiary in 2017 signed a 30-year concession contract for the management and development of the port, strategically located on the Gulf of Aden, between the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean, more than 1,300 kilometers north of Mogadishu. The Dubai-based ports company has sparked friction with Mogadishu over its development of ports in Berbera in breakaway Somaliland — whose independence is not recognized — as well as Puntland. Many of Somalia's federal states have aligned with the United Arab Emirates, while the central

government is perceived as pro-Qatar, in the Gulf crisis pitting Arab powers against each other.

### 'Death and destruction'

Shabaab also claimed responsibility for the car bomb in Mogadishu, via a statement on a pro-Shabaab website. "The blast occurred close to Mogadishu mall and it has caused death and destruction. Nine civilians were confirmed dead and several others are wounded," police officer Ahmed Moalin Ali said. "The terrorists parked a vehicle loaded with explosives in the vicinity of the mall to kill the innocent civilians."

He said some of the victims died in a building that collapsed as a result of the blast in the Hamarweyne market. "I saw the dead bodies of four people recovered from the debris of a collapsed building and three others were strewn dead outside after the blast had blown them," said shopper Mumira Abdulkadir.

"I was not far away from the blast location, but I was lucky to have survived, several people were wounded and some were screaming before the ambulances arrived," said another witness, Abdulahi Mohamed. Somalia has not had an effective central government since the 1991 overthrow of president Siad Barre's military regime which ushered in decades of chaos — including an insurrection by the Shabaab since 2006.

The group once held sway over large swathes of countryside and the capital, however they were chased out of Mogadishu by the 22,000-strong African Union peace-enforcement mission, AMISOM in 2011, and have since abandoned many strongholds. They nevertheless control vast rural areas and remain a key threat to peace in Somalia and the region, with the capacity to stage significant attacks. In October 2017, a truck bombing in a busy



**MOGADISHU:** Emergency rescue staff carry the body of a victim over rubble at the scene of a car-bomb attack. — AFP

neighborhood of Mogadishu killed over 500 people in the deadliest attack in Somalia to date. On January 15, Shabaab gunmen — and the first-ever suicide bomber in

Kenya — attacked the Dusit hotel and office complex in Nairobi, leaving 21 dead and prompting police and the US Embassy to urge caution in public spaces. — AFP

## French army air strikes 'repel incursion into Chad from Libya'

**PARIS:** French warplanes Sunday struck twice to halt an armed group that crossed into northern Chad from Libya in a column of 40 pickup trucks, the French military said, adding it acted at Chad's request. A rebel group opposed to President Idriss Deby said it had been the target of the strikes, and warned France that its act could stir "hostility towards the French."

In a statement yesterday, the French military said that Mirage 2000 fighters intervened "together with the Chadian army" to "halt the hostile advance and disperse the column," which had crossed deep into Chadian territory. The warplanes are based near N'Djamena, the Chadian capital, as part of France's Barkhane counter-terrorism force in the Sahel. "The column had been spotted at least 48 hours beforehand," armed forces spokesman Patrik Steiger said.

The Chadian airforce carried out strikes to try to repel it before asking the French to intervene, he said. On Sunday morning, French planes made low warning passes over the column but it continued to advance, triggering a decision to scramble more fighters, which carried out two strikes at around 6 pm Paris time. Steiger said the group had crossed 400 kilometers of Chadian territory before being halted "between Tibesti and Ennedi" in the northwest. He did not identify which armed group they belonged to.

But the spokesman for Chad's most active rebel group, the Union of Resistance Forces (UFR), said that the raid had targeted its men. Reached by AFP from the Gabonese capital Libreville, UFR spokesman Youssouf Hamid said the strikes marked a "dangerous turn" by France in Chad's "internal affairs." "The Chadian people will respond. It may take the form of showing hostility towards the French," Hamid said. "Paris has become a force that is hostile to the Chadian people," he added. Hamid did not give any details about the objective of the incursion. The UFR was created in January 2009 from an alliance of eight rebel groups. In February 2008, a tripartite insurgent group, moving in from the east, reached the gates of the presidential palace in N'Djamena before being repulsed by Deby's forces. Deby accused Sudan of supporting the attack, a charge that it denied. Chad, a vast and mostly desert country with more than 200 ethnic groups, has suffered repeated coups and crises since it gained independence from France in 1960. — AFP

## Merkel urges 'creativity', 'goodwill' in Brexit talks

**TOKYO:** German Chancellor Angela Merkel yesterday urged Britain and the EU to show "creativity" and "goodwill" in upcoming Brexit talks but stressed the withdrawal agreement was not up for renegotiation. Speaking alongside her Japanese counterpart Shinzo Abe, Merkel said "we want to do everything to avoid a no-deal (Brexit) because that would increase the uncertainty."

However, she reiterated that the withdrawal agreement had been painstakingly negotiated and "we do not want to reopen" it. "This is not on the agenda." Nevertheless, the German chancellor said that questions over crunch topics like the unpopular Northern Ireland "backstop" provision could be discussed in the so-called political agreement that accompanies the Brexit deal.

The backstop is intended to ensure there is no return to a hard border with Ireland, but Brexit supporters fear it will keep Britain tied to EU customs rules. "We need to show creativity, we need to listen to each other," said Merkel. "We can still use the time to come to an agreement over the things that are standing in our way, if everyone shows goodwill." — AFP

## Erdogan says Turkey keeping 'low-level' contact with Syria

**ISTANBUL:** Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Sunday said his government maintained "low-level" contact through its spy agency with the Syrian regime despite being one of its most fervent critics. Ankara fell out with the regime of President Bashar al-Assad following the 2011 crackdown on popular dissent, with Erdogan denouncing him as "killer Assad".

The Turkish leader has ruled out any direct talks with Assad and Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said in December Ankara was only in contact with Damascus through third parties, namely Russia and Iran. Erdogan's comments Sunday are the first time he has confirmed direct low-level talks with Damascus. "Foreign policy is being conducted with Syria at low-level," Erdogan told the state-run TRT television in an interview, adding that spy agencies could maintain links even if their leaders did not. "Even if it's your enemy, you will not entirely break ties in case you might need them," he said. Turkey, home to nearly four million Syrian refugees, is backing rebels seeking Assad's ouster.

### 'Whatever is needed'

Asked about the US withdrawal plan, Erdogan said he hoped Washington would

pull out its troops out of Syria soon. If not, he warned, Ankara would take action to avert the possible terror threat posed by US-backed Syrian Kurdish militia. "I hope (the US) will complete (the pullout) in a short period of time because we do not want to live under threat," Erdogan said. "Whenever we see any sign of a threat, we will do whatever is needed," he said.

Erdogan's government welcomed a surprise announcement in December by US President Donald Trump that he was pulling around 2,000 American troops from the war-torn country. That has prompted Turkey to put on hold its plans to launch a military operation in Syria to drive out Syrian Kurdish militia deemed as "terrorists" by Ankara. Turkey is pushing for a 32 kilometer "security zone" in Syria after receiving the US backing. The "safe zone" or "security zone" would be on the Syrian side of the 900-kilometre Syria-Turkey border. Erdogan showed the negotiated "security zone" on the map, during the live broadcast, which he said would stretch from Jarabulus in northern Syria to the Iraqi border. And he urged the US, a NATO ally, to hand over the zone's security to Turkish troops.

Turkey is ready to run the "security zone" together with the US, he said but "we cannot leave it to coalition forces because we need to feel safe." He said: "We cannot trust coalition forces... they have neither troops to ensure security there nor logistical means," Erdogan said. The Turkish army has launched two major operations in Syria in 2016 and in 2018 to combat Syrian Kurdish fighters as well as Islamic State group jihadists. The deployment of Turkish troops and their proxy forces in areas of northwest Syria has



**ANKARA:** Turkish President and ruling Justice and Development (AK) Party chair Recep Tayyip Erdogan makes a speech during AK party's presentation of mayoral candidates for upcoming March 31 local elections at the Ankara Sports Hall. — AFP

drawn accusations by some critics of a Turkish military occupation. Erdogan, who visited Russia for talks over the "security zone" last month, also said he would meet President Vladimir Putin in Sochi on February 14.

### US 'silence'

Wading into the murder of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi, who was killed by a Saudi hit team in the kingdom's Istanbul consulate, last year, Erdogan accused the United States of "silence." "I cannot understand America's silence... We want every-

thing to be clarified because there is an atrocity, there is a murder," he said. "The Khashoggi murder is not an ordinary one." Khashoggi, a Washington Post contributor and Saudi regime critic, was murdered at the Saudi consulate in Istanbul on October 2 soon after he entered the compound to obtain paperwork for his upcoming marriage to a Turkish woman. Riyadh described it as a "rogue" operation but denied any involvement by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. The case has caused strains in the kingdom's ties with ashington. — AFP

## Major EU nations rally behind Guaido as Venezuela leader

**MADRID:** Spain, Britain, France and other EU nations yesterday recognized Venezuela's opposition chief Juan Guaido as interim leader after President Nicolas Maduro rejected their ultimatum to call snap presidential elections. Russia, one of the main allies of Maduro's regime, slammed what it dubbed European "interference" in the oil-rich but impoverished Latin American country, saying it was an attempt "to legitimize usurped power."

Already recognized by the United States, Canada, Australia and several Latin American countries, Guaido is trying to force the socialist leader from power, aiming to set up a transitional government and hold new presidential elections. After announcing the Spanish government's official recognition of Guaido, Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez urged the 35-year-old National Assembly head to "call elections as soon as possible, elections that have to be free and democratic."

Sanchez said he wanted Spain to spearhead a plan of humanitarian aid for Venezuela in the European Union and United Nations. British Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt promptly followed suit, saying on Twitter he hoped "this takes us closer to ending humanitarian crisis." France, Germany, Portugal, Austria, Sweden, Denmark, Latvia, Lithuania, Finland and the Netherlands also recognized Guaido. "Venezuelans have the right to express themselves freely and democratically," French President Emmanuel Macron tweeted.

### 'Confrontation'

Seven EU states had given Maduro a Sunday deadline to call presidential elections or they would recognize Guaido. But in an interview with Spanish television station Sexta broadcast on Sunday evening, Maduro said he would not "cave in to pressure" from those calling for his departure. "Why does the European Union have to tell a



**CARACAS:** Supporters of Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro gather to mark the 20th anniversary of the rise of power of the late Hugo Chavez, the leftist firebrand who installed a socialist government. — AFP

country in the world that has already had elections that it has to repeat its presidential elections, because they were not won by their right-wing allies?" said Maduro, interviewed in Caracas. "They are trying to corner us with ultimatums to force us into an extreme situation of confrontation," Maduro said. Maduro started a new term in office last month after 2018 elections that were branded invalid by the opposition. He has said he is only willing to call new elections to the opposition-held National Assembly. However, he supported plans for a meeting of Latin American and EU states in a "Contact Group" meeting in Montevideo next Thursday.

### Humanitarian crisis

Under Maduro's stewardship, oil-dependent Venezuela has plunged into an economic crisis, suffering from hyperinflation and shortages of food and medicine. Yesterday, oil prices rose to their highest level yet this year on European markets on the back of the crisis in Venezuela. After several years of opposition efforts to oust Maduro, Guaido declared himself acting president at a rally on January 23.

At the weekend, he called on the army to allow in humanitarian aid from the United States via neighboring Colombia and Brazil. Maduro claims the US pledge to deliver \$20 million in aid relief would precede military intervention. Guaido says up to 300,000 people are "at risk of death" in Venezuela for want of humanitarian assistance. US President Donald Trump warned that military intervention remains "an option" for dealing with the crisis in Venezuela. All eyes are now on Venezuela's military, which has so far been Maduro's main pillar of support, but there have been signs of wavering in the ranks. A top air force general publicly sided with Guaido on Saturday. On Sunday, Maduro addressed troops on military exercises, calling on them for "maximum cohesion".

Tens of thousands of people turned out Saturday for competing shows of support for Guaido and for Maduro. Guaido has called for a new demonstration on February 12 and another protest to push for the entry of aid. Forty people were killed in clashes with security forces in a week of protests coinciding with Guaido's self-proclamation as acting leader, with hundreds more arrested, according to the United Nations. — AFP



International

# Lesser-known 2020 hopefuls build their base, one Iowa voter at a time

They are early birds running from behind, among the longest of long shots

DYERSVILLE: If you build a political support operation early in Iowa, votes will come. Such is the field-of-dreams mentality among America's dynamic but lesser-known presidential candidates John Delaney and Andrew Yang. They are unapologetic optimists who have been canvassing the early voting state for months and are deeply invested, both in time and money, in the 2020 race.

Lacking the name recognition of Joe Biden, Bernie Sanders and other heavyweights who may seek to challenge President Donald Trump, they are early birds running from behind, among the longest of long shots. They have already made dozens of trips to Iowa, where fortunes are made — and dashed — in America's fiery political cauldron. Each is convinced his gambit will pay off. "We're going to shock the world in 2020" by winning the Iowa caucus next February 3, declared technology entrepreneur Yang at a small town hall in Jefferson, where he explained his proposal for a universal basic income that would provide \$1,000 per month to every American adult.

Yang, the son of Taiwanese immigrants, says Trump was elected because America "automated away four million manufacturing jobs" in places like Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin and Iowa — states that Barack Obama won but Trump reclaimed in 2016. While Yang and Delaney are often left out of the national 2020 conversation, they share a goal: convincing voters, often one at a time, that have what it takes to be president.

In separate interviews with AFP at Iowa campaign stops, each assured that they were unfazed about not yet registering on the national radar, insisting that striking a chord with Iowans is more important. "If I win the Iowa caucus, every single person in the country is going to know who I am," assured Delaney. The former congressman and businessman from Maryland has been on the trail in Iowa for 18 months, visiting all

99 counties. He said he is "campaigning the old-fashioned way," meeting with voters in coffeehouses, town halls, meet-and-greets and living rooms, revealing what's in his heart. Delaney espouses many progressive priorities like creating a universal health care system, raising the minimum wage and modernizing the country's crumbling infrastructure. But he's also selling political moderation and greater bipartisanship, including on stronger cooperation in Washington to address the looming threat to millions of jobs posed by robots and artificial intelligence. "I'm an entrepreneur, and what entrepreneurs I think are good at is seeing not maybe what people see today but what they think is going to happen," Delaney said.

'Anybody's game'

Hopefuls with more solid political pedigrees, such as senators Elizabeth Warren, Kamala Harris and Kirsten Gillibrand, have already jetted in, while freshly declared candidates Senator Cory Booker and congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard arrive this week. Biden and Sanders — two men who have not yet entered the race — are leading early polls. But Iowa's JD Scholten, who nearly ousted a veteran Republican last year in their fierce US House seat battle, said there are no clear favorites in the Democratic nomination race.

"It's anybody's game," he told AFP at a Democratic Party dinner in Jefferson, northwestern Iowa. "There are so many different voices out there now." For the past 47 years, since Iowa began voting first in the nominating process, it has been a place where those voices have gained a willing ear. Iowa Democratic Party chairman Troy Price recalled that two Democratic presidents, Jimmy Carter and Barack Obama, were under-the-radar candidates in Iowa where their determination helped propel them to caucus victory and beyond.

"You don't necessarily have to have the most money



WATERLOO: US Senator and 2020 presidential candidate Sherrod Brown (D-OH) speaks at a house party as his wife Connie Schultz (C-L) looks on during a campaign stop. — AFP

or the highest name ID to be successful in this race," he said. "We're going to give every candidate a fair shot, we're going to give every candidate the opportunity to share their vision." Delaney has held more than 250 events across the state in 22 trips. Yang has visited eight times. At the famed, snow-covered baseball diamond in Dyersville — where the 1989 movie Field of Dreams was filmed — 19-year-old Tucker La Belle said Iowa is as level a political playing field as there is.

"I think anyone has a shot here," said the Clarke University communications major. "People in Iowa are

going to listen to you no matter what, and they're going to give you that respect and time of day that you won't get in other parts of the country." Iowans engage with lesser-known candidates with an enthusiasm and curiosity virtually unparalleled. But the Delaney and Yang names drew blanks from many voters, including Dan Deutmeyer, a systems manager who grew up in Dyersville. "Iowa does make one of the biggest decisions on who continues and who doesn't," he said. "It's the obscure and the unknowns sometimes who move forward and get elected." — AFP

## US sends 3,750 more troops to Mexico border

WASHINGTON: The United States will send an additional 3,750 troops to its frontier with Mexico, the Pentagon said Sunday, as President Donald Trump doubled down on his call for a wall to boost border security. Soldiers were originally deployed to the border under an order President Donald Trump gave before midterm elections in November as "caravans" of migrants made their way to the border to seek asylum from violence and poverty in their own countries.

But the mission, under which troops assist civilian border patrol agents by providing logistical support and installing concertina-wire fencing, has been described by opponents as a political stunt designed to create the illusion of a crisis. "The Department of Defense will deploy approximately 3,750 additional US forces to provide the additional support to CBP (Customs and Border Protection) at the southwest border that Acting Secretary of Defense (Pat) Shanahan approved Jan. 11," a statement said. This additional deployment is for three months, the statement added, and will bring to 4,350 the total number of troops at the border.

Their tasks will include "a mobile surveillance capability through the end of September 2019, as well as the emplacement of approximately 150



People pray as they lean against the US-Mexico border fence, during the celebration of a religious service on both sides of the fence in Playas de Tijuana, Baja California state, Mexico. — AFP

miles of concertina wire between ports of entry." The news comes ahead of a February 15 deadline that President Donald Trump set for Congress to agree on funding for building a border wall which he made a key pledge in his election campaign.

The president says that existing sections of walls should be extended along the border to stop what he describes as an uncontrolled invasion of criminals. Trump underscored these claims Sunday. "With Caravans marching through Mexico and toward our Country, Republicans must be prepared to do whatever is necessary for STRONG Border Security," he tweeted. "Dems do nothing. If there is no Wall, there is no Security. Human Trafficking, Drugs and Criminals

of all dimensions - KEEP OUT!"

Democrats, who control the lower house, have repeatedly rejected Trump's funding demands, saying that he has made the wall project a political crusade to demonize immigrants and to satisfy his base. He previously tried to pressure Congress into backing his idea by refusing to sign off on budgets for swathes of the federal government, leading to a five-week shutdown of some 800,000 government jobs. The border troop deployment was one of several issues on which Trump and former defense secretary Jim Mattis disagreed before he quit in December after Trump's shock decision to pull troops from Syria. — AFP

## Democrat trusts Americans ready for gay president

WASHINGTON: Pete Buttigieg, an openly gay mayor who is running for US president, said Sunday he believes America will judge him based on the quality of his ideas and experience. Buttigieg, the mayor of South Bend, Indiana, launched his candidacy for the Democratic presidential nomination in January. If elected — which for now seems unlikely — Buttigieg, a former naval intelligence officer who served in Afghanistan, would become the first openly homosexual president of the United States.

He is among a crush of Democrats vying to unseat Republican Donald Trump next year. Other declared Democrats include Trump nemesis Elizabeth Warren, and Kamala Harris, a California senator who aspires to be the nation's first black female president. But are Americans ready for a president who is openly gay and in a same-sex marriage? The question was put to him in an interview on ABC's "This Week." "I think there's only one way to find out," said the mayor of the

city whose population is about 100,000.

Buttigieg, 37, recalled that he came out as gay in 2015 in the middle of a re-election campaign. South Bend is a conservative community and at the time Mike Pence was governor of the state, Buttigieg said, recalling that he still got re-elected with "80 percent of the vote." "So, I think the lesson we learned is that people are prepared to get to know you and judge you based on the quality of your ideas and your experience and your work. And I trust that America could do that too."

Buttigieg, who has been South Bend's mayor since 2012, married junior high school teacher Chasten Glezman last year. Same-sex marriages have been legal throughout the United States since a 2015 Supreme Court decision. In last November's mid-term elections, Jared Polis became the first openly gay governor in US history when he was elected in Colorado, after serving in Congress. — AFP

Kuwait Times Premier Brands

To see your ad here, call: +965 248 35 616 / 617

E MAIL: info@kuwaittimes.net ads@kuwaittimes.net Website: www.kuwaittimes.net

best OFFERS 50% SAVE UP TO

SHARP LC-32LE185M 32" SMART TV 49 54

SHARP LC-40SA5500X 40" SMART TV 84 99

SHARP 2T-C50AE1X 50" SMART TV 119 159

SHARP LC-60UA6500X 60" SMART TV 199 299

best.com.kw 1 809 809

Kuwait City (New St.) | Kuwait City (Panasonic Tower) | Sharq (Souq Sharq) | Hawalli (Tunis St.) | Hawalli (Bin Khalid St.) | Al-Salmiya (Salem Al-Mubarak St.) | Al-Salmiya (Boulevard Mall) | Al-Farwaniya (Behind the Police Station) | Al-Shuwaikh (Al-Ghazali Bridge) | Al-Fahaheel (Opposite Public Parking) | Al-Rai (4th Ring Rd) | Al-Jahra (Opposite Main Co-op) | Airport (Departures) | Al-Eqalla (89 Mall)

## Analysis

**Kuwait Times**  
Established 1961  
The First Daily in The Arabian Gulf

THE LEADING INDEPENDENT  
DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF  
ESTABLISHED 1961

Founder and Publisher  
**YOUSUF S. AL-ALYAN**

Editor-in-Chief  
**ABD AL-RAHMAN AL-ALYAN**

EDITORIAL : 24833199-24833358-24833432  
ADVERTISING : 24835616/7  
FAX : 24835620/1  
CIRCULATION : 24833199 Extn. 163  
ACCOUNTS : 24833199 Extn. 125  
COMMERCIAL : 24835618

P.O.Box 1301 Safat, 13014 Kuwait.  
Email: info@kuwaittimes.com  
Website: www.kuwaittimes.net

## As death toll rises, communities start rethinking Taser use

Warren Ragudo died after two Taser shocks by police intervening in a family altercation. Ramzi Saad died after a Taser shock by police during a dispute between Saad and his mother. Chinedu Okobi died after police used a Taser to subdue him in a confrontation they blamed on his refusal to stop walking in traffic. All three were unarmed. All three had histories of mental illness. And all three died last year in a single northern California county, San Mateo.

They were among at least 49 people who died in 2018 after being shocked by police with a Taser, a similar number as in the previous two years, according to a Reuters review of police records, news reports and court documents. The deaths typically draw little public scrutiny - no government agency tracks how often Tasers are used or how many of those deployments prove fatal, and coroners and medical examiners use varying standards to assess a Taser's role in a death. But some communities now are considering more restrictive Taser policies following allegations that the weapons were used excessively or deployed against people with physical or mental conditions that put them at higher risk of death or injury.

Reuters has contacted 14 police departments, counties and cities that saw a Taser-related death or other serious Taser-related incident in 2018. Of those, five are reviewing their Taser policies; three had conducted reviews and made no changes; and five declined comment because investigations into the incidents were still ongoing. Reuters now has documented a total of at least 1,081 US deaths following use of Tasers, almost all since the weapons began coming into widespread use in the early 2000s. In many of those cases, the Taser, which fires a pair of barbed darts that deliver a paralyzing electrical charge, was combined with other force, such as hand strikes or restraint holds.

Following the three San Mateo deaths, all within nine months, the county board of supervisors and the district attorney launched ongoing reviews of the use and safety of Tasers, which were touted by police and the weapon's manufacturer as a near-perfect, "non-lethal" weapon when they began coming into widespread use more than a decade ago.

There is a need to reevaluate "the proper role for Tasers and how and when they are engaged," Dave Pine, a member of the Board of Supervisors told Reuters. Until then, "I personally think it would be appropriate to have a moratorium on their use." Most independent researchers who have studied Tasers say deaths are rare when they are used properly, but in a series of reports in 2017, Reuters found that many police officers are not trained properly on the risks and weapons are often misused.

Reuters was able to obtain cause-of-death data for 779 of the 1,081 deaths it has documented and the Taser was deemed a cause or contributing factor in 21 percent of those. Axon Enterprise Inc., the Taser's manufacturer, says most deaths involving the weapons are a result of drug use, underlying physiological conditions, such as heart problems, or other police force used along with the Taser. Axon argues that most cause-of-death rulings implicating its weapons are misinformed and said in an email that Tasers albeit "not risk free" are "the most safe and effective less-lethal use of force tool available to law enforcement."

### Recognizing the risks

Reuters reporting, which included the most complete accounting to date of fatalities following Taser shocks, showed that many cases involved high-risk subjects, such as people agitated by drugs or mental illness, people with heart problems, people who are very young or very old or very frail. At least half those who died after Taser shocks last year fell into one or more of those categories. As in previous years, about 90 percent were unarmed and nearly a quarter had a history of mental illness.

As police departments have become more aware of Tasers' risks and limitations, a growing number have restricted their use, says Chuck Wexler, executive director of the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) think tank. Still, many officers remain unaware of the hazards when they encounter those vulnerable to a Taser's shock, Wexler warns. "That's a big problem."

Nationally, there are no uniform standards governing police use of Tasers, although PERF and the International Association of Chiefs of Police offer model guidelines that warn against using Tasers on vulnerable populations and limit the number and duration of shocks during deployment. Axon said it offers police departments "the latest public-safety best practices and training" for Taser use, including warnings about vulnerable populations. The company also offers "de-escalation training" to help officers resolve conflicts without Tasers, as well as "empathy training for special populations, including the mentally ill."

In San Mateo, the county coroner ruled the death of Ramzi Saad a homicide: "cardiac arrest occurring during physical exertion, physical restraint and taser-ing." Police visited the Redwood City home where Saad, 55, lived with his mother on Aug 13 after a neighbor witnessed him shoving his mother during an argument and called 911. — Reuters



Young Rohingya refugees play at the Balukhali refugee camp in Ukhaia yesterday. — AFP

## Race to batten down Rohingya camp

In hotels and restaurants near the beach at Cox's Bazar in southeast Bangladesh, international and local aid workers sent to help the Rohingya in the world's largest refugee settlement talk nervously of the major challenge ahead - the weather. Cox's Bazar was mainly known as Bangladesh's top local tourism spot, famed for the world's longest natural sea beach, until the 2017 arrival of more than 730,000 Rohingya fleeing persecution in Myanmar in a human exodus of unprecedented scale.

Joining thousands of Rohingya Muslims already in Cox's Bazar, they cleared forests and built shelters from mud and bamboo to create a sprawling mass of camps that now house more than 900,000 people, of which 80 percent are women and children. Over 18 months the Bangladesh government, with thousands of staff from about 145 non-government organizations (NGOs) and aid agencies, have brought order to the chaos, building more stable shelters, roads, sanitation and setting up community projects.

But while life in the settlement has started to stabilize, aid workers said they were rushing to secure the camps for the longer term with no sign of the crisis ending and one factor hanging over them - the monsoon in May then cyclone season. "This is not an easy place to work because we are constantly worrying about things over which we have no control," said Nayana Bose, spokeswoman for the Inter Sector Coordination Group (ISCG) that coordinates the humanitarian agencies' work. "It's challenging in terms of terrain, weather, and population," she said, adding this made it harder than other refugee crises and Bangladesh's biggest ever humanitarian task.

Aid workers recalled how the early months of the crisis were focused on life-saving work, such as building shelters and latrines, food supplies, and dealing with health emergencies. They worked around the clock in the camps located about 40 km south of Cox's Bazar - a 1.5 hour drive that can take much longer depending on traffic on the potholed roads where aid agencies' four-wheel drives vie with auto rickshaws.

### Fly in, fly out

Most international staff came for three month stints but

## Muscovites declare cold war on snow salt

From the first snowfall in November to the very end of the thaw in April, Moscow enlists a small army of shovelers, scrapers, road gritters and plough drivers to keep the city moving. Trucks carry mounds of snow through the night towards melting plants in the capital's outskirts, while smaller vehicles hum down the pavements scattering salt mix. "Russia without snow is not Russia," says Alexei Babunashvili, the head of one such melting station, on a January morning after a normal week's worth of snow has fallen overnight.

"It's like a man without a woman... no life at all," he adds, as behind him a truck carrying around 30 cubic metres of dirty snow dumps its load into a pit of heated water. But Babunashvili, like many residents of the city, has questions over the salt mix that Moscow has in recent years been using in increasing volumes to keep the roads and pavements clear of ice. On the streets and social media, complaints from Muscovites about the substance locally known as "reagent" begin as soon as temperatures drop below zero.

"Reagent spoils shoes and car wheels, but for melting snow it's good," Babunashvili says, as workers use poles to break up floating chunks of ice before the water goes into the sewage and re-enters the city's supply after purification. Other people are less equivocal about the mix of salt, marble chips, calcium chloride, formic acid and other chemicals that is liberally scattered around Moscow. In 2009, a study by scientists from Moscow State University found that "reagent" harms soil, underground pipes and clothing, and can aggravate human and animal skin. But Moscow officials who oversee snow clearing insist the substance is safe and that its exact makeup is constantly being developed. One expert scattered road salt on black bread and ate it on state television two years ago.

### Sick pets

"It's disgusting," says Ksenia Schmidt, a 20-year-old student chatting with friends in central Moscow. "My dog got sick from reagent, it was awful. We went to the vet and he said it was most likely salt poisoning," she says,

as time went on were replaced by staff on six month and one year contracts, working eight week shifts before flying out for one week of rest and recreation and to visit their families. Leisure activities are limited in Cox's Bazar, with alcohol in Muslim Bangladesh only available at some international hotels, so some aid staff set up yoga classes and book clubs. Women must be dressed conservatively so swimming is not an option, although some aid workers value beach walks, and international workers are told not to leave hotels after 10 pm.

Firas Al-Khateeb, a spokesman for the UN's refugee agency UNHCR, said he had worked with refugees in five other countries but the Rohingya crisis was more challenging. First there was the sheer numbers involved, then language problems as most Rohingya are illiterate, complicating awareness campaigns about risks in the camps, and also the fact the Rohingya are not recognized by Myanmar and have nowhere to go.

Chances of the crisis ending soon are remote. Bangladesh's government has vowed not to repatriate anyone unwillingly, garnering global praise for Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina who just won a third term despite reports of poll irregularities. UN special rapporteur on human rights in Myanmar, Yanghee Lee, said on Jan 25 it was clear the Rohingya cannot return "in the near future" with the situation unchanged and Myanmar still denying all accusations of persecution. "The Rohingya are stateless and had been suffering back home. Some talk about the freedom they have here," said Khateeb, whose organization is frequently quoted saying the average length of stay in a refugee camp is around 15-20 years.

### Getting ready

But he added that the weather was a major problem, with efforts now underway to make the camps as secure as possible in case of a severe monsoon or cyclone season. Last year the Cox's Bazar area was not badly hit. Anjum Nahed Chowdhury, a project manager with Christian Aid working on disaster risk reduction with BRAC, Bangladesh's largest NGO, is focused on strengthening bamboo for shelters, digging ditches, landslide protection,

and building brick roads. "We must be ready for the monsoon season and we are much better prepared this year. If the cyclones had been bad last year it would have been a disaster," she said. While life in the camps is becoming normalized, the Rohingya are not allowed to formally work as this could impact local jobs, but they can earn about \$5 a day on NGO projects in camps. With this they can trade with each other at stalls that line the main roads winding through the camps that sell food, plastic toys and clothes as stray dogs and cows wander past. Gemma Snowdon, a spokeswoman for the World Food Program, said food in the camps was also changing to a longer-term plan.

At first they handed out rice, lentils and oil but now they are supplying people with cards with monthly amounts based on family size with which they can buy fresh food, dried fish and eggs from stores set up by local retailers in the camps. Another program, run by the UN's Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), International Organization for Migrants (IOM) and WFP, is supplying all households with stoves and a monthly canister of LPG to reduce pollution and deforestation. The loss of forest has been a key source of tension with some local people, who are now outnumbered two to one by the Rohingya, and lost some traditional income from the forest. While other locals, like Theotonius Gomes who runs the Mag Darin restaurant, have welcomed the influx of aid workers which has boosted businesses and prompted the government to start work on an international airport terminal and extended runway.

But all the aid work comes at a cost. Last year UN agencies and NGOs launched a \$950.8 million appeal to provide essential humanitarian assistance, including to nearly 400,000 Bangladeshis in nearby communities, some of whom are as poor as the Rohingya, in a bid to diffuse tensions. A new funding plan will be launched later this month, with initial drafts of the proposal, seen by the Thomson Reuters Foundation, showing the target will be about \$920 million. Aid groups are well aware raising funds could get harder as the crisis rolls on and new emergencies hit the headlines. "But this emergency is not over yet. Still the Rohingyas need our help and support," said Khateeb. — Reuters

## In a quiet French village, a cleric plotted revolution

Forty years ago this month, the man who would go on to lead the Islamic revolution in Iran lived in a simple house in a village outside Paris, spending his days cross-legged under an apple tree in the garden, contemplating insurrection. Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini was exiled from Iran in the mid-1960s, after a crackdown on his teachings by the Shah. After a brief time in Turkey he moved to Iraq, but was later expelled from the holy city of Najaf by Saddam Hussein in 1978.

He would end up in sleepy Neauphle-le-Chateau, west of Paris, where from October that year until his return to Tehran in Feb 1979, he quietly fomented unrest, nurturing the Islamist revolution that persists to this day. Artist Jean-Claude Cintas, 61, lived down the road from the ayatollah at the time and distinctly recalls the period when the bearded Shiite cleric in his robes and black turban inhabited the village and French police laid on extra protection for him.

"For the folks of Neauphle-le-Chateau, for us, we were telling ourselves, 'Why give as much importance, why completely shut down the town, with all these police and these helicopters, for this man?' whose purpose we didn't understand," said Cintas. "Even if we knew he was fighting against the Shah of Iran."

Reuters archive video from the time shows Khomeini sitting on a mattress under an apple tree, Persian prayer rugs in front of him, in quiet conversation. His black glasses are held by the stem in his right hand, which shakes slightly. Other pictures show him walking in the village street with two young boys, one of them his grandson, the sides of the roads covered in snow, police looking on. Some footage shows him meeting members of the Iranian and Western press. Another resident, Michelle Laverdaque, said anecdotes had always circulated in the village about Khomeini, even if there is little today to show he was ever there, apart from a tourist sign explaining the history around the fall of Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi. — Reuters

adding that the substance ruins leather boots. Pet owners across the capital say they have to dress their dogs' paws in "shoes" to protect them from the salt, carry the animals or simply avoid areas where reagent is spread.

Opposition politician Ilya Yashin this winter released an online video entitled "Sobyanin (Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyanin) is poisoning Moscow with reagent. Why?" in which he argued city hall was continuing to use the substance so it could award big contracts to preferred businessmen. This year the city spent a record six billion roubles (\$91 million) on the mix, according to official data. Yashin said that in the West other salt combinations, sand or roads with better snow resistance were more common. "The reality is that the chemicals our city services use are far from safe," the politician said.

### 60,000 snow clearers

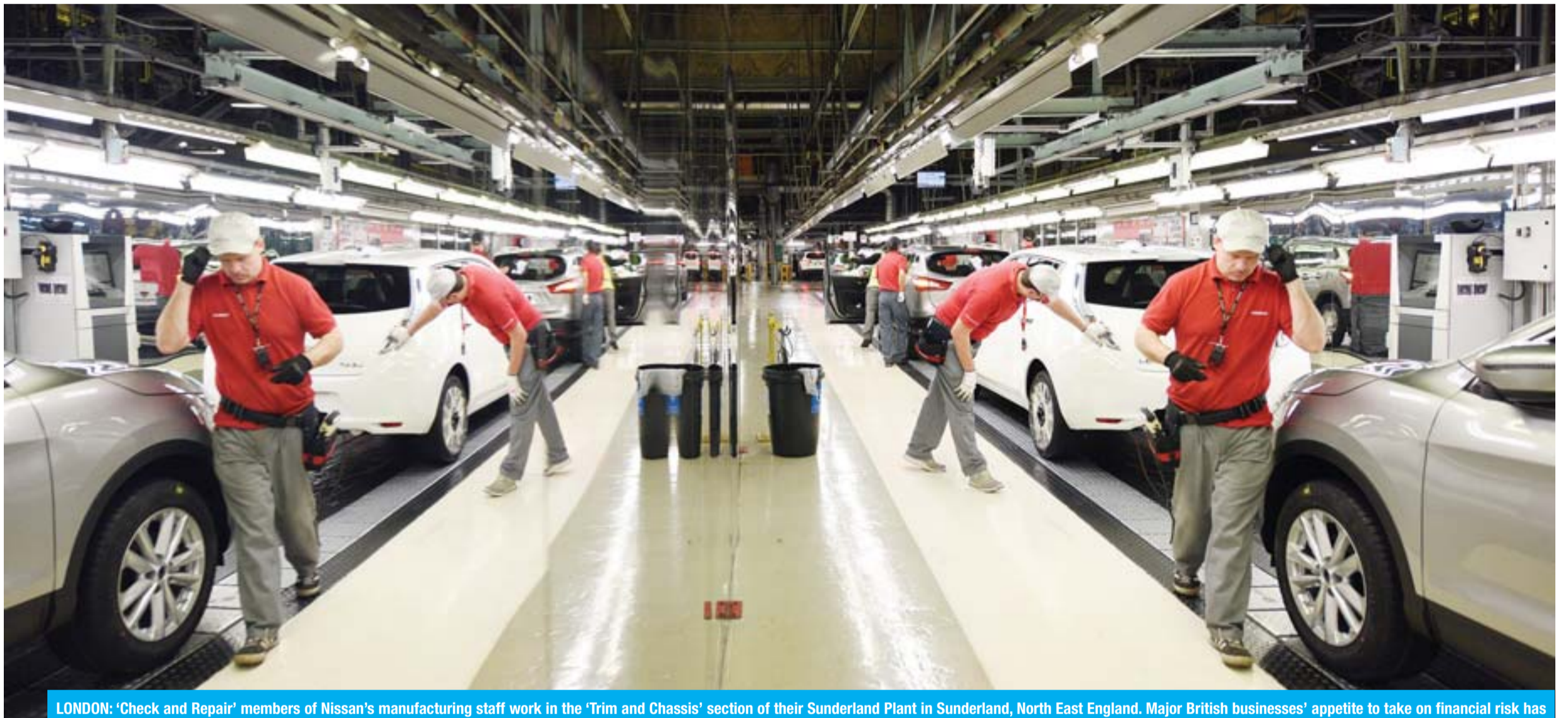
"What's used in Moscow, before it starts being used, is tested by experts," the deputy head of the city's roads department Andrei Sokolov told AFP, however. "You just need to clean your boots. I clean my own maybe once a week." Like others in city hall, he says there is no way Moscow could function without reagent. "If we didn't use anti-freezing material, it wouldn't be physically possible for us to collect all the snow straight away or to clean the roads," he added.

And, Sokolov suggested, if other countries get by without it, perhaps it's because their task is not on the same scale as in Russia. In Europe's largest city - with an official population of 12 million but likely home to several million more - some 60,000 people and 14,000 vehicles are employed by the Moscow roads department to clear the snow. This does not include those working for other departments or private contractors.

"I don't know if it's harmful or not," says 64-year-old plough driver Viktor Antonov of reagent, sitting in a traffic jam between the Kremlin and Moskva river. Antonov is at the front of a dozen-strong convoy of vehicles that are scraping the roads clear before laying anti-freezing agent ahead of further snowfall. At the back, Evgeny, 30, controls the quantity and spread of reagent from his tobacco smoke-scented truck cabin decorated with a small Russian flag. The pair and their colleagues spend winter days waiting for the call sending them out on their two-hour, 25-km route through the city center. Antonov says of their Sisyphean task: "I'm not against the snow. But it's important that the streets are clean, and not icy." — AFP

## Business

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2019

**12** Australia vows to clean up financial sector after key misconduct inquiry**14** Second Electronic Correspondence Conference opens**14** The Business Year: 2019 to be a turning point for Kuwait economy

LONDON: 'Check and Repair' members of Nissan's manufacturing staff work in the 'Trim and Chassis' section of their Sunderland Plant in Sunderland, North East England. Major British businesses' appetite to take on financial risk has fallen to its lowest level in nearly a decade due to fears of "the hardest of Brexits", a survey by Deloitte showed yesterday. — AFP

# UK Plc's risk appetite at 'recessionary' level

## Britain seeks to reassure foreign investors over Brexit

LONDON: Major British businesses' appetite to take on financial risk has fallen to its lowest level in nearly a decade due to fears of "the hardest of Brexits" and rising US protectionism, a survey by accountancy firm Deloitte showed yesterday.

The world's fifth-largest economy is less than eight weeks away from leaving its biggest trading partner, the European Union, and British lawmakers have so far refused to back a transition deal negotiated by Prime Minister Theresa May. Without a deal, businesses fear that major delays at ports for customs and other checks will disrupt supply chains and even lead to shortages of food and other essentials.

"Corporates are positioned for the hardest of Brexits, with risk appetite at recessionary levels and an intense focus on cost control," Deloitte's chief economist, Ian Stewart, said.

A survey by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW), were released yesterday, showed falling sentiment too and pointed to first-quarter economic growth of just 0.1 percent, the joint-weakest since 2012. Businesses are not just afraid of short-term disruption: 78 percent of the 110 companies surveyed by Deloitte said they expected Brexit to damage the econo-

my over the long term, compared with just 10 percent who expected an improvement.

Last week, the main trade body for Britain's automotive sector said a no-deal Brexit would cause "permanent devastation", and carmaker Nissan is expected to cancel previously announced UK investment imminently. Less than 10 percent of chief financial officers surveyed in the Deloitte survey said now was a good time to take greater risk on to their balance sheets, the lowest in over nine years. Brexit was identified as the top risk, followed by trade wars triggered by US protectionism and broader weakness in British domestic demand.

The Deloitte survey polled chief financial officers from major UK-listed companies with a combined market value of 390 billion pounds (\$510 billion), as well as UK subsidiaries of large foreign firms, between Jan. 8 and Jan. 24.

### Investors

Britain yesterday will seek to reassure foreign investors worried about Britain leaving the EU after Japanese automaker Nissan said it was scrapping a major planned investment less than two months before Brexit. Prime Minister Theresa May was due to hold a

conference call with around 55 chairmen and chief executives of European multinationals with operations in Britain. "She'll be stressing on that call the importance of the UK leaving the EU with a deal," her spokesman said.

Nissan's decision not to build its new X-Trail vehicle at its factory in Sunderland in northeast England was "very disappointing," he said, adding however that the company had confirmed no jobs would be lost as a result. Business Secretary Greg Clark was also due to make a statement to parliament on Nissan as Brexit supporters and opponents fiercely debated whether the decision was motivated by Britain's impending withdrawal from the EU.

Britain is on course to crash out of the bloc on March 29 after MPs last month voted massively against a divorce deal struck between May and EU leaders in December. Clark himself told the Financial Times that Nissan told him their decision was "a warning sign" of the damage that a no-deal Brexit could have on Britain's car sector.

### 'Still time to reach agreement'

May is now seeking to renegotiate her deal, particularly its contentious "backstop" provision to keep the

Irish border free-flowing, in a bid to secure parliament's support. EU leaders have so far refused, and German Chancellor Angela Merkel repeated this on Monday, saying the Brexit agreement had been painstakingly negotiated and reopening it "is not on the agenda". But speaking alongside Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in Tokyo, she said: "We want to do everything to avoid a no-deal, because that would increase the uncertainty."

Merkel said questions about the backstop could be discussed in the so-called political agreement that accompanies the Brexit deal, adding: "We need to show creativity, we need to listen to each other."

"We can still use the time to come to an agreement over the things that are standing in our way, if everyone shows goodwill." In London, May has invited hardline eurosceptics and Remain supporters within her Conservative Party to come up with possible alternatives to the backstop. The MPs were set to meet later yesterday and again today and tomorrow.

May wrote in the Sunday Telegraph that she intends to return to Brussels where she will be "battling for Britain and Northern Ireland" to change the deal. "If we stand together and speak with one voice, I believe we can find the right way forward," she wrote. — Agencies

## India's buffalo meat exports to plunge amid China clampdown

MUMBAI: India's buffalo meat exports are set to plunge 15 percent to their lowest in six years, a leading industry body told Reuters, as world No 1 meat consumer China clamps down on food smuggling. China does not allow imports of Indian buffalo beef due to fears over foot-and-mouth disease, but the meat is often smuggled into the country through neighboring nations along with other foods that have also been prohibited by Beijing.

The Chinese government has periodically ramped up customs controls over the last few years as it cracks down on these so-called 'greytrade' networks.

That has hit demand for Indian buffalo meat in places such as Vietnam, where

some traders look to resell to clients in China, according to the All India Meat & Livestock Exporters Association.

"Chinese buying has been very erratic in the last couple of months and that is being reflected in export numbers," said Fauzan Alavi, vice president at the organization. China's General Administration of Customs did not respond to a fax seeking comment on the issue. Shrinking shipments from the world's No.2 exporter of buffalo meat are likely to drag on prices for the commodity, potentially good news for buyers in countries such as Malaysia, Indonesia, Egypt and Iraq.

Alavi said that overall buffalo meat exports in the 2018/19 financial year that ends on March 31 could drop 15 percent from the year before to 1.15 million tons, the lowest since 2012/13. Two other exporters said shipments would likely fall more than 10 percent, without giving an exact number.

Exports in the period from last April to November declined 10 percent from the same time in 2017 to 825,570 tons, according to data from the nation's Agriculture & Processed Food Products Export

Development Authority. In 2017/18 the country's exports stood at 1.35 million tons, with Vietnam accounting for more than half the total. The vast majority of the beef India exports is buffalo, an animal less venerated than the indigenous Indian cow that many view as sacred.

India's buffaloes are mainly used for dairy and are only slaughtered for meat after their milk productivity has peaked. That makes the meat produced lower quality than from beef cattle, and is mainly used in processed food, canned goods and low-end dishes. Total Indian buffalo meat exports are around \$4 billion a year. "There are times when China puts restriction on cross-border trade and export moderates," said Alavi.

The slowdown in exports has already pulled Indian buffalo meat prices to \$2,900 per tonne from \$3,200 six months ago, exporters said. "Many Indian states are free from foot-and-mouth disease and exports should be allowed to China from these states," Alavi said.

"Chinese consumers are paying unnecessarily high prices. Direct trade would help both buyers and sellers."



MUMBAI: India's buffalo meat exports are set to plunge 15 percent to their lowest in six years, a leading industry body told Reuters, as world No 1 meat consumer China clamps down on food smuggling.

### No substitute

The depreciation of the rupee to record lows against the US dollar helped exporters in the first-half of the 2018/19 fiscal year, allowing them to slash prices to better-compete with

exporters in top buffalo meat supplier Brazil, said a New Delhi-based exporter. "But in last few months, demand has moderated from China," he added, declining to be identified due to the sensitivity of the issue. — Reuters

Business

# Australia vows to clean up financial sector after key misconduct inquiry

## Cases referred to regulator for prosecution

**CANBERRA:** A special government-appointed inquiry excoriated Australia's financial sector for misconduct yesterday, referring two dozen cases to regulators for possible legal action but leaving the structure of the country's powerful banks in place.

Regulators will be subjected to a new oversight body and the financial industry's pay will be overhauled to remove conflicts of interest, according to the recommendations of the so-called Royal Commission. But the recommendations stopped short of measures that would threaten the A\$400 billion (\$289 billion) industry's dominant position. The recommendations come after the public inquiry heard 11 months of shocking revelations of the financial industry's wrongdoing, including that fees were charged to the accounts of dead people and that cash bribes were paid over the counter to win mortgage business, wiping A\$60 billion from the country's top finance stocks.

The conservative government, which was initially opposed to the setting up of the inquiry, promised it would act on all the 76 recommendations. While the changes are likely to make the financial sector more liable to be punished for violations, banks in the world's fourteenth-biggest economy have been spared any enforced breakup or interference in the way they choose to lend money. The inquiry said it would be costly and disruptive to separate banks providing products and advice.

"I don't know that it was a missed opportunity but a lot of people were thinking that he would force structural separation," said Pamela Hanrahan, a professor of commercial law at University of New South Wales, who advised the inquiry, referring to its Commissioner Kenneth Hayne.

"There are parts of the community that might have expected the commissioner to go in a bit harder ... but he

has left a very clear pathway for whomever is in government and for the industry to think about what they need to change." The inquiry recommended sweeping changes to the business and pay models of mortgage and insurance broking, financial advice and pension fund management.

Authorities were urged to consider laying charges for misconduct like charging fees for services not rendered, including instances at major lenders Commonwealth Bank of Australia, National Australia Bank Ltd and Australia and New Zealand Banking Group.

Misconduct reached into the sector's upper echelons, with top wealth manager AMP Ltd engaging in board-level deception of a regulator over the deliberate charging of customers for financial advice it never gave. Firms were found to prey on some of society's most vulnerable customers, highlighted by the case of an insurer who used aggressive sales techniques to sell an opaque product to a young man with Down Syndrome.

"The price paid by our community has been immense and goes beyond just the financial. Businesses have been broken, and the emotional stress and personal pain have broken lives," Australian Treasurer Josh Frydenberg said.

The recommendations included banning trailing commissions for mortgage brokers, forcing financial planners to disclose any fees they receive for selling products, and banning banks from charging default interest for farm businesses affected by drought. Regulators also needed greater oversight after they were accused of working too closely with the banks. When misconduct was revealed, it either went unpunished or the consequences did not reflect the seriousness of what had been done, the inquiry found.

Australia's corporate regulator said in response to the report that it would prioritize serious matters referred to it by the Royal Commission for possible prosecutions.



**MELBOURNE:** A sign adorns the headquarters of the National Australia Bank (NAB) in Melbourne yesterday. Australian banks admitted to failing customers and vowed to "reset" their industry, as they braced for the release of a crunch report yesterday, into financial abuses in the sector. —AFP

### Bank shares rise

Ahead of the report's release, which came after the close of market trading in Sydney, shares in the "Big Four" banks closed up about 1 percent as investors looked forward to some certainty around the new regula-

tory framework. However, wealth managers, whose reputations were shredded in the inquiry, were punished with IOOF Holdings Ltd stock closing down 4.5 percent and AMP sliding to a record low. The broader market closed 0.5 percent higher. —Reuters

## Germany sanctions Iran airline over regime links

**BERLIN:** Germany said yesterday it had banned Iranian airline Mahan Air from its airports, in an escalation of sanctions adopted by the European Union against Tehran over attacks on opponents in the bloc. The move was necessary to protect Germany's "foreign and security policy interests", foreign ministry spokesman Christopher Burger told reporters at a regular Berlin press conference.

Officials at the Federal Aviation Office (LBA) sent Tehran-based Mahan Air a notification "ordering the immediate suspension of its authorization to operate passenger flights from and to Germany" from Monday, a transport ministry spokeswoman added.

Mahan, Iran's second-largest carrier after Iran Air, flies four services a week between Tehran and the German cities of Duesseldorf and Munich.

It was blacklisted by the US in 2011, as Washington said the carrier was providing technical and material support to an elite unit of Iran's Revolutionary Guards known as the Quds Force.

The US treasury has threatened sanctions against countries and companies offering the airline's 31 aircraft landing rights or services such as on-board dining.

But Brussels and Washington have been at odds on how best to deal with Iran since President Donald Trump's decision to withdraw from a 2015 deal lifting some sanctions in exchange for Tehran suspending its nuclear program.

Foreign ministry spokesman Burger reiterated that Germany wished to "uphold" the agreement "and play our part in keeping economic exchange with Iran possible".

"But we have always said that destabilizing activity by Iran in the (Middle East) region as well as Iran's ballistic missile program are unacceptable," he added. "On top of that, there are recent indications regarding the activities of Iran's secret services within EU states." —AFP

## Fasten your seatbelt: Own the premium Mazda and get up to KD 2,700

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Automotive Imports Co. AL-SHAYA & AL-SAGAR, the authorized distributors of Mazda vehicles in Kuwait has announced the most challenging offer for the start of 2019 that grants clients the unique opportunity to own the 7-seater Mazda CX9 SUV and get the highest value on top of their trade-in cars.

While Mazda insists on its firm traditions to being one of few vehicles manufacturers located in Japan, the company developed the CX9 to be one of the finest & most reliable 4-wheel drive SUVs that combines the quality of a premium 7-seater and design to satisfy both the head and the heart in equal measures. As well as a full suite of Mazda's groundbreaking SKYACTIV technology that now includes G-Vectoring control (GVC).

### MAZDA CX9

The Mazda CX9, a perfect family-size three-row crossover SUV that defied the conventional design cues and driving experience expected of vehicles of its class. CX9 quickly captivated the automotive industry, winning numerous awards.

Its interior is nothing short of breathtaking, an experience rather than simply another drive. From the moment one steps foot into the new CX9, that person is greeted by an atmosphere of beauty and delicate details. Even the door jams are

finished with a level of precision that shows sophistication. The smooth lines of the CX9 start up front with a bold five-point grille with double bars. They're flanked on either side by standard low- & high-beam LED headlights. The bold grille introduces a strong lower body and sleek upper body that elevate KODO.

Other features of the marvelous CX9 include advances Blind Spot Monitoring (ABSM), Radar Cruise Control (RCS), Lane Keep Assistance System (LAS) and Lane Departure Warning (LDW) & Smart City Brake System (SCBS) amongst many others to discover.

Ashish Tandon, General Manager of Kaico stated "we have been partners with Mazda for nearly 50 years now, we shared their success and development alongside the years and as an exclusive distributor, we will continue to present clients with the best technology & craftsmanship that Mazda can offer"

Nader Salmeh, Senior Divisional Manager- vehicles, added that this offer is the perfect chance for clients to own the CX9 while it lasts and is considered one of most desired vehicles in the Mazda range in the global market. Mazda vehicles are closer to being a premium brand than they ever were and this once in a lifetime opportunity should be seized since it is for a limited quantity of CX9.

The history of Mazda stretches back over 90 years and Kaico has been their partner for the last 49 years. Kaico was founded in 1936 and is one of the main pillars of the AL SHAYA Commercial Group. Kaico is the authorized distributor for Mazda, Peugeot and Geely cars, Michelin and Apollo tires, Mobilil lubricants, Iveco trucks, Eicher buses and Royal Enfield motor bikes.

## Turkish inflation resumes rise in January

**ANKARA:** Turkish inflation slightly surged 1.06 percent in January from December after two months of slowdown, reaching an annual rate of 20.35 percent, driven by higher

food prices, official statistics showed yesterday.

The highest monthly increase was recorded in food, at 6.43 percent, according to the Turkish statistics office (TUIK). In recent months, Turkey has been facing a sharp surge in its inflation rate, which hit a 15-year high in October at more than 25 percent. The central bank revised down its inflation forecast last week.

It said 12-month inflation was likely to be 14.6 percent

at the end of 2019, down from the 15.2 percent estimate given in October. The inflation forecast for 2020 also was cut to 8.2 percent from 9.3 percent and the central bank said it hopes price rises will stabilize at around five percent in the medium term. Jason Tuvey, senior emerging markets economist at London-based Capital Economics, said in a note that inflation was expected to ease over the coming months. —AFP



## EXCHANGE RATES

### Al-Muzaini Exchange Co.

#### EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES

US Dollar Transfer	303.650
Euro	351.170
Sterling Pound	400.670
Canadian dollar	233.760
Turkish lira	59.540
Swiss Franc	308.270
US Dollar Buying	302.450

#### ASIAN COUNTRIES

Japanese Yen	2.774
Indian Rupees	4.269
Pakistani Rupees	2.208
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.704
Nepali Rupees	2.665
Singapore Dollar	226.600
Hongkong Dollar	38.699
Bangladesh Taka	3.554
Philippine Peso	5.816
Thai Baht	9.727
Malaysian ringgit	77.660

#### GCC COUNTRIES

Saudi Riyal	81.027
Qatari Riyal	83.455
ani Riyal	789.214
Bahraini Dinar	806.830
UAE Dirham	82.727

#### ARAB COUNTRIES

Egyptian Pound - Cash	19.850
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	17.167

Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.220
Tunisian Dinar	103.630
Jordanian Dinar	428.370
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	0.022
Syrian Lira	0.000
Morocco Dirham	32.372

### Dollarco Exchange Co. Ltd

Rate for Transfer	Selling Rate
US Dollar	303.290
Canadian Dollar	232.220
Sterling Pound	399.230
Euro	349.970
Swiss Frank	304.560
Bahrain Dinar	806.560
UAE Dirhams	82.975
Qatari Riyals	84.215
Saudi Riyals	81.775
Jordanian Dinar	429.055
Egyptian Pound	17.181
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.711
Indian Rupees	4.256
Pakistani Rupees	2.193
Bangladesh Taka	3.617
Philippines Peso	5.814
Cyprus pound	18.045
Japanese Yen	3.770
Syrian Pound	1.590
Nepalese Rupees	2.671
Malaysian Ringgit	74.880
Chinese Yuan Renminbi	45.440
Thai Bhat	10.680

Turkish Lira	58.640
Singapore dollars	224.363

### BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

#### CURRENCY

	BUY	SELL
<b>Europe</b>		
British Pound	0.389838	0.403738
Czech Korune	0.005499	0.014799
Danish Krone	0.042465	0.047465
Euro	0.339985	0.353685
Georgian Lari	0.113752	0.113752
Hungarian 0.001002	0.001192	0.001192
Norwegian Krone	0.031899	0.037099
Romanian Leu	0.056176	0.073025
Russian ruble	0.004622	0.004622
Slovakia	0.009074	0.019074
Swedish Krona	0.029456	0.034456
Swiss Franc	0.298123	0.0309123
<b>Australasia</b>		
Australian Dollar	0.211299	0.223299
New Zealand Dollar	0.202916	0.212416
<b>America</b>		
Canadian Dollar	0.226324	0.235324
US Dollars	0.299750	0.305050
US Dollars Mint	0.300250	0.306050
<b>Asia</b>		
Bangladesh Taka	0.003046	0.003847

Chinese Yuan	0.043612	0.047112
Hong Kong Dollar	0.0366639	0.039389
Indian Rupee	0.003720	0.004492
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000017	0.000023
Japanese Yen	0.002683	0.002863
Korean Won	0.000260	0.000275
Malaysian Ringgit	0.071130	0.077130
Nepalese Rupee	0.003604	0.002944
Pakistan Rupee	0.001564	0.002334
Philippine Peso	0.005772	0.006072
Singapore Dollar	0.219074	0.229074
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001337	0.001917
Taiwan	0.009734	0.009914
Thai Baht	0.009361	0.009911
Vietnamese Dong	0.000013	0.000013

#### Arab

Bahraini Dinar	0.791398	0.807898
Egyptian Pound	0.017084	0.019684
Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000085
Iraqi Dinar	0.000208	0.000268
Jordanian Dinar	0.424260	0.433260
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000151	0.000257
Moroccan Dirhams	0.021683	0.024583
Omani Riyal	0.782903	0.786583
Qatar Riyal	0.079170	0.084110
audi Riyal	0.079940	0.081240
Syrian Pound	0.001288	0.001508
Tunisian Dinar	0.096388	0.104388
Turkish Lira	0.051636	0.063135
UAE Dirhams	0.081302	0.083002
Yemeni Riyal	0.000988	0.001068

Business

# Gulf Bank records KD 57 million in net profit for 2018, an increase of 18%

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank K.S.C.P. ("Bank") announced its financial results for the year ending 2018.

**Financial summary**

Net profit increased from KD 48 million in 2017 to KD 57 million in 2018, an increase of 18 percent. This is the fifth straight year of double-digit growth in net profit for the Bank.

Earnings per share increased to 20 fils per share and the Board of Directors is recommending a cash dividend of 10 fils per share for shareholders' approval at the Annual General Meeting to be held in March 2019. Cash dividends paid have increased from 4 fils per share in 2016 to 7 fils per share in 2017 to 9 fils per share in 2018.

Loans and Advances to customers reached an all-time high of KD 4.2 billion at the end of 2018, an increase of nearly KD 0.5 billion or 13 percent over the last two years. This growth was well balanced as 57 percent came from the Bank's Corporate segment and 43 percent came from the Bank's Consumer segment.

Non-Performing Loans (NPLs) reached an all-time low of 1 percent. This was driven mainly by the settlement of two legacy corporate loans in the second half of 2018, one of which led to a recovery of KD 36.5 million recorded in the fourth quarter of 2018.

The IFRS9 accounting standard on credit facilities was implemented by the Central Bank of Kuwait in 2018 and, as of year-end 2018, the Bank's total credit provisions of KD 312 million were greater than the IFRS9 requirements by KD 112 million.

The Bank's regulatory capital ratios remained strong as the Tier 1 ratio of 14.1 percent was 2.1 percent above the regulatory minimum of 12 percent and the Capital Adequacy Ratio (CAR) of 17.5 percent was 3.5 percent above the regulatory minimum of 14 percent. The Bank maintained its 'A' ratings from the four major credit rating agencies. Moody's Investor Service maintained a rating of A3 and upgraded the outlook of the Bank to 'Positive' from 'Stable' while Capital Intelligence upgraded the rating to 'A-' from 'BBB+'. Fitch Ratings have also affirmed their ratings at 'A+' with a



Gulf Bank Chairman Omar Alghanim



'stable' outlook and S&P Global Ratings affirmed the Bank rating at 'A-', with a 'Stable' outlook as well.

Commenting on the results, Omar Kutayba Alghanim, Gulf Bank's Chairman said: "We are extremely happy with our Bank's performance in 2018. We have delivered strong financial results to our shareholders, and we continue to be relentless in our mission to deliver value, service, and innovation to our customers who live and do business in Kuwait and beyond."

**Business Highlights**

To serve its retail customers, the Bank now has 58 branches in Kuwait and has

plans to open more in 2019 and beyond. In addition, the Bank has leveraged its new credit card system by offering a new lineup of credit cards with benefits tailored to each of its customer segments and a new cashback card to supplement the Bank's popular rewards program. In addition, the Bank signed agreements with several retailers in Kuwait to offer an interest-free program to their customers to drive more sales for them and more customers for the Bank. Gulf Bank also launched the "WISE" investment platform for its wealth and priority customers, and a new state-of-the-art website.

To serve its domestic and multinational corporate customers, the bank continues to leverage its product and service capabilities to offer a range of tailor-made financial solutions. The Bank covers all industries with a focus on financing government projects, especially those that are part of the Kuwait National Development Plan 2035.

**CSR and Sustainability**

Sustainability continues to play an integral role in the Bank's CSR initiatives. Gulf Bank's social responsibility programs support events focusing on youth and education; women empowerment; health and fitness; and Kuwait's heritage. "We see increasing demand from investors, customers, regulators and our own employees around social responsibility and sustainability. We aim to invest in our communities and engage with our partners to promote social and economic development that will ultimately drive sustainable growth in our beloved country, Kuwait," said Mr. Alghanim.

Gulf Bank also continues to sponsor INJAZ-Kuwait as part of its commitment to encourage and develop professional business skills amongst youth. To date, Gulf Bank has participated in four INJAZ Al-Arab programs, 47 INJAZ Kuwait Job Shadow Days, 69 INJAZ Kuwait Innovation Camps, and 120 INJAZ Kuwait Entrepreneurship Master Class workshops.

**Appreciation**

Alghanim concluded his remarks by stating: "On behalf of the Board of

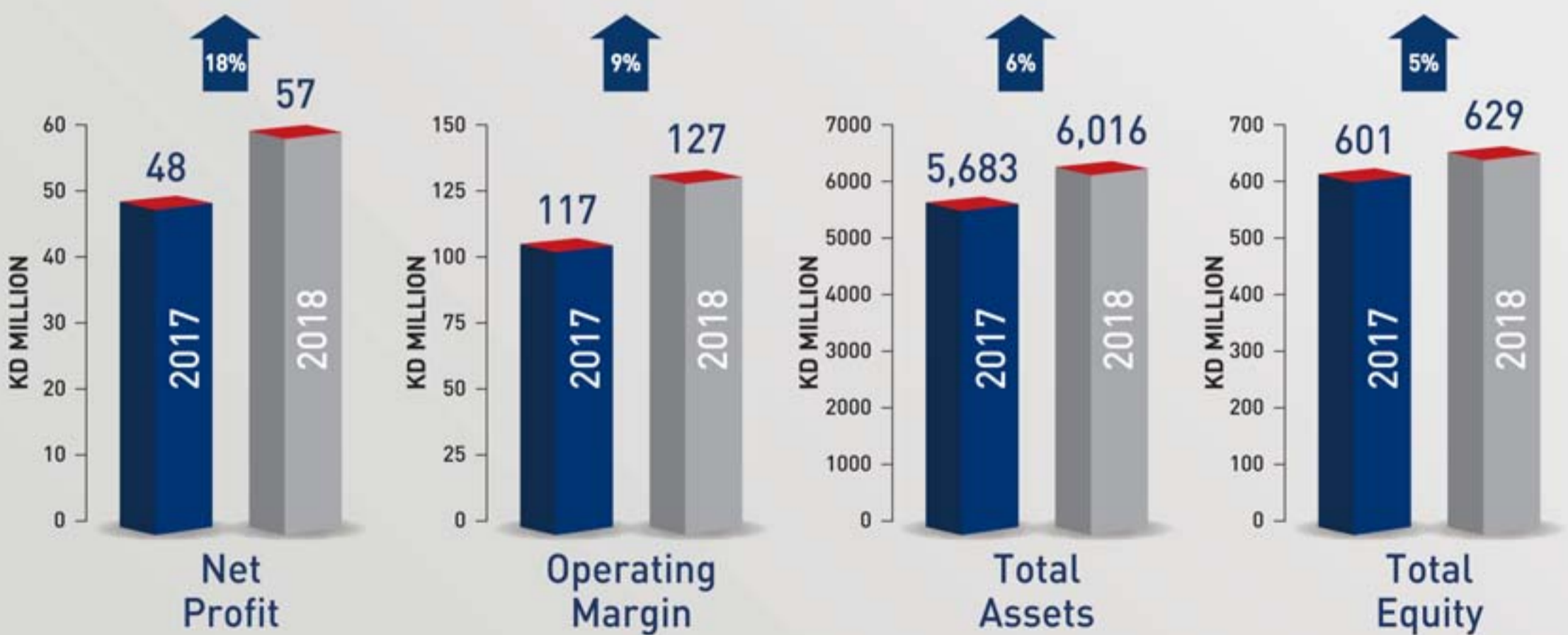
Rating Agency	Rating	Outlook
MOODY'S	A3	Positive
S&P Global Ratings	A-	Stable
Fitch Ratings	A+	Stable
GI CAPITAL Intelligence	A-	Stable

	2018
Capital Adequacy Ratio	17.5%
Non-Performing Loans Ratio (NPL)	1%
Earnings per share (fils)	20
Proposed dividend per share (fils)	10

Directors, we express our gratitude and appreciation to the Central Bank of Kuwait and the Capital Markets Authority for their dedicated efforts in supporting and promoting Kuwait's Banking sector. I would like to offer our sincere thanks to our val-

ued customers for their continued trust in Gulf Bank as their loyalty is at the core of our success. Finally, I would like to thank the entire Gulf Bank team for their dedicated service and being part of the Gulf Bank family."

## KD 57 MILLION NET PROFIT



As of or for the year ending 31 December 2018

e-gulfbank.com • 1 805 805



## Business

## NBK Capital Global Markets Commentary

# Emerging markets among the best performing in the world in January

## NBK Capital: Kuwait's stock has been leading GCC markets since beginning of 2019

**KUWAIT:** The New Year seems to be starting on a positive note after the turmoil that swept markets during the last few months of 2018. Indications of a resolution to the trade war between the US and China is offering good support for global markets.

Moreover, the January Fed statement has confirmed market expectations of a more dovish fed going into 2019. In its last statement, the Federal reserve dropped the phrase "further gradual increases" and replaced it by "will be patient as it determines what future adjustments to the target range for the federal funds rate may be appropriate". Effectively the Fed signaled a pause in tightening for the time being and even left the door open for a cut if and when necessary. Volatility has receded gradually during January and by the end of the month was almost back at pre-correction levels, while markets seem to have completely ignored the longest shutdown in US history.

The MSCI All Countries World Index started the first month of the year well into the green with a positive performance of 7.80 percent. Major US Indices reversed the biggest part of their December declines and ended January with solid returns. The S&P 500 was up 7.87 percent followed by the Dow Jones Industrial Average with a 7.17 percent advance. The tech-heavy NASDAQ was the leader however, with an advance of 9.74 per-

cent. Treasuries yields remained almost unchanged compared their end of 2018 levels as the 10-year bonds closed the month at 2.63 percent. Industrial activity picked up in January as the ISM Manufacturing Index rebounded to 56.6 from 54.1 and beating expectations of 54.2. The blowout numbers for January, however, came from the Non-farm payrolls which showed the US economy adding 304K jobs compared to consensus of 165K. The unemployment rate remained stable at 3.9 percent while average hourly earnings came in below expectations at 0.1 percent.

The global rally extended to Europe as the Stoxx Europe 600 Index climbed by 6.23 percent during January supported by a 5.82 percent gain for the German DAX and 5.54 percent for the French CAC40. Europe's fourth quarter preliminary GDP increased by 1.2 percent year-on-year. Industrial activity weakened further in January as the Market Manufacturing PMI declined to 50.5 from 51.4, just half a point away from contraction territory. The Market Services PMI wasn't so far behind at 50.8, while consumer confidence deteriorated further to -7.9 below a consensus estimate of -6.5.

Over in the UK, even though equity markets were able to join the rally, the FTSE100 added only 3.58 percent underperforming its global peers. Industrial activity retreated as the Market Manufacturing PMI recorded 52.8

compared to a revised 54.2 for December and a consensus estimate of 53.5. Consumer confidence in economic activity remained unchanged with the GfK Consumer Confidence Index recording -14 for January.

Japanese equities started the year on a good footing with the Nikkei 225 Index increasing by 3.79 percent during January after having declined by more than 10 percent during December. The Nikkei Manufacturing PMI came in at 50.3, marginally above consensus of 50.0 and down from 52.6 in December. The unemployment rate edged marginally lower to 2.4 percent meeting expectations and down from 2.5 percent in December.

Emerging markets were among the best performers globally during January. The MSCI Emerging Markets Index advanced by 8.71 percent during the month closing a significant part of the gap formed in 2018 when the index lost more than 16 percent of its value. The MSCI Asia ex-Japan closed the month up 7.28 percent while other major emerging markets had a very strong January led by Turkey and Russia with gains of 14.03 percent for the BIST 100 and 6.41 percent for the Russian Stock Exchange.

Oil continued its reversal in January, with Brent up 22.6 percent to \$61.9/bbl from its December 24 low until the end of January and WTI up 26.47 percent to \$53.8/bbl over the



same period. Oil markets were bolstered by Saudi Arabia's announcement that it expects to reduce its oil output further in February to levels well below the levels set in the OPEC+ agreement. Oil markets found further strength from the political crisis in Venezuela and the tightening of US sanctions.

GCC markets joined the global rally in equities. The S&P GCC composite advanced by 7.38 percent during January led by Saudi Arabia, with the Tadawul All Share Index up 9.4 percent for the month. It was followed by Qatar Exchange Index at 4.09 percent and Bahrain Bourse All Share Index which

advanced by 4.05 percent. Abu Dhabi and Dubai also ended the month in positive territory with 2.64 percent and 1.50 percent for the ADX General Index and the DFM General Index respectively. Kuwait had a robust month with the Boursa Kuwait All Share Index ending 2.49 percent in the green. Oman's MSM 30 Index was the only GCC index that closed the month down as it retreated by 3.64 percent in a continuation of last year's weakness. The broader S&P Pan Arab Index was up 6.44 percent with support from Saudi Arabia and Egypt which saw the EGX30 advance by 8.37 percent in January.

## Second Electronic Conference opens

**KUWAIT:** The General Manager of Central Authority of Information Technology Hya Al-Wadaani, yesterday opened the second Electronic Correspondence Conference under the sponsorship of the Ministries' Council - Central Authority of Information Technology, and Eurotech Company.

Mona Al-Meqhawi, manager of the Rehabilitation and Human Cadres Preparation department in the Central Authority, said in her speech that the societies overlooked a real revolution in the field of technology and communication, indicating that she has realized a big advancement associated with electronic revolution in all fields, be it individual or society.

Al-Meqhawi added: The concept of the electronic transactions represent one of the characteristics of this age, and tools of forming societies capable

of dealing with it. The projects of electronic correspondences and electronic signature represent an advancement in administrative revolution in the governmental works as they connect the information technology, duties and responsibilities of the governmental authority through applying clear strategies and policies.

Executive Manager of Eurotech Company, Dr Fadi Jawad said that the world entered the fourth industrial revolution which is the electronic revolution where technology will be the basis for all societies and nobody will be able to move forward without using one of its tools.

He added: You are responsible for the departments of information technology, and technology development in your establishments. Therefore, we shall do our best to be available with our science, culture, equipment, developing our systems, and deploying all updates so that Kuwait will be one of the most developed smart cities coping with the digital internationalism. We will do our best to develop the culture of work with the different authorities in Kuwait to enter the world of blockchain in next September and launch 3D printing technique in creating a real environment.

## TBY will show how 2019 is going to be a turning point for Kuwait economy

**KUWAIT:** "The Business Year: Kuwait 2019 will show how 2019 is going to be a turning point for the Kuwaiti economy toward the realization of Vision 2035. For this reason, we want to shed the light on sectors like education as a pillar of the future of Kuwait, but also finance, telecoms, and green economy," said Ioana Popa, Country Director, The Business Year. TBY Kuwait is keen on promoting Kuwait and attracting an increasing amount of FDI into the country by showcasing the numerous business opportunities on offer. TBY is also closely working with various business councils, but more specifically with the German Business Council (GBCK), said Popa in an interview.

**Question: The Business Year (TBY) is currently working on its fourth edition on Kuwait. What is TBY aiming to do in Kuwait with its yearly publications?**

**Popa:** TBY has operations in 35 countries worldwide and aims to provide the international business community with a comprehensive panorama of each country we analyze through our different platforms. We are an interview-based publication, allowing us to be a privileged B2B platform that gives the chance to CEOs and other leaders to voice their opinions on the main economic trends of the day.

It is also a perfect way to put faces and names to the major sectors of each economy. In order to conduct our research, we always partner with local institutions, therefore sharing their local knowledge and our international expertise. For this reason, we have been collaborating with the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) since our first publication on Kuwait back in 2016. For the upcoming 2019 edition, we had the pleasure to renew our partnership and we are happy to work alongside Sheikh Dr. Meshaal Jaber Al-Sabah, Director General of KDIPA, and Mohammed Yaqoub, Assistant Director General for Business Development. Their support is valuable for us and we want to help them promote Kuwait and attract an increasing amount of FDI into the country by showcasing the numerous business opportunities on offer. We also closely work with various business coun-

cils, but more specifically with the German Business Council (GBCK).

**Q: What does your collaboration with KDIPA entail this year?**

**Popa:** Until now, KDIPA was our research partner and facilitated our access to certain key companies in the country in order for us to conduct our research. For the 2019 edition, we took our partnership one step further. KDIPA and The Business Year Events- the event organization arm of TBY-are co-organizing a one-day event in London on June 13, 2019 at The Dorchester Hotel.

This event will be one of a kind and will include three panels, one on the diversification of the Kuwaiti economy, followed by a discussion about Islamic banking, and finally a panel on the digital economy and entrepreneurship. We will also host Sheikh Dr Meshaal Jaber Al-Sabah, Dr Khaled Mahdi, Secretary General of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development, Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi, Vice Chairman and Group CEO of Zain Group, and numerous other business leaders from the country.

This event will also be the occasion for us to officially launch The Business Year: Kuwait 2019 on stage and for every attendee to receive a copy. The main objective of this event is to increase the exposure of Kuwait at an international level.

**Q: What will be the main the main topics of the upcoming The Business Year: Kuwait 2019 publication?**

**Popa:** The Business Year: Kuwait 2019 will show how 2019 is going to be a turning point for the Kuwaiti economy toward the realization of Vision 2035. For this reason, we want to shed the light on sectors like education as a pillar of the future of Kuwait, but also finance, telecoms, and green economy. We also want, through this upcoming publication, to showcase the key role of women in the economy and this is why you will be able to see the interviews of Elham Mahfouz from Al-Tijari, Dr Samira Omar, Director General of KISR and Rana Al-Nibari from The Scientific Center. In addition, we will highlight the increasing role of SMEs and entrepreneurs in the future of the economy.

During our research, we have had the chance to meet with successful young Kuwaitis such as Athbi Al-Enezi from JustClean, Abdullah Al-Mutawa from Carriage, and Mohammed Jaffar, CEO of Faith Capital. We have noticed that Kuwait truly has the potential to become a digital hub in the region if these young entrepreneurial minds keep investing and creating successful tech-related business.



Ioana Popa, Country Director, The Business Year, during the interview

**Q: What is your analysis of the Kuwaiti economy in the context of Vision 2035?**

**Popa:** Currently there is a trend in the GCC toward having grand national plans. Kuwait Vision 2035 will be in direct competition with Saudi Vision 2030, Oman Vision 2040, Qatar Vision 2030, and the UAE's vision 2030. Kuwait's political stability and outstanding diplomacy in the region will be among the main competitive factors the country will have to offer. In addition to that, we can add the location of the country, with direct access to the Arabian Gulf, and strong purchasing power. These will be determining factors for foreign investors seeking to invest in the GCC.

However, according to our research, one of the main concerns shared by the business community is the significant bureaucracy and long-lasting processes existing in Kuwait. If not addressed, this concern could negatively impact the realization of Vision 2035. Also, even though the tendering process is fairly transparent and offers, on paper, equality of opportunity to bidding companies, in reality the decisive factor is price. This could be another factor preventing higher levels of FDI in the country and the implementation of high-end companies offering not necessarily the cheapest solutions or services but the most quality.

Kuwait has outstanding potential and could become the place to invest in the GCC. Vision 2035 looks promising and several projects are expected to break ground in 2019, sending a positive message to the international business community but also boosting the level of confidence among investors. If the dialogue remains open between the private and public sectors then there is a great opportunity for Kuwait to become a highly relevant destination for FDI in the near future.

## Germany facing big budget hole as economy slows

**BERLIN:** Germany is facing a budget shortfall of around 25 billion euros (\$28.6 billion) by 2023 as an economic slowdown means tax revenues will come in below previous estimates, a Finance Ministry document obtained by Reuters showed.

Global trade tensions and concern about Brexit have already prompted Germany to slash its growth forecast for this year to 1 percent from 1.8 percent previously as a decade-long boom in Europe's economic powerhouse draws to a close. The ministry document, prepared for Finance Minister Olaf Scholz to present to cabinet colleagues, pointed to annual budget shortfalls of 5 billion euros through

to and including 2022. The prospect of budget deficits represents a dramatic deterioration in the finances of Europe's biggest economy, which reported a budget surplus for the federal government of some 11 billion euros last year.

The document highlighted further risks for the budget, including costs related to exiting coal power.

Allies of Chancellor Angela Merkel, who leads a ruling coalition of her conservatives and the center-left Social Democrats (SPD), have been pressing for the government to lower the tax burden for the rich.

Both Merkel's conservative bloc and the Social Democrats are seeking to energize their rank-and-file and to win back voters ahead of European and regional elections starting in May.

Scholz, a Social Democrat, urged ministers to make savings.

"Investments will be carried forward at the 2019 level," the ministry document read, adding that personnel costs would be frozen. — Reuters

## Gulf Bank announces winners of Al-Danah weekly draw

**KUWAIT:** Gulf Bank held its weekly draw on 3rd February 2019 announcing the names of its winners for the week from the 27th January till the 31st January 2019, in which five winners will receive KD 1,000 each, every week.

**The winners this week are:**

- Abdullah Mohammad Abdullah Almuzaini
- Mohammad Eqail Alhasan
- Awatif Khalaf Mahmoud Al-Moansor
- Baheja Abdulla Ahmed Almedan
- Fatmah Basheer Mnahi Aladwani

The first Gulf Bank Al-Danah's quarterly draw 2019 for the prize of KD 150,000 will be

held on 27 March 2019, the second quarterly draw 2019 will be held on 26 June 2019, for the prize of KD 250,000, and the third quarterly draw for the prize of KD 500,000 on 25 September 2019. The final Al-Danah draw for KD 1,000,000, will be held on 16 January 2020, where the Al-Danah millionaire will be announced at a live event.

Gulf Bank encourages customers to increase their chances of winning with Al-Danah by depositing more into their Gulf Bank accounts using the new ePay (Self-Pay) service, which is available on Gulf Bank's online and mobile banking services.

Al-Danah offers a number of unique services to customers, including the Al-Danah Deposit Only ATM card, which allows account holders to deposit money into their accounts at their convenience. Account holders can also calculate their chances of winning the draws through the 'Al-Danah Chances' calculator available on the Gulf Bank website and app.

Gulf Bank's Al-Danah account is open to Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti residents of Kuwait. Customers require a minimum of KD 200 to open an account and the same amount should be maintained for customers to be eligible for the upcoming Al-Danah draws. If the customer's

account balance falls below KD 200 at any given time, a KD 2 fee will be charged to their account monthly until the minimum balance is met. Customers who open an account and/or deposit more will enter the weekly draw within two days. To take part in the Al-Danah 2019 upcoming quarterly and yearly draws, customers must meet the required hold period for each draw.

The Al-Danah draws are all approved by and held in the presence of a representative from the Ministry of Commerce. Furthermore, Gulf Bank have partnered with Ernst and Young Kuwait (EY) with reference to "Al-Danah Prize Draw" system in order to assist in assessing processes, technical controls considering relevant parameters and provide recommendations in-line with industry leading practices.

The study was conducted in line with industry standards and control requirements relevant to similar prize draw schemes wherein, a detailed review of prize draw management system along with draw scheme parameters, data extraction for draw, filtration of customers as per defined business criteria and necessary system interactions was conducted to advise on any potential areas of improvements.

What's On

# ACK students win at KOC's Science Innovation Competition

In the first ever Science Innovation Competition organized by the Kuwait Oil Company (KOC), the Australian College of Kuwait (ACK) engineering students won first and second places. The Science Innovation Competition was held by KOC on the January 27 and 28, 2019, at the Ahmad Al Jaber Oil & Gas Exhibition. The competition brought together groups of students from different universities around Kuwait to create projects which promote innovation in design and engineering.

Besides ACK, there were competitors from Kuwait University, the American University of the Middle East, and the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training. The competition had 16 groups in total, with four of the groups being from the ACK School of Engineering. First place was secured by a group from the Petroleum Engineering Department, while second place was won by the Mechanical Engineering Department. An award ceremony was held on Wednesday, January 30th, to honor the winners of the competition.

The project which won the first place was titled "Development of lost circulation treatments to cure naturally fractured formations and reservoirs." This project was supervised by Dr. Mortadha Al Saba, and the group of students responsible for it were Mohamed Alaedin Fahmy, Yousef Mohammad Al Darakh, Mohammed Qasem Al Mejadi, Ali Mohammad Farhat, and Jaber Majli.

The group that won the second place worked on a project titled "Plant irrigation water sprinkler robot." This group was supervised by Dr. Adel Younis, and the students in the group were Dalal Al Salahi, Ahmad Al Khudher, Hamoud Al Baijan, Eissa Al Failakawi, and Mohamed Ahmed.



Mohammad Al Basri, KOC's Public Relations and Information Group Manager, thanked ACK and its students for their efforts and congratulated them on their success in the competition. "The projects that the students gave to the competition were amazing,"

said Al Basri. "They were projects that could benefit us in the petroleum sector and could also benefit government institutions."

ACK is very proud of this achievement which shows clearly the quality and dedication of our stu-

dents as well as the continuous efforts and commitments made by our faculty. ACK would also like to thank the Kuwait Oil Company for organizing the competition and for giving its students such an invaluable opportunity to show their talents.



## Ooredoo sponsors Thriller - Live



Mijbil Alayoub



Othman Aljeeran

Ooredoo Kuwait announced its sponsorship of the international sensation: Thriller - Live, a show celebrating the music of The Jackson 5 and the solo work and life of The King of Pop in a spectacular concert created to celebrate the career of the world's greatest entertainer. The international sensation has played 5000 shows to over 5 million fans in over 30 countries. The six shows will be staged over four consecutive days at Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Center (JACC) in Kuwait City starting March 20.

This sponsorship comes in line with Ooredoo's role towards the community and the importance of effectively taking part in international events and activities catered to the savvy Kuwaiti audience from all generations who appreciate such events. JACC is considered a national landmark and our support with their activities stems from Ooredoo's strong belief in the partnership between the private and public sectors, especially when it comes to events that unite all the people of Kuwait, from different backgrounds.

Commenting on this sponsorship, Mijbil Alayoub, Senior Director of Corporate Communications at Ooredoo Kuwait said: "We are very pleased in our collaboration in such an international show, which will surely witness an immense crowd of Michael's fans from all across Kuwait. We look forward to taking part in other events that are yet to come with JACC".

Othman Aljeeran, Head of Public Relations Department at JACC added "We are excited to present to our audience Thriller Live show as part of our 18/19 cultural season titled Bridging Cultures, which showcases a number of artistic and musical shows as well as fabulous performances by famous international ensembles brought to you for the first time in Kuwait including dance performances and entertaining shows suitable for all age categories. We thank Ooredoo for sponsoring the show and looking forward for more collaborations in the future." Tickets can be found online and they can also be purchased from the JACC's Box Office.



The Ambassador of China Li Minggang, Sheikh Ibrahim Al-Duaij Al-Sabah Deputy Head of the Ruling Family Council, Mohammad Aboul Hassan Advisor, Sheikh Mohammad Khaled Al-Sabah Undersecretary for Local Affairs of Diwan of Prime Minister and Dean of Diplomatic Corps Abdul Lahad MB Acke jointly cut the ceremonial cake at a reception on the occasion of arrival of the Ambassador and Chinese spring festival. Higher official, diplomats, Chinese community and media persons attended the event. —Photos by Joseph Shagra



## ABK sponsors charity gala concert at Kuwait English School

In continuation of its efforts to support community-driven initiatives, Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) sponsored the Kuwait English School's Charity Gala Concert. The event was held on January 31, 2019, at the school campus in Salwa. Initiated by the school and Kuwait's Red Crescent Society, the concert offered an evening of musical entertainment to the attendees.

During the event, the school band showcased its talent by performing live music and paying tribute to the West End Theatre by performing some of their popular songs. The Green Unit Choir - the

school team composed of special needs' students - carried out a performance along with the senior school choir. ABK's participation stems from its commitment to charitable causes and its devotion to being a force for good. In addition, it reflects the Bank's tireless dedication towards supporting the communities in need and raising social awareness within the communities the bank operates in.

The event served as a platform to engage students with humanitarian causes, while highlighting the importance of individual contributions in the creation of a movement of amplitude. Furthermore, by encouraging students with special needs to participate in the musical performances the school underlined the equal opportunity and responsibility of each individual towards the community. The proceeds raised during the event were collected to provide essential medical equipment in Yemen through the Red Crescent.



# CLINIC PAGE



**Kuwait Times**  
248 33 199

## Dr Sahar Ghannam

**Dermatology consultant, skin treatment and laser**

**Timing: Saturdays and Wednesdays from 10 am to 5 pm**  
Sunday, Monday and Tuesday from 9:30 am until 5 pm  
**Thursday from 9:30 am until 1 pm.**

**Friday is a holiday.**

**Address: Fourth Ring Road - Abdallah Fadalah Street, Meidan Hawally, opposite fire station - block 35, building 31.**  
Clinic Phones: 25610407/ 409/ 314 Fax: 25610465  
Mobaile: 90974754/ 99166746

 saharpolyclinic  Dr.saharghannamclinic  Email: drsgderma@gmail.com

## Dr. Ala' Groof

**Consultant Surgeon**  
**Canadian board certified.**

General Surgery, Vascular Surgery, Endoscopic/laparoscopic Surgery, Obesity/Metabolic Surgery, Tumor Surgery

- Treat patients with problems in the arteries and veins- varicose veins, narrowing/occlusion or ballooning of vessels.
- Treat patients with diabetic foot wounds and leg swelling.
- Treat patients in need of hemodialysis access and associated problems.
- Treat patients with gall bladder stones, abdominal swellings/tumors/hernias.
- Treat patients with problems of overweight- Sleeve Gastrectomy and gastric bypass.

**We cover GIG insured patients- KPC/AFYA**

**Meidan Hawally - End of Fourth Ring Road - behind the Gas Station - Sabaek building, seventh floor**  
**Tel: 25626000 - 65966000**



To advertise on this Page, Call: 24833199 ext:101,102

**Scope of Clinical Practice:**

- General & Laparoscopic Surgery
- Single Port Surgery
- Treatment of Colo-Rectal Diseases, Including Colorectal Cancer
- Surgical Treatment of Inflammatory Bowel Abscess
- Treatment of Perianal Fistula & Complex Perianal Fistula (complications)
- VAAFT Procedure (Treatment of Fistula through Fistuloscope)
- Treatment of Irritable Bowel Symptoms
- Colonoscopy & Gastroscopy
- Stomach Balloon Insertion & removal
- Bariatric Surgery - Lap Sleeve Gastrectomy
- Gallstones & Abdominal Hernias Surgery

• Colonic Hydrotherapy & Fecal Incontinence Treatment  
• Laparoscopic mini bypass  
• Transanal minimally invasive surgery

**Academic Certificates, Trainings & Fellowships:**

- American Board of General Surgery
- Fellow of American College of Surgery
- Canadian Board of General Surgery
- Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians & Surgeons of Canada
- American Board of Colo - Rectal Surgery
- American Board of Surgical Critical Care

## Dr. Abdullah Al Haddad

**Surgery Department**  
Consultant General Surgery, Laparoscopic & Colo - Rectal Surgeon



 daralshifa  
Email: aalhaddad@daralshifa.com

 مستشفى دار الشيفاء  
Dar Al Shifa Hospital  
Tele: 1802 555

## Dr Saleh Al-Jraiwi



**Dermatology and Venereologist**  
**American Academy fellow**


**Higher specialty in treating chronic dermatological diseases such as Psoriasis, Vitiligo, Alopecia areata, Eczema, Atopic Eczema, Warts, take skin samples and fungus by most modern equipment.**

**Now exclusively and first time in Kuwait**  
most modern American system and technology to treat **Erectile dysfunction for men** resulting from diabetes, blood pressure and blood vessels, has CE, FDA quality certificates.

**Treatment period, A course 3 weeks**

Hawally - Morocco Street Route 40 - Dr Saleh Al-Jraiwi Medical Complex.  
**ED 1000 MEDISPIC Tel: 97116099 / 22655566**

 @sjderma

**To advertise on this Page**

**Call: 24833199 ext:101,102 or**  
**Direct line: 24835616 / 24835617**  
**or email: ads@kuwaittimes.com**



**To advertise on this Page**

**Call: 24833199 ext:101,102 or**  
**Direct line: 24835616 / 24835617**  
**or email: ads@kuwaittimes.com**



**To advertise on this Page**

**Call: 24833199 ext:101,102 or**  
**Direct line: 24835616 / 24835617**  
**or email: ads@kuwaittimes.com**



**WELCOME**

**Dr Tammam Abou Ali**  
Consultant ENT, Head & Neck, Facial Plastic Surgeon.

**1 888 883**  
www.qmc-kuwait.com

 qmckuwait

- Endoscopic Sinus Surgery
- Septoplasty and turbinate reduction surgery by laser or RF
- Snoring and OSAP Surgery
- Rhinoplasty with open and closed techniques
- Microscopic Middle Ear Surgery and Tympanoplasty
- Salivary gland and parotid surgery
- Thyroid and parathyroid surgery
- Micro laryngeal surgery



**Global Medical Center Welcomes**


## Dr. Marzouq Al-Bader

**Consultant vascular and general surgery**

All general and specialized surgeries such as:

- All critical and non-critical arteries and veins surgeries
- All methods of treating varicose
- Special department for care of injured diabetic foot
- Carrying out delicate procedures such as removing the extra rib
- Treating excess perspiration
- AV connection for dialysis

**Telephone: 1871111** **Global Medical Center, Bneid Al-Qar Bour Saeed Street, Block-1, Building-128.**

 @globalmedcenter  
www.globalmed-center.com



## Dr. Husain Alenezi

-Board Certified Urologist.  
-Endourology Society-Approved Fellowship In Endourology And Robotic Surgery At Western University, Ontario, Canada.

**Expert in diagnosing and treating:**

- 1- Urinary Stones (Kidney, Ureter & Bladder) By Endoscopy & Laser
- 2- Prostate Cancer And Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia
- 3- Lower Urinary Tract Symptoms In Males And Females
- 4- Tumors And Malignancies Of The Urinary Tract (Kidney, Adrenals, Ureter, Bladder And Testes)
- 5- Male Factor Infertility And Varicoceles (Microscopic Surgery)
- 6- Erectile Dysfunction

Contact Taiba Hospital: 1808088  94449452  Twitter: @DrHusain\_Urol



**Our Doctors Provide care For the entire Family**

**Book your appointments today!**

 **Dr. Kiron Turaka**  
Ophthalmologist

 **Dr. Zareena Zahir**  
Ophthalmologist

 **Dr. Nasan Khan**  
Senior Cardiologist

 **Dr. P. Seshendra Nath**  
Orthopedic Consultant (AUSTRALIA)  
Specialized in Neck, Shoulder, Hip and Knee

**50721507**  
**24551555**  
www.exircenterkw.com

**EXIR MEDICAL SUBSPECIALITIES CENTER**  
Block No.4 Jahra - Kuwait

**WE ACCEPT ALL MAJOR INSURANCES**

Tel : 24568057 / 24568059 info@exircenterkw.com www.exircenterkw.com  /exircenterkw





# CLINIC PAGE



**Kuwait Times**  
248 33 199

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

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

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

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

**ACADAMIC CERTIFICATES:**

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

**SPECIALIZED IN:**

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

**SHARD, Ahmad Alsheer st., Building 14, Floor 13.**  
Tel: (+965) 22060777  
@DrFahadMed, @FahadSabb, @dardonabb  
Email: drfahadmed@beautybeyond.com.kw

**To advertise on this Page**

**Call: 24833199 ext:101,102**  
**or Direct line: 24835616 / 24835617**  
**or email: ads@kuwaittimes.com**

**Dr. Ahmad Alaeddine**  
Head of Cardiology departmenta at Dar Al Shifa hospital

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

**مستشفى دار الشفا**  
Dar Al Shifa Hospital  
Tel:1802 555

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

**Specialized in:**

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

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

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

**Specialized in:**

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

**IC INTERNATIONAL CLINIC**  
American Board Certified in General Surgery  
Member of the Society of American Gastrointestinal & Endoscopic Surgeons (SAGES)  
Higher specialization in Hepato-Pancreato-Biliary surgery & Organ Transplantation  
Member of many prestigious surgical societies.

- ◆ Day case surgeries
- ◆ Minor surgeries (lipoma, sebaceous cyst, ingrowing nail)
- ◆ Diagnosis, treatment and follow up of all surgical emergencies
- ◆ Hemorrhoids, fistula & anal fissure surgeries
- ◆ Surgery for morbid obesity (sleeve, gastric bypass)
- ◆ Breast surgeries
- ◆ Hernia repair
- ◆ Thyroid & adrenal surgeries
- ◆ Surgery for reflux disease
- ◆ Cholecystectomy & laparoscopic appendicectomy
- ◆ Liver, pancreas & bile ducts surgeries

**Dr. Hani Haider**  
General Surgery Consultant  
http://www.international-clinic.com **Tel: 1886677**

**To advertise on this Page**

**Call: 24833199 ext:101,102**

**DR. FAHAD AL-MUKHAIZEEM**  
Consultant Pediatrician

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

**Tel.: 22269369 - Fax: 22269368**  
**Al-Jabriya - Block 1A - St.1 - Mazaya Building - 15th Floor - Clinic B**

**DR. WALEED S BUHAIMED**  
Consultant of General Surgery  
Laposcopic and Bariatric Surgery

**Academic Certificates – Training**

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

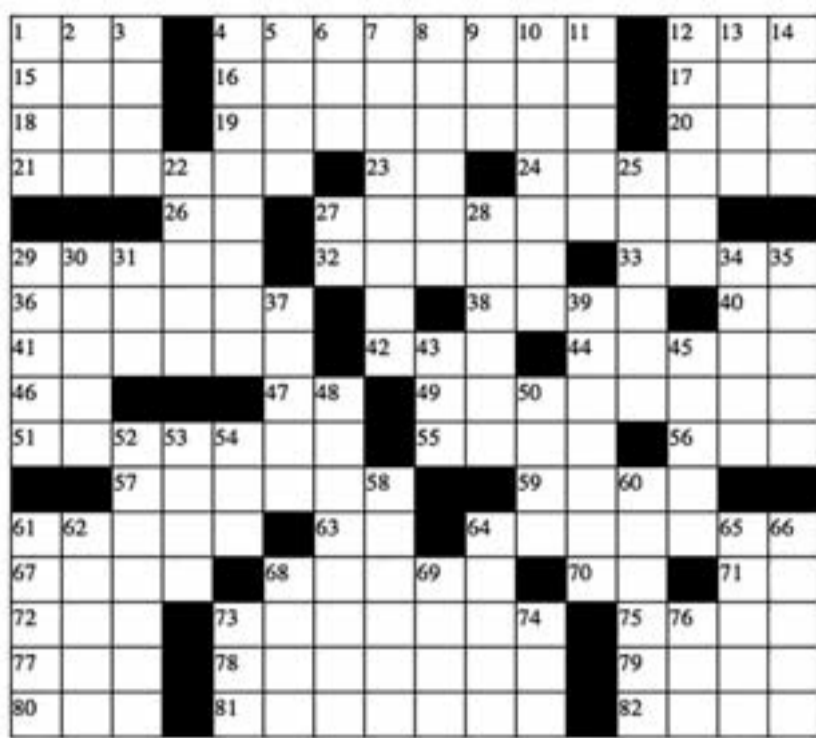
**Scope of clinical Practice.**

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

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

Stars

CROSSWORD 2128



ACROSS

- 1. 100 pyas equal 1 kyat.
4. Very large in expanse or scope.
12. A dark-skinned member of a race of people living in Australia when Europeans arrived.
15. (sports) The chief official (as in boxing or American football) who is expected to ensure fair play.
16. A fast-growing tropical American evergreen having white flowers and white fleshy edible fruit.
17. The most common computer memory which can be used by programs to perform necessary tasks while the computer is on.
18. The sense organ for hearing and equilibrium.
19. Troubled emotionally and usually deeply.
20. (prefix) Bad or erroneous or lack of.
21. The cardinal number that is the sum of four and one.
23. A public promotion of some product or service.
24. A hard blow with a flat object.
26. The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.
29. (prefix) Within.
32. Of or relating to or associated with the moon.
33. A lyric poet.
36. Originally a British youth subculture that evolved out of the teddy boys in the 1960s.
38. Informal terms for a mother.
40. A colorless and odorless inert gas.
41. Cheap and shoddy.
42. A white linen liturgical vestment with sleeves.
44. (computer science) American Standard Code for Information Interchange.
46. (Akkadian) God of wisdom.
47. A silvery soft waxy metallic element of the alkali metal group.
49. A salt or ester of xanthic acid.
51. A constituent (proton or neutron) of an atomic nucleus.
55. The United Nations agency concerned with civil aviation.
56. Someone who is morally reprehensible.
57. A (usually canopied) seat for riding on the back of a camel or elephant.
59. An informal term for a father.
61. With rapid movements.
63. A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali earth group.
67. An indication of radiant light drawn around the head of a saint.
70. An associate degree in nursing.
71. The square of a body of any size of type.
72. An inflammatory complication of leprosy that results in painful skin lesions on the arms and legs and face.
75. An aggressive remark directed at a person like a missile and intended to have a telling effect.
77. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
78. Oily poisonous liquid amine obtained from nitrobenzene and used to make dyes and plastics and medicines.
79. An Arabic speaking person who lives in Arabia or North Africa.
80. The longer of the two telegraphic signals used in Morse code.
81. An ancient city in southern Greece.
82. A small cake leavened with yeast.

DOWN

- 1. Preparatory school work done outside school (especially at home).
2. Not only so, but.
3. A rounded thickly curled hairdo.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You're finally coming out of the cocoon you placed yourself in the last few days. The social scene means more to you today. Being around people is top of your list and love is in the air. Practical items though are important to you too. Your usual fly by night attitude gives way to more orderly pastimes. You can have love and be in the real-world too. Enjoy your new-found energy for cleaning house and filing your paperwork. It's part of your allure right now.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Getting organized in a better fashion is a focus now. Breaking old habits and forming better opportunities have you looking towards the future with optimism. What's more, you know exactly what you're doing when you organize. You're using your whole self, body, mind and spirit to achieve your goals. Thought and energy manifest. Take a course on investing. Control is part of your agenda now. Taurus, even in love. Watch your health. Enjoy a nice, leisurely walk tonight. Relax.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Taking chances is in your powerhouse today. You may look to others as if you're jumping into something without thinking but that isn't the case. The people you love know you're the kind of person who makes wise decisions. Especially today, you appreciate their their thoughtfulness. It gives you the impetus to carry through with your choices. Gemini. And you'd be right to do so. Your children are commanding more attention now just by the rights they have as your children. You have a desire to dote on them. Enjoy this day.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Ambition is your guide today. Listen to your inner voice. It won't lead you wrong. Take the time to be with people who have the same aspirations you do. Get into a group conversation at lunch. You might hear something that could lead you in the direction you're seeking to make more in your work world. That's truly what you want now. At home, get everything in order so that you can create more energy towards your desires. You feel better when your house is in order and that creates what you need at work too. Not enough time, you feel. Cancer, to do everything you want to accomplish today. Try to be calm.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Today will be a good time to think more about the issues you've been pondering the last couple of days. You're even more clear-headed now. Take the time to speak to the person or person's you think you might want to separate yourself from whether at work or at home. Communication is key and you can get your points across. Leo but that doesn't mean it'll fix all the issues. You can make good decisions through this process. Reorganization is happening no matter what your findings now. You'll succeed.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You're beginning to think this last few days will go on forever with the humdrum of being out of whack in your life. You're unsure whether you can tolerate it. Your usual straight-to-the-point attitude isn't working for you at all. At work, keep your head down, do your work and try to make it through this time without making waves. Tensions are high. You've started to think about colors and decorating or taking up art to relax. Either is nice especially now because it gives you a chance to be alone and not think unless you want to. Virgo. It will get better.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

You wish to share information you've learned about life and everything that comprises it and you do. It may not be the best time to share at work or at home because you have people who are rather old-fashioned in their beliefs who may not be in a great mood. These friends and workmates might start an argument. Don't give into this type behavior. Be silent and think. Just because you want to widen your belief structure, Libra, doesn't mean others want the same. Let them learn at their own pace. Let work be work and meet with like-minded friends later.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Information is on your mind even its only gossip. Like the rag sheets, there's always a modicum of truth to rumors. You enjoy sorting it out especially if it's with a workmate. People are drawn to you and want to tell you all the talk around the water cooler. Let them, Scorpio. At home you just want to chill with a good book. People are nice but being alone with a get-away book is even better. Take a warm bath or shower and security-up under a warm blanket with your book or a good television program.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 19)

Though you're frustrated with both work and home you're really working and putting energy into making both better. Money is associated with wealth and you want the ability to go after other items besides the material which can only happen when you have some wealth. You're assertive at work and may push others too hard, Sagittarius. Others aren't the only ones though. You may put too much on you and that could cause illness or unhappiness. You think if you have to clean the bathroom everyone can but not everyone is in your mood, especially your lover. Relax some and take it easy on you.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You're having issues trying to consider the whole picture of your life today. It's because your thinking about the reasoning behind all that is. You wonder if there is more for you. Generally, you take to work like a duck on a bug but now you're daydreaming. Rest assured this will be over soon, Capricorn, and you can get back to what you think is real life. Politics takes on more importance but don't let yourself get caught up in the day-to-day fighting between the two parties. You know that politicians are people. People care for themselves more than others most often. Where do you figure in the scheme of things?



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Everyone from work to home means more to you at this time. You see the big picture as to how these people work in your life and you want every one of them you care for around you now. It's a cocooning of sorts. Moreover, they want to be close to you. This makes you feel great today. You're more outgoing now and you need to be admired. Don't go buying presents though, big lunches or drinks for all. You might overspend and that'll make you worry tomorrow. You've got the admiration, Aquarius. One drawback though, one who may see you as a daydreamer without purpose. Overlook him or her.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You're into the organic diet and toxic free lifestyle; this is reflected in the contents of your garden and kitchen. You're focused like a laser on reaching certain financial goals and anything that threatens this rattles you; take a deep breath and conquer! You're in a position to caretaker someone who's unable to take care of themselves in some way; you happily attend to this. You go the extra mile to help someone at work and this opens your eyes to the

Wordsearch Puzzle

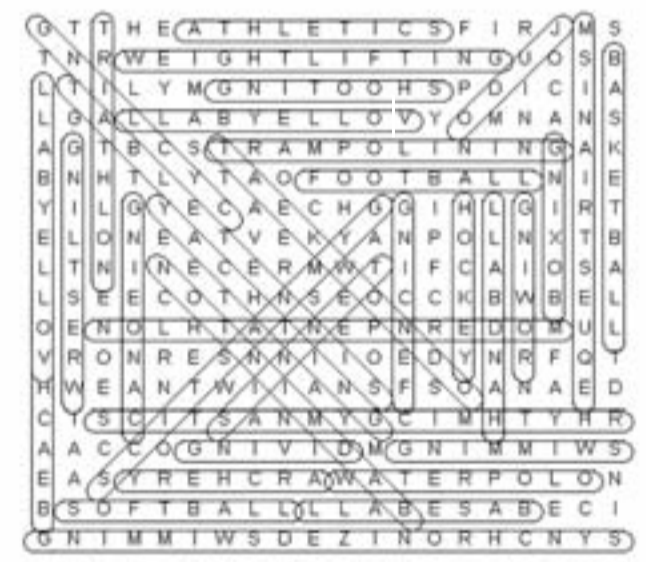
Surgery
Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a secret message.



- ANESTHESIA, DRILL, LUNGS, SPLINT, APPENDIX, ENDOSCOPE, MALLET, SPONGE, BIOPSY, FORCEPS, NEEDLE, STAPLER, BLOOD, GRASPERS, OCCLUDERS, SUCTION, BONE SAW, HEART, PROBE, SURGEON, BRAIN, HEMOSTAT, RETRACTORS, SUTURE, CALIPER, HOOK, RIBS, SYRINGE, CANNULA, INCISION, RULER, TISSUE, CATHETER, INJECTION, SCALPEL, TRACHEOTOME, CLAMPS, IRRIGATION, SCISSORS, TRANSPLANT, COLON, KIDNEY, SKIN, TREPINE, DELATORS, LANCET, SPECULA, TROCAR, DESTRUCTORS, LIVER, SPLEEN, TWEEZERS

Yesterday's Solution

Summer Olympics



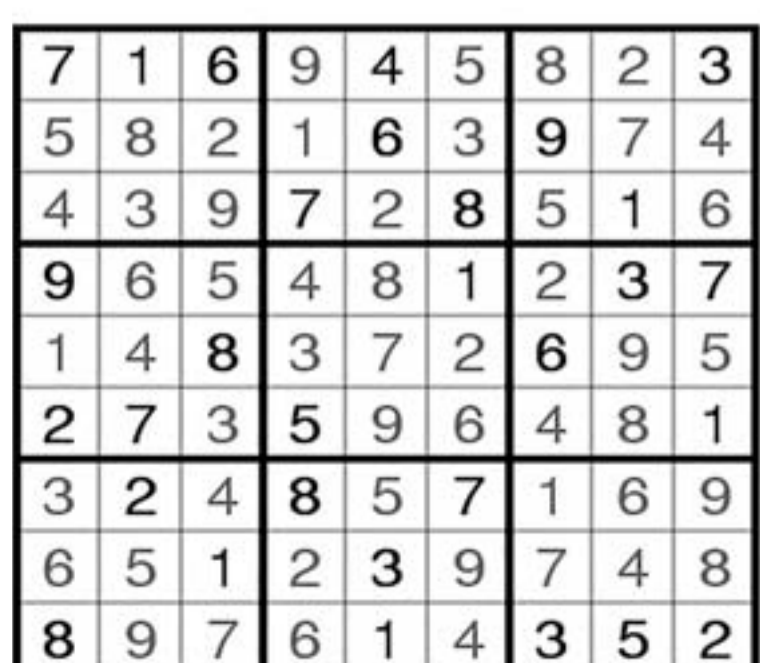
- ARCHERY, ATHLETICS, BADMINTON, BASKETBALL, BASKETBALL, BEACH VOLLEYBALL, BOXING, CANOEING, CYCLING, DIVING, EQUESTRIANISM, FENCING, FOOTBALL, GYMNASTICS, HANDBALL, HOCKEY, JUDO, MODERN PENTATHLON, RHYTHMIC GYMNASTICS, ROWING, SHOOTING, SOFTBALL, SWIMMING, SYNCHRONIZED SWIMMING, TABLE TENNIS, TAIKWONDO, TENNIS, TRIATHLON, TRAMPOLINE, VOLLEYBALL, WATER POLO, WEIGHTLIFTING, WRESTLING, YACHTING

The hidden sentence is: THE FIRST OLYMPIC GYMNAST TO ACHIEVE A PERFECT SCORE OF TEN WAS NADIA COMANECI

Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



# Lifestyle

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2019



A tourist takes photos inside an installation entitled 'A golden year' by Dog and Pony of Los Angeles, erected as part Lunar New Year festivities, at a shopping arcade in Hong Kong yesterday. — AFP

## Angelina Jolie visits Rohingya camp in Bangladesh

Hollywood superstar Angelina Jolie visited a Rohingya refugee camp in Bangladesh yesterday ahead of a new UN appeal for nearly one billion dollars to look after the refugee influx. After arriving in the South Asian nation, Jolie, a special envoy of the UN Refugee agency UNHCR, went straight to a camp in Teknaf near the Myanmar border to talk to some of the 720,000 Muslims who fled a military clampdown in the neighboring state in August 2017. The 43-year-old made no immediate public comment, but Cox's Bazar district deputy police chief Iqbal Hossain told AFP that Jolie will be visiting more camps on Tuesday.



US actress and humanitarian Angelina Jolie arrives at the airport in Cox's Bazar in southern Bangladesh yesterday. — AFP

Jolie is in Bangladesh to assess the humanitarian needs of the one million Rohingya in camps around the town of Cox's Bazar. She has previously met with displaced Rohingya while in Myanmar in July 2015 and in India in 2006. Bangladesh has been reeling since more than 730,000 Rohingya arrived from Myanmar after August 2017. More than 620,000 of the Muslims live in the Kutupalong camp, the world's largest refugee settlement. There were already about 300,000 in the camps before the exodus which has strained Bangladesh's resources to the limit.

Jolie will conclude her visit by meeting Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen, and other senior officials in Dhaka, a UNHCR statement said. The talks will focus on how the UNHCR can help Bangladesh's efforts for the Rohingya and the need for "sustainable solutions" to settle the persecuted minority, the statement added. The UN is to soon launch a new international appeal for \$920 million to meet the needs of Rohingya refugees and the communities hosting them, the refugee agency said. — AFP

## Myanmar's opium farmers cling on to lucrative crop

Fields of purple opium poppy stretch across the pastures and peaks of mountainous eastern Myanmar, with many farmers reluctant to give up the profitable cash crop in spite of incentives offered. Myanmar is the second biggest source of opium in the world after Afghanistan, with Shan state its main production hub. AFP hiked up the steep mountainside towering over the small town of Hopong, just a few dozen kilometers from tourist hotspot Inle Lake.

The farmland closest to the town boasts fields of coffee, potatoes and corn, and provides a lifeline for the scattered villages. But scale the ridge and the far side exposes a blanket of purple reaching up to an altitude of some 2,400 meters (8,000 feet). Each day men and women from the surrounding villages, home to the Pa-O and other Shan ethnic minority groups, take to the fields of the illegal flower. They harvest its addictive sap into cans that can fetch up to \$100 each, sums that far exceed the profits possible from other produce.

The fight has been on for decades to eradicate the drug's production, with a mixture of "carrot-and-stick" tactics. Anti-drugs police destroyed more than 600 hectares (1500 acres) of poppy fields in Hopong in the last year. Meanwhile, the government and NGOs have offered Myanmar farmers incentives to switch to other cash crops—with some success. In 2018, the area of opium poppy cultivation in the country dropped by 10 percent to 37,300 hectares from the previous year, according to the UN Office on Drugs and Crime.

The agency acknowledges, however, that this is partly due to a "strong shift" by drug gangs toward synthetic drugs, especially methamphetamine. For



Poppy buds at an illegal field in Hopong.



A poppy bud at an illegal field in Hopong, Myanmar's Shan State.

many farmers—among Myanmar's poorest people—their crop choice simply comes down to money. After trying to cultivate coffee, one farmworker, preferring not to be named, said he switched back to growing opium three years ago. "We know that it's not good for our country," he said, looking up from the opium poppy in his hand to survey the purple-shrouded mountainsides around him. "But we have no choice because it's very difficult to make a living from other crops." — AFP



A poppy flower at an illegal field in Hopong.



A farmer working at an illegal poppy field in Hopong, Myanmar Shan State.



A farmer working at an illegal poppy field in Hopong. — AFP photos



## Dido's son Stanley isn't named after Stan

**D**ido didn't name her son Stanley after her hit song with Eminem. The 'White Flag' hitmaker - who will release her first new album in five years, 'Still On My Mind', in March - gave birth to her little boy seven years ago, and had a number one in 12 countries with the track 'Stan', which features a remix of the lyrics from her song 'Thank You', in 2000. However, the 47-year-old star has insisted that the single didn't influence the choice of moniker for Stanley and revealed that her husband Rohan Gavin was also "bizarrely" keen on the name. Appearing on 'Lorraine' yesterday she said: "[He's] definitely Stanley [not Stan]. Nothing to do with the song. 'I know [everyone assumes it's to do with the song]. When I was a teenager, I was with my mate, I remember sitting on a wall, and they were like, 'What are you going to call your kid?' and I was like, 'Stanley'. Bizarrely, when I met my hus-

band, that was the name that was his favorite for different reasons." The song 'Stan' - which was voiced by the rap superstar - was actually about a character who was an over-obsessive fan of Eminem, and it's also believed to be the origin of the slang phrase to be a "stan" of a celebrity. Dido also appeared in the music video as Stan's pregnant girlfriend. The 47-year-old singer is set to embark on her first world tour in 15 years, and has admitted it feels a "little bit scary". She spilled: "Yes, I'm super excited. I haven't toured for 15 years. I didn't realize I'd left it quite that long ..." "I suddenly got that rush of, 'My gosh, I really miss this!' "Little bit scary. [The tour will be] all over the world." Meanwhile, the 'Life for Rent' hitmaker recently admitted that becoming a mother gave her the motivation to return to music. She said: "One day I thought: 'I'm going to write a song about having a kid then put it

to one side, get that out of my system, done.' "I'm really proud of it, it came out very naturally and it's just a little song about what it feels like for me to love someone in that way. "Then at that moment the floodgates opened, suddenly the world became full of songs again." The burst of creativity came after Dido struggled to connect with any of her material for a while. She explained: "After I had my son if I'm honest everything I wrote for a few years after that was rubbish. "I write about conflict and little moments of light and dark; but there was no conflict. I just loved him and there was nothing to say about that."

## Nile Rodgers & Chic announce second date at Hampton Court Palace

**N**ile Rodgers & Chic have added a second show at Hampton Court Palace Festival due to demand. The 'Le Freak' hitmakers - who recently released their first album in 25 years, 'It's About Time' - sold out their first date on June 14, and will now play a second concert at the 3,000 capacity Base Court - one of the Tudor courtyards in the stunning grounds of the historical landmark - on June 15. Caro Emerald will play the festival on June 12, jazz star Jools Holland performs on June 6, new-wave pioneers Tears For Fears on June 18 and 19, and pop legends The Jacksons on June 7. The extravaganza will be headlined by Kylie Minogue on June 20 and 21, for what will be the Australian pop princess' only London dates of the summer. Stephen Flint Wood - SVP & Managing Director of Arts & Entertainment, IMG - previously said: "We are absolutely delighted to announce Kylie Minogue as the first artist to perform at the 2019 Hampton Court Palace Festival. "Kylie will be making her debut at the Festival and have no doubt her shows will be truly special with a star of her magnitude performing in the idyllic setting of Hampton Court Palace. "Further announcements of world-class musical talent will be announced in the coming weeks." Tickets for the second Nile Rodgers & Chic concert on June 15 will go on general sale at 10am next Thursday.



## YUNGBLUD ANNOUNCES AUTUMN TOUR

**Y**ungblud has announced a European tour in the autumn. The 21-year-old singer - who is dating 'Without You' hitmaker Halsey - sold out most of his dates in the UK in March, and his new run will see him play his biggest headline show to date in the British capital at London's O2 Academy Brixton on November 21. The extensive tour kicks off in Amsterdam on October 27, and wraps at Sheffield's O2 Academy on November 29. The alternative star released the single 'Loner' last month, and revealed the music video for the song was directed by himself and was shot at his grandmother's house in Doncaster. The rocker - whose real name is Dominic Harrison - filmed

his promo in this location as he wanted it to be a "reflection of where [he's] from" and so he can always remember that he owes his fame to his fans. He said: "I created this track because it's a reflection of where I'm from and who I am. I wanted to invite my fans and people who might not know me yet into my front room and to have a cup of tea with them. I wanted to show them what Dom looks like going to get a glass of water at 2am. "At the end of the day, I needed to tell myself no matter what happens or how far this thing goes, that I am just a 21-year-old kid from the north of England who has been put in this position by his fans. If I ever forget that I'm in dangerous water." The 'Psychotic Kids' singer went on to explain that although he wanted the video to demonstrate his roots, it was also to show how "alone" he's felt "his whole life", even though he was surrounded by family and friends. He said: "We shot the video in my Nan's house, with my mates from school and also in the venue I played my first shows in. "The track reflects how alone I felt my whole life no matter how many people seemed to be around me."



## THE 1975 TO RELEASE MORE NEW MUSIC SOON

**T**he 1975 are "working hard" to get a new song released soon. The 'Somebody Else' hitmakers' manager, Jamie Osborne, has revealed that Matt Healy and co could release a single before the end of February, from their next album 'Notes On A Conditional Form'. When a Twitter user asked: "Is it true that The 1975 have a single out this month?", the Dirty Hit record label boss replied: "We are working hard to get new music ready yes xxx not sure about this month will depend if it's ready. Xx (sic)" Matty recently admitted he wants their next record to be their 'Nebraska'. The frontman said Bruce Springsteen's iconic 1982 LP - which was made up of demos he'd recorded without the E Street Band - has been a big influence on the group's upcoming release, which will act as the follow-up to 'A Brief Inquiry into Online Relationships'. He said: "When I was making the last record that wasn't trying to make a particular thing. Of course, at times, I wanted to make [My Bloody Valentine's] 'Loveless' of course, or at times I wanted to make 'OK Computer' - there were all these types of things. [Coltrane's] 'Blue Train'. "On this record you can hear that at times I want to make my 'Nebraska' [Bruce Springsteen's sparsest album] or I want to make my 'Immunity' by Jon Hopkins. I'd like it to be a moment-in-time record like a 'Nebraska.' " The band's fourth album is set to be released in May - just six months after its predecessor - but Matty insisted fans can expect very different content. He explained: "No, what I've realized is

it's never going to be a continuation or an association with 'A Brief Inquiry'. It's a completely different record. "Six months now is the same as what three years was before. Think about the amount of s\*\*t that happens in six months' time. It will be a different thing and a different time."



## Danny Jones working on new solo material

**D**anny Jones plans to release new solo material this year. The McFly star has revealed he's been working in the studio on songs after he sold out his debut solo gig at London's O2 Shepherd's Bush Empire last year, and following the release of his solo single 'Is This Still Love', and he hopes to have them ready in time for when he 'The Voice Kids UK' returns this summer. Danny - who joined the children's version ITV's spinning chair talent show alongside will.i.am and Pixie Lott - told the Daily Star newspaper: "I went back through a little management change but hopefully June/July I will release. "I've got two songs flying the flag and from the gig I did I got instant research it, so I'm trying to I'm trying to write more like that. "Hopefully, by the time of 'The Voice', I will have some more songs." The 32-year-old musician's solo sessions have acted as his way of dealing with the affects of his father walking out on his family when he was 18. He explained: "When we had our year off from the 15 years of madness, I started writing for The People and then all this stuff I've not dealt with like mum and dad's breakdown in their relationship. "And I was like: "These can't be for anyone else." "These have to be for me so that's why I started doing solo things." Danny also co-wrote the song 'Don't Know Why' on his band's album 'Wonderland' with his sisters Vicky. And the band's track 'The Ballad of Paul K', was based on his and bandmate Dougie Poynter's experiences of broken families. Meanwhile, Danny - who is also joined by Tom Fletcher and Harry Judd in the group - also revealed that he secretly released music under the name TRAVI and has worked with chart-topping DJ Sigala on a project. He said: "I had this project with Bruce/Sigala before. "And then I had this thing called TRAVI and I released this dance song called Bang on Spotify. "I've let you in on a secret now." McFly have been on an extended hiatus since 2016, but bassist Dougie recently teased the band are working on their first album in nine years. The 'Love Is On The Radio' hitmakers haven't released an album since 2010's 'Above The Noise', and after the long wait left fans unsure about their future, he confirmed the group will "at least start writing" new tracks this year. He said: "McFly will at least start writing by the summer and I can't wait. I love that band and I love the guys. It's awesome."



## Richards wants to collaborate with Dion

**C**laire Richards says her dream collaboration would be with Celine Dion. The Steps star has just released her debut solo album 'My Wildest Dreams' but she is already thinking about new musical projects and admits she would love to get in the studio with her idol, and she hopes to get the chance to pitch for a duet when she supports the 'My Heart Will Go On' hitmaker at her Barclaycard presents British Summer Time Hyde Park 2019 concert in July. Speaking exclusively to BANG Showbiz, Claire said: "I am gonna be supporting Celine Dion in Hyde Park in July. She is one of my absolute idols and as daunting as that might be she would be amazing to sing

with." Also at the top of Claire's wish list for duets is Michael Buble because she just loves his singing style. She said: "Michael Buble too, I love his voice. I'd love to sing with him. Anybody that can really belt out a good tune would be great." Steps reunited in 2017 for a tour and new album 'Tears on the Dancefloor' and will be following up that LP with a new record. When Claire, 41, told her bandmates, Faye Tozer, Lisa Scott-Lee, Ian 'H' Watkins and Lee Latchford-Evans she was working on a solo album they were all super supportive. She said: "They were and have been really supportive and kind of excited because they know it's something I've wanted to do for ages. I think I've been telling them for years, as well as everybody else! They were great and have been great and H sent me a photograph of his pre-order confirmation the other day, bless him!" Claire's latest single is 'Shame On You' and she insists it was one of the songs she definitely wanted included on the tracklist because it is an empowering anthem for women. She said: "I loved this song, I wanted to put a couple of up tempos on the album. It's quite an empowering 'I'm in charge' kind of song and that's what I really liked about it. As well as being a quite up-tempo dancey song the lyrics are not just a rubbish throwaway kind of thing."



## Lady Gaga and Cooper to perform at Oscars

**L**ady Gaga and Bradley Cooper will perform 'Shallow' at the Oscars. The Academy has confirmed that the pair - who star as lovers Ally and Jackson Maine in the movie - will sing the Oscar-nominated song at the ceremony on February 24. A simple message posted on The Academy's Twitter account reads: "Cooper. Gaga. 'Shallow.' #Oscars." It was previously claimed that only two of the Best Original Song nominees would perform at the ceremony but The Academy has now confirmed that at least four of the nominees will be represented. Messages on the Twitter account stated: "Things we'd like to announce today: 1. @IAMJHUD will perform the nominated song 'I'll Fight' on the #Oscars! 2. This has been our favorite tweet of the day. "Spoiler Alert: 'The Place

Where Lost Things Go' from 'Mary Poppins Returns' will be performed on the #Oscars. BONUS SPOILER ALERT: It will be performed by a surprise special guest! "Time to update your Songs That Will Be Performed On This Year's Oscars Playlist: We're excited to welcome @GillianWelch and David Rawlings to the #Oscars stage to sing 'When a Cowboy Trades His Spurs for Wings' from 'The Ballad of Buster Scruggs' (sic)". While it has yet to be confirmed, it is also believed that Kendrick Lamar and SZA's 'All the Stars' will also be performed. Last week Gaga and Cooper performed 'Shallow' together for the first time since the movie in a surprise reunion at Gaga's Enigma show in Las Vegas.



Lifestyle | Gossip

# PRATT PROMISES FANS A THIRD GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY FILM

**C**hris Pratt has assured fans there will be a third installment in the 'Guardians of the Galaxy' franchise. The future of 'Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 3' has been unclear following director-and-writer James Gunn being fired from the Marvel Cinematic Universe movie by bosses at Disney following the emergence of old Twitter posts he made in which he joked about topics such as rape and child abuse. Although Gunn has penned a script for the third film a new director is yet to be found, but Pratt - who plays Star-Lord in the movies - has "promised" there will be a new chapter in the superhero sci-fi franchise but he

doesn't know "exactly what that's going to look like". Speaking to Variety, the 'Jurassic World' star said: "I promise there'll be a third movie, I don't know exactly what that's going to look like, but I know everyone on board is just eager to give the fans what they want and wrap up a trilogy in a meaningful way." Last year, Adam McKay confirmed that he was in talks with Marvel Studios president Kevin Feige about the possibility of helming the movie but didn't say whether he will take on the role or not. 'Vice' filmmaker McKay previously said: "We've talked a little bit. Yeah. We were kicking around the idea of the Inhumans at one point. We're always kind

of talking. I think Feige is just the greatest and I think what they're doing is amazing." Although Gunn, 52, won't be working on 'Guardians of the Galaxy' again he has been in talks to direct DC Comics' upcoming 'Suicide Squad' sequel after it was previously revealed he was writing the script for the flick. The movie is also said to have been given the title, 'The Suicide Squad', and it looks likely to be a reboot of sorts, rather than a direct sequel. Warner Bros have penned the film in for an August 2021 release.



## Stone 'begged' Lanthimos for role in The Favorite

**E**mma Stone "basically begged" Yorgos Lanthimos for her role in 'The Favorite'. The 30-year-old actress plays Abigail Masham in the comedy biopic, the penniless cousin of Lady Sarah Churchill, played by Rachel Weisz, who arrives at Hampton Court in 1904 and battle's her relative to become a confidante of Olivia Colman's Queen Anne. The award-winning movie was directed by acclaimed filmmaker Yorgos, who was responsible for the 2015 dystopian thriller 'The Lobster', and Emma has revealed the director "never considered" an American actress for the part before meeting the 'Easy A' star and she pleaded her case. In an interview with Vogue, she said: "I was getting ready to do 'La La Land', Yorgos was like, 'I'd never considered meeting an American for the part,' so I basically begged." Emma has nothing but praise for the "crazy and funny and dark" world that Yorgos created with such strong female characters. She said: "How is it possible that there's all three of these women in one story? So crazy and funny and dark." Emma herself has been praised by Olivia, 45, for her work in the movie and her qualities as a person, saying: "Emma will remain. I hope, a lifelong friend." Olivia won the Best Actress in a Motion Picture Comedy or Musical Golden Globe for her performance as the British monarch and she is up for the Best Actress Oscar too at the upcoming Academy Awards. Emma and Rachel are competing against one another for the Best Supporting Actress Oscar for their respective roles and Yorgos is up for Best Director. 'The Favorite' is up for a total of 10 accolades at the 91st Academy Awards ceremony which takes place at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles on February 24.

## Berlinger defends Ted Bundy biopic

**J**oe Berlinger has rubbished claims that his Ted Bundy biopic glorifies the serial killer. The director of 'Extremely Wicked Shockingly Evil and Vile' - who also directed Netflix's recent hit docu-series 'The Ted Bundy Tapes' - has defended his upcoming film amid criticism of its portrayal of the murderer, who charmed his 30 or more female victims before killing them in the 1970s. He told Bustle: "I think the idea of this particular story, making a movie about Bundy, equals glorification of him is a very naive and knee-jerk reaction. "Because if you actually watch the movie, the last thing we're doing is glorifying him. He gets his due at the end, but we're portraying the experience of how one becomes a victim to that kind of psychopathic seduction." The crime movie stars Zac Efron as the magnetic killer and chronicles the crimes of Ted from the perspective of his long-time girlfriend Elizabeth Kloepfer, played by Lily Collins, who refused to believe the truth about him for years. Joe, 57, defended the work, saying there should be "no censoring of subject matter". However, he also acknowledged that creating the film and "making entertainment out of other people's tragedy" is in itself morally questionable. He said: "I am highly aware of the hypocrisy that I myself participate in, about the nature of true crime film-making is that, at the end of the day, we're making entertainment out of other people's tragedy. "I think there should be no censoring of subject matter, if it's done responsibly. And even if it's done irresponsibly, people have the right to tell any story they want to tell."



## Creature from the Black Lagoon actress Julie Adams dies

**C**reature from the Black Lagoon' star Julie Adams has died at the age of 92. The American actress - who was born Betty May Adams on October 17, 1926 - passed away on Sunday in Los Angeles following her eight-decade spanning career which included her unforgettable performance as damsel in distress Kay Lawrence in Universal's iconic 1954 monster movie. 'Creature from the Black Lagoon' tells the story of a group of scientists who disturb a strange amphibious prehistoric beast lurking in the depths of the Amazonian jungle who they want to capture. The creature - known as Gill-Man - embarks on a murder spree and attempts to kidnap Kay after falling in love with her but is repeatedly shot and fought off by the film's heroes. A post on her official Facebook page read: "We are sad to report that Julie Adams passed away Sunday, February 3rd in Los Angeles, CA at the age of 92. In a career that spanned eight decades, she appeared in fifty films and hundreds of television episodes. She also starred in more than a dozen plays. She was a wonderful actress, mother and grandmother. She cherished her fans and was delighted that so many were enchanted by her performance in CFTBL - and numerous other projects. Her book 'The Lucky Southern Star' is enjoyed by film enthusiasts around the world. She is in heaven with the angels now, and she will live in our hearts forever." As well as her most famous role as a scream queen in 'Creature from the Black Lagoon', Adams was a regular on film and television with notable performances in 'Crooked River', 'The Treasure of the Lost Canyon', 'Capitol', 'The Mississippi Gambler', 'The Private War of Major Benson' and TV series 'Murder, She Wrote', in which she played Eve Simpson for 10 episodes over six years. A major Hollywood pin-up at the height of her career, Universal Studios once declared Adams' legs "the most perfectly symmetrical in the world" and insured them for \$125,000 as a publicity stunt for their contracted star. The legacy of 'Creature from the Black Lagoon' continues today as the flick was the inspiration for Guillermo del Toro's 2017 four-time Oscar-winning film 'The Shape of Water', which told the love story between



Sally Hawkins' mute cleaner Elisa Esposito and the mysterious Amphibian Man who is being experimented on at a secret government laboratory. The 53-year-old Mexican filmmaker was obsessed with Jack Arnold's creature feature as a child but unlike most viewers he always wanted Adams' alter ego Kay Lawrence to fall in love with Gill-Man. Previously speaking to BANG Showbiz, he said: "For me as a kid, at age six, I watched 'Creature from the Black Lagoon' and I always hoped they would get together. But that was impossible. So it has taken 57 years to remedy that!"

## Disney reportedly working on two Zootopia sequels

**D**isney are reportedly working on two 'Zootopia' sequels. Tommy 'Tiny' Lister - who voiced fennec fox Finnick in the animation - has claimed that the movie, which won Best Animated Feature at the Oscars in 2017, is set to become a trilogy with Walt Disney's Animated Studios reportedly throwing millions at the franchise. Lister spoke at a fan event in Ontario, Canada, recently, where he claimed: "I can tell you for sure I'm doing another 'Zootopia' with Disney. We doing three of them. [There were] three 'Madagascars'. "We're gonna replace that. We're the biggest film that Disney is producing. "The last one was \$240 million. "This one I'm hearing will be \$300 million. "That's what they spent on the budget, not the advertising. But the movie made \$2.6 billion, with merchandising and the box office." The first movie was directed by Byron Howard and Rich Moore and raked in over a billion dollars at the box office. The original movie reimagines a world in which humans have never existed, and starred Jason Bateman as friendly fox Nick Wilde and 'Once Upon A Time' actress Ginnifer Goodwin as Lieutenant Judy Hopps. The all-star cast also featured the likes of Shakira, Idris Elba, Kristen Bell and Octavia Spencer. A Zootopia land was recently announced for the Shanghai Disneyland in China, proving that the much-loved animation is still popular. There is no word yet on when the sequels would begin filming and whether or not the original cast would be returning. Disney are yet to comment on Lister's comments.



## Toy Story 4 teaser introduces new characters

**A** new 'Toy Story 4' teaser has introduced two new characters. The latest trailer for the much-anticipated Disney movie was aired following the Super Bowl on Sunday and revealed the identity of the new characters, Bunny and Duckie, who are voiced by 'Key & Peele' stars Jordan Peele and Keegan-Michael Key. The toys are introduced to the franchise as prizes to be won at a carnival, where Buzz Lightyear - who is played by Tim Allen - and Woody - played by Tom Hanks - are planning to meet. The trailer also harks back to the original 'Toy Story' movie from 1995, opening with Randy Newman's song 'You've Got a Friend in Me'. And the first shot is of Woody and Bo Peep searching for Buzz at the carnival. The teaser features a humorous exchange between Buzz and the new characters, before ending with the movie's official release date - June 21 - appearing on screen. Disney previously revealed that the upcoming movie will focus on Woody's relationship with Bo. A synopsis read: "Woody has always been confident about his place in the world, and that his priority is taking care of his kid, whether that's Andy or Bonnie. "So when Bonnie's beloved new craft-project-turned-toy, Forky (Tony Hale), declares himself as 'trash' and not a toy, Woody takes it upon himself to show Forky why he should embrace being a toy. "But when Bonnie takes the whole gang on her family's road trip excursion, Woody ends up on an unexpected detour that includes a reunion with his long-lost friend Bo Peep."



## Daniel Day-Lewis ignored Richard E Grant



**D**aniel Day-Lewis refused to "acknowledge" Richard E. Grant for "three months". The 'Can You Ever Forgive Me?' actor felt like he owed his success to the Oscar-winning star because he landed his career-making role in 'Withnail and I' after Daniel turned down the part of Withnail, but his gratitude when they worked together on 'The Age of Innocence' five years later was met with a minimal response. Recalling how he threw himself to Daniel's feet, Richard said: "I said, 'Oh Daniel, I owe you my career.' And he said, 'Arise!' "Then he didn't acknowledge me for the next three months because his character hated my character and he's a method actor. "Michelle Pfeiffer said to me, 'It's nothing that you've done personally - this is the way he works.' " Richard is up for the Best Supporting Actor Oscar for his role in 'Can You Ever Forgive Me?'. However, the 62-year-old star is comfortable with the fact he's expecting 'Green Book' star Mahershala Ali to take the honor. He told Event magazine: "I'm in the honeymoon period right now. When you haven't yet been told that it's not you. So I'm enjoying the ride, for as long as it lasts." Despite his busy career, the 'Spice World' star always tried to be around for his wife Joan and their daughter Olivia as much as possible. He said: "I've attempted to keep a rule: never to be away for more than three weeks. "If I was working in other parts of Europe, I would fly back at the weekend. More often than not, I was one of the few fathers who was at the school gate to pick her up. I've asked her if she ever felt that I wasn't present and she said, 'What are you talking about? I am grateful for that.'" — Bang Showbiz



In this file photo US rapper 21 Savage attends the 2018 MTV Video Music Awards at Radio City Music Hall in New York City. — AFP

## OFFICIALS ARREST RAPPER 21 SAVAGE SAYING HE IS IN US ILLEGALLY

Rapper 21 Savage, who has long said he is from the US state of Georgia, was detained on Sunday by US immigration officers who say he is actually British and overstayed his visa. The news sent shockwaves through social media as the Grammy-nominated 26-year-old rapper whose real name is Sha Yaa Bin Abraham Joseph says he is local act from Atlanta, the capital of hip hop. “We are working diligently to get Mr. Abraham-Joseph out of detention while we work with the authorities to clear up any misunderstandings,” the rapper’s lawyer, Dina LaPolt, said in a statement to AFP.

US Immigration and Customs Enforcement spokesman Bryan Cox told the local Atlanta Journal-Constitution outlet that 21 Savage is an “unlawfully present United Kingdom national” who entered the United States in 2005 on a visa that expired one year later. The US agency also told the paper he had been arrested and later convicted for felony drug charges in 2014 — but at the time, ICE was unaware that he was in fact British. According to the paper 21 Savage was arrested in a “targeted operation.” The artist, known for his conversational rap delivery and

no-nonsense sincerity, released his debut studio album in 2017. His lyrics touch on everything from drugs and violence to systemic racism and police brutality. His sophomore album, “I Am > I Was” debuted at the top of the Billboard 200 in December 2018, holding the number one spot for two consecutive weeks. The rapper is up next week for two Grammys for his work on fellow rapper Post Malone’s smash hit “Rockstar,” including for the major Record of the Year award. — AFP

In a remote northern corner of Saudi Arabia sit the relics of an ancient civilization, which the kingdom hopes to turn into a global tourism destination as it tries to open up to the world and diversify its economy away from oil. Backed by billions of dollars in state-led investment and a French cultural partnership, the authorities expect Al-Ula and its majestic rock-hewn tombs of Madain Saleh could eventually attract millions of visitors, local and foreign alike.

That is generating excitement in the kingdom, while upending a superstition among many Saudis — and long-backed by religious edicts — that the area is haunted by jinn, the malevolent spirits of the Koran and Arabian mythology, and must be avoided. Al-Ula’s development is part of a push to preserve pre-Islamic heritage sites in order to attract non-Muslim tourists, strengthen national identity and temper the austere strain of Sunni Islam that has dominated Saudi Arabia for decades.

Madain Saleh, a UNESCO World Heritage site located there, is a 2,000-year-old city carved into desert rocks by the Nabateans, the pre-Islamic Arab people that also built Petra in neighboring Jordan. Elaborately carved multi-storey facades with epigraphs inscribed into the red sandstone give way to internal chambers where bodies were once laid to rest. At night, stars twinkle in the vast desert sky.

Superstition about the site can be traced back to a hadith, or saying attributed to the Prophet Mohammad, warning Muslims not to enter “unless you are crying ... lest you suffer the affliction” of its people, said to have perished for their sins. While interpretation of that passage is nowadays contested, Saudi state-backed clerics had referenced it for years. In 2012, one of them ruled that Al-Ula should be opened to the public, but even years later a school in the area was temporarily closed after students sighted jinn, local media reported.

### ‘Just getting started’

During a media tour, residents refused to speak about the area’s reputation for being jinxed, instead focusing on opportunities to make money and welcome visitors. Locals are planning to open restaurants and shops, and a few hundred young people have been sent abroad to study hospitality. As conservative Saudi Arabia loosens social restrictions, some of the tour guides in Al-Ula will be women.

“The local community is peaceful, educated and hospitable,” said resident Talal Al-Fajir. “The crown prince ... has paved the way for the entire world to visit us and see the huge civilizations in our region. We are just getting started.” In Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman’s headlong push to transform Saudi Arabia’s economy and society, Al-Ula has gained prominence.

He has ridden dune buggies through its sands and invited Western investors and celebrities for helicopter tours of the area, which abuts NEOM, the \$500-billion mega-city he wants to build along the Red Sea. Plans to admit tourists to Saudi Arabia have been discussed for years but have not come to fruition due to sluggish bureaucracy and concern over conservative sentiment. International outcry over the murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi by Saudi agents last October may give some potential tourists pause, but calls for Western performers to boycott the kingdom have not caught on.

## Saudi antiquities site, long seen as haunted, tries to woo visitors



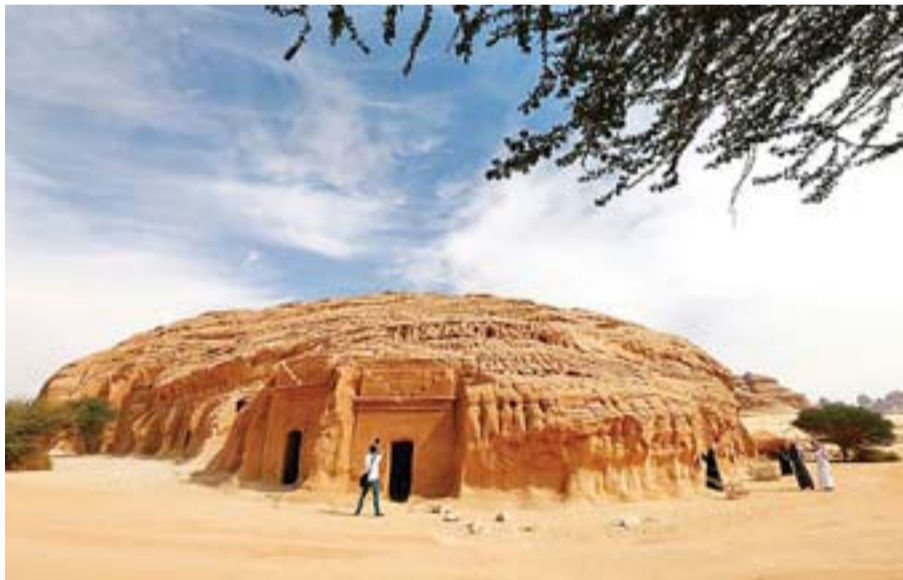
Rock shaped like an elephant is seen near the city of Al-Ula, Saudi Arabia.



Rock shaped like an elephant is seen near the city of Al-Ula, Saudi Arabia.

Many of the visitors to al-Ula during an ongoing winter music festival are VIPs or well-heeled guests, with ticket prices reaching several thousand dollars. Visas were arranged on an ad hoc basis. Riyadh native Dana Daham visited last month with friends, taking a train from Jeddah to Medina and then a 300-km (180-mile) car ride. “We didn’t expect it to be this magnificent. We keep hearing stories from people but this is way more than we thought it would be,” she said. “It’s amazing, it’s beautiful. So much history, so much going on.”

The weekend she visited featured a concert by the hologram of the late Egyptian diva Umm Kulthum. Italian tenor Andrea Bocelli performed a few days later and Greek singer Yanni is also expected, alongside Arab stars such as Kadam Al-Safer and Mohamed Abdo. — Reuters

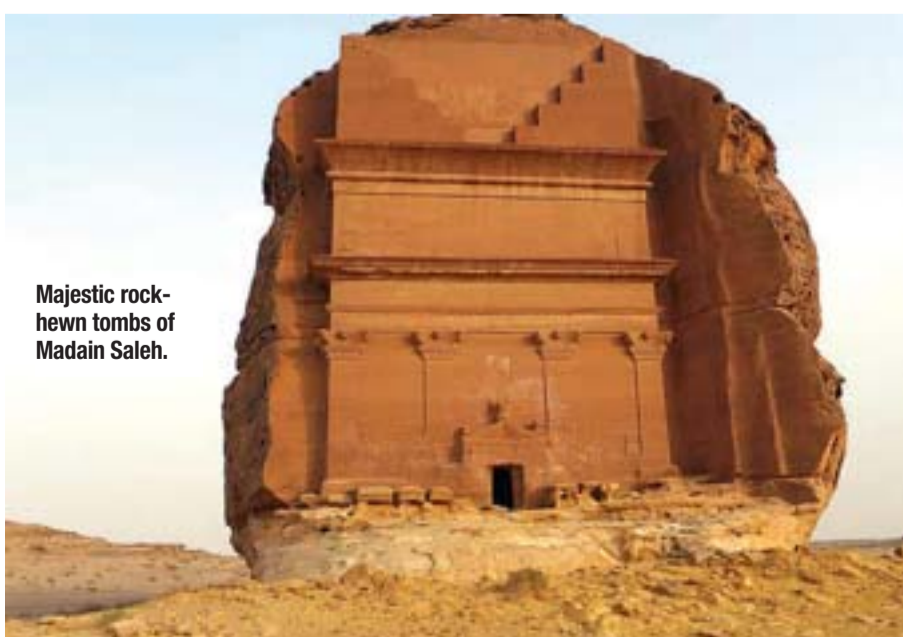


Majestic rock-hewn tombs of Madain Saleh.



Visitors tour at majestic rock-hewn tombs of Madain Saleh near the city of Al-Ula, Saudi Arabia.

Visitors tour at majestic rock-hewn tombs of Madain Saleh near the city of Al-Ula, Saudi Arabia. — Reuters photos



Majestic rock-hewn tombs of Madain Saleh.



Majestic rock-hewn tombs of Madain Saleh.

## Health &amp; Science

# Hong Kongers divided over city's emboldened wild boars

## Politicians propose to legalize hunting, relocating pigs

**HONG KONG:** As Hong Kong prepares to celebrate the Year of the Pig, the city is facing its own peculiar porcine pickle—a furious debate about what to do with its growing and emboldened wild boar population. Best known for its densely packed skyscrapers, Hong Kong also boasts large tracts of subtropical mountains and parkland that host a thriving number of Eurasian wild pigs. And increasingly humans and pigs are meeting face to snout.

Boars have been filmed running alongside vehicles on roads, jogging down beaches filled with sunbathers, sniffing the tarmac at the city's international airport—and even falling through the ceiling of a children's clothing store. Easy pickings from rubbish bins and open air barbecue pits as well as humans deliberately feeding them have enticed the wild animals to leave their trotter prints across a growing swathe of the concrete jungle.

The situation has some people rattled. "They are dangerous to pedestrians as they rush down the hill. They pose threats to the older and the weak, hazards to traffic and hikers," local councillor Chan Chit-kwai, who wants to see steps taken to reduce the wild boar population, told AFP. "It's not as easy as those people saying we can all just live in peace," he added.

City authorities say the number of sightings and nuisance reports caused by boars has more than doubled, from 294 for all of 2013 to 679 for the January to October period last year. Injuries have been reported. In October, two elderly people were bitten by a wild boar near a public estate while four months earlier two people needed stitches after they were attacked near the University of Hong Kong, local media reported.

The city's Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) is now considering euthanizing "high risk" wild boars that are deemed aggressive or have a record of attacking humans. "In those cases, we would use drugs to euthanize the wild pigs," conservation officer Cheung Ka Shing told reporters. The agency has also sterilized 54 wild pigs who regularly appear near urban areas and relocated 92 others to more remote locations.

Some local politicians have proposed more active measures such as introducing predators, legalizing hunting and even relocating pigs to an uninhabited island—the latter idea getting short shrift given pigs can swim.

### Not scared

But many balk at harming the boars. Near the entrance to Aberdeen Country Park on the main island, a wild boar family of three is snoozing under warm sunlight—a trio of elderly Hong Kong residents playing cards just a few meters away. "I'm not scared. As long as you don't poke them or throw things at them, it will be fine," said 73-year-old Mr Fung, one of the card-players said.

"They have made the Aberdeen country park an attraction," explained another park regular, 70-year-old Mr Lai, who said he encounters boars often while hiking. "As long as you don't attack them, they won't offend you. It's too brutal to kill them," he added. The AFCD said they do not have an estimate of the total population of wild pigs in Hong Kong but country park camera surveys have recorded an increase in number and a wider spread than 20 years ago.

Experts say the wild boars' diet is 90 percent plant based and that they have no need to be fed by humans, who they would normally avoid. "They shouldn't come to people for food, nor to attack. Their aggressive behavior would be an act of self-defense," said Chan Po Lam, a wetland and fauna conservation officer at the AFCD. In the Aberdeen park a banner warns visitors not to feed wild animals.

But some ignore it. During AFP's visit a man scattered pieces of white bread on the grass, soon drawing a thankful boar from the bush. "I believe people feed wild animals out of kindness, but it encourages them to hang out in human communities more often," said Chan. Veronique Che, from the Hong Kong Wild Boar Concern Group, says the animals shouldn't be blamed for being more visible given the urban sprawl increasingly encroaches on their natural habitat. "Many problems related to wild boars are actually created by humans," she said.



**HONG KONG:** In this picture, a group of men play a game at a table as a wild boar walks past in Hong Kong's Aberdeen Park. — AFP photos

Just down the road from Aberdeen Country Park is a public housing estate with residents waiting for buses on a narrow winding roadside. The local boars have burrowed under a metal fence separating the forest from the housing estate to look in the rubbish bins for food. As a group of

boars appeared, locals took photos on their phones while children greeted their hairy neighbors with excited "oink" noises. "There should be harmony between human and wild boars," Che said. "Humans shouldn't treat wild boars as threats, nor as pets." — AFP

## Stark warning on melting Himalayan glaciers

**KATHMANDU:** Two-thirds of Himalayan glaciers, the world's "Third Pole", could melt by 2100 if global emissions are not reduced, scientists warned in a major new study issued Monday. And even if the "most ambitious" Paris Agreement goal of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius is achieved, one-third of the glaciers would go, according to the Hindu Kush Himalaya Assessment.

Glaciers in the Hindu Kush-Himalaya (HKH) region are a critical water source for some 250 million people in the mountains as well as to 1.65 billion others in the river valleys below, the report said. The glaciers feed 10 of the world's most important river systems, including the Ganges, Indus, Yellow, Mekong and Irrawaddy, and directly or indirectly supply billions of people with food, energy, clean air and income.

Impacts on people from their melting will range from worsened air pollution to more extreme weather, while lower pre-monsoon river flows will throw urban water systems and food and energy production off-kilter, the study warned. As the glaciers shrink, hundreds of risky glacial lakes that could burst and unleash floods have formed in the foothills of the mountains, which include giants



**KATHMANDU:** This file picture shows a view of the Lirung Glacier in the Lantang Valley, some 60km northwest of Kathmandu. — AFP

such as Everest and K2. The new report was published by the Kathmandu-based International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) in Nepal, one of eight countries on the front line. Five years in the making, it involved more than 350 researchers and policy experts, 185 organizations, 210 authors, 20 review editors and 125 external reviewers.

"Global warming is on track to transform the

frigid, glacier-covered mountain peaks... cutting across eight countries to bare rocks in a little less than a century," Philippus Wester of ICIMOD, who led the report, said in a statement. "This is the climate crisis you haven't heard of." The region would require up to \$4.6 billion per year by 2030 to adapt to climate change, rising to as much as \$7.8 billion per year by 2050, according to an estimate in the report. — AFP

## Scientists use drones to monitor whale health

**SYDNEY:** "Thar she blows!" The old cry of sailors sighting a whale's waterspout is taking on new meaning as scientists turn to drones, or unmanned aerial vehicles, to gather samples of the fluids exhaled by the huge mammals and track their health. Marine researcher Vanessa Pirotta of Sydney's Macquarie University, says a drone has been used for the first time to collect whale mucus from humpback whales at sea in a technique that could help monitor the health of whales around the world.

"We're collecting...that visible plume of spray rising from the whale's blowhole, as they come to the surface to breathe," she said. Television. "This approach may ultimately enable a better understanding of the patterns and drivers of disease emergence in wild populations," Pirotta and eight co-authors say in a paper published

in an online open-access journal, *Viruses*. The scientists collected whale blow samples from 19 humpback whales during the 2017 annual northward migration from Antarctica to northern Australia, they added. The spray is collected in a petri dish attached to the top of a quadcopter drone, with a flip-lid opened by the craft's pilot as the drone flies above the whale.

The method is less invasive than using a boat to get close and collecting samples on a pole, Pirotta said, and represents an advance over past techniques that depended on samples from stranded whales or those killed for the purpose. The whale spray collected by a drone contains DNA, proteins, lipids and types of bacteria. "We can collect bacteria, in my case, to look at the types of bacteria living in whale lungs for an assessment of whale health," Pirotta said. In this way, drones serve as an early-warning detection system to monitor potential changes in whales' health. "We can adapt this method to other whale populations around the world not doing so well, like the North Atlantic right whale," Pirotta added. An international ban on whaling took effect in 1986, but Japan, which says eating whale is part of its culture, last year said it would resume commercial whaling from July in its waters and exclusive economic zone. — Reuters



**SYDNEY:** A humpback whale breaches the coast at Clovelly Beach in Sydney, Australia. — Reuters

## Obesity-linked cancers on the rise in young adults

**PARIS:** A sharp increase in the rate of obesity-linked cancers among young adults in the United States could foreshadow a reversal in the overall decline in cancer mortality, researchers warned yesterday. In a sweeping study covering two-thirds of the US population, they showed that half a dozen cancers for which obesity is a known risk factor became more frequent from 1995 to 2015 among women and men under 50. The younger the age bracket, the more quickly these cancers gained ground, they reported in *The Lancet*, a medical journal. During the period examined, the incidence of pancreatic cancer, for example, increased by about one percent per year for adults aged 45 to 49. Among 30 to 34-year-olds, the average annual percent increase was more than twice that high. And among 25 to 29-year-olds, the rate jumped by 4.4 percent per year.

Comparing five-year age brackets from 25 to 80, the annual hike was similarly highest among the 25 to 29 cohort for four other obesity-linked cancers: kidney (6.23 percent), gallbladder (3.71 percent), uterine, and colon. "Our findings expose a recent change that could serve as a warning of an increased burden of obesity-related cancers to come in older adults," said co-author Ahmedin Jemal of the American Cancer Society, USA. Obesity has more than doubled in the United States over the last four decades.

### Mortality could rise

It has also risen sharply in other rich nations and, more recently, the developing world. Today, some two billion people are overweight or obese. With few exceptions, cancer has been seen as a disease of ageing. Indeed, the researchers note that the number of new cancer cases reported remains much higher in older age brackets, even if the rate of increase is now highest among young adults.

Two pancreatic cancer cases, for example, were diagnosed among every 100,000 24 to 49-year-olds from 2010 to 2014, compared to 37 cases for every 100,000 people aged 50 to 84. Overall, the number of people in the United States who succumb to cancer has declined. From 1980 to 2014 — when cancer claimed some 20 million lives—mortality dropped by 20 percent, from 240 to 192 deaths per 100,000 people, due in part to reduced tobacco use.

"But in the future, obesity could reverse that progress," Jemal cautioned. "Obesity is now one of the most preventable causes of cancer in the US and UK—around 1 in 12 cases in the US are caused by excess weight, and more than 1 in 20 in the UK." Building on earlier research suggesting a link between obesity and more frequent colon cancers in young adults, Jemal and colleagues analyzed all cancer cases from 1995 to 2015 in 25 US states home to 67 percent of the population. — AFP

## Henkel launches 'Alliance to End Plastic Waste'

**G**lobal challenges need global solutions — this is why nearly 30 companies from the plastics and consumer goods value chain today launched the new "Alliance to End Plastic Waste" (AEPW). The Alliance will develop and bring to scale solutions that will minimize and manage plastic waste. It will also promote solutions for used plastics by helping to enable a circular economy. Building on its existing efforts for sustainability and its commitment for a circular economy, Henkel joined the Alliance as one of the founding members.

"As a global consumer goods and industrial company, we at Henkel want to contribute to ending plastic waste. Developing sustainable solutions for this challenge will only be possible if we engage and collaborate across the entire value chain — from suppliers, trade partners, consumers and organizations through to governments," says Hans Van Bylen, Henkel CEO and President of the German Chemical Association VCI.

### Commitment across plastic value chain

The Alliance has committed over 1.0 billion US dollars with the goal of investing 1.5 billion US dollars over the next five years to help end plastic waste in the environment. Members are chemical and plastic manufacturers, consumer goods companies, retailers, converters, and waste management companies — they represent the range of companies that make, use, sell, process, collect, and recycle plastics. The Alliance has been working with the World Business Council for Sustainable Development as a founding strategic partner.

The global Alliance has the mission to advance solutions to eliminate plastic waste in the environment, especially in the ocean. Therefore, it will develop and execute Alliance-sponsored projects along with individual, company-directed investments that drive progress in four key areas:

- Infrastructure development to collect and manage waste and increase recycling
- Innovation to advance and scale new technologies that make recycling and recovering plastics easier and create value from all post-use plastics
- Education and engagement of governments, businesses, and communities to mobilize action
- Clean up of concentrated areas of plastic waste already in the environment, particularly the major conduits of waste, like rivers, that carry land-based plastic waste to the sea

### Reinforcing Henkel's efforts for sustainable packaging

"Our decision to become a founding member in the Alliance reinforces our commitment to promoting a circular value chain for plastics, as demonstrated by our strategy and ambitious targets for sustainable packaging," says Hans Van Bylen.

By 2025, 100 percent of Henkel's packaging will be recyclable, reusable or compostable. At the same time, 35 percent of the packaging of Henkel's consumer products in Europe will include recycled plastics. To drive progress toward a circular value chain for plastics, Henkel follows a comprehensive approach.

Henkel is engaged in several cross-industry initiatives to drive innovation in packaging development and to find effective solutions which can be implemented on a large scale. The company is member of the New Plastics Economy (NPE), an initiative led by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation that brings key stakeholders together to redesign the future of plastics. NPE is aiming to build momentum toward a plastics system based on the "circular economy" principle.

When developing more sustainable solutions for its product packaging, Henkel closely collaborates with partners along the value chain. Alongside its own innovations, Henkel recently invested 5 million British pounds into an impact fund from Circularity Capital to further promote a circular economy.

Henkel also supports different organizations and initiatives which drive progress for the improvement of recycling infrastructure allowing for a circular economy. Since 2017, the Plastic Bank is an important strategic partner for Henkel. The social enterprise offers solutions to both the environmental problems of plastic waste and the social challenges posed by poverty and the lack of employment opportunities. The local communities can return collected plastic waste and exchange it for money, goods, or services. In this way, value is created from plastic and it does not end up in the waterways or oceans. Henkel has already successfully integrated this so-called Social Plastic into selected packaging.

Progress toward sustainability in packaging will only be possible if stakeholders from all stages in the packaging value chain work together. This is why Henkel also drives initiatives to raise customers' and consumers' awareness of the need to use resources like plastic responsibly, to enable them to help create a closed circle for plastics. Therefore, the company has set itself the goal to reach more than 1 billion consumers with targeted information on recycling.

# Pak police culture of impunity faces trial by social media

ISLAMABAD: Five policemen raise their guns and fire dozens of times into a parked car at point-blank range in Pakistan. Then they reach inside, around the bodies of the dead, to pull out three crying children. The footage filmed by shocked witnesses to the killing went viral, sending Prime Minister Imran Khan scrambling to quell anger over a police culture of impunity that is now being threatened by social media.

Thousands have been gunned down in recent years across Pakistan in so-called "encounter killings" - incidents where suspects allegedly resist arrest, are slain, then later identified as terrorists to boost statistics. This latest "encounter" saw a family gunned down in broad daylight in the eastern city of Sahiwal last month, leaving four people dead including two parents and their teenage daughter.

Three children survived the incident, including nine-year-old Umair Khalil who later told journalists that police shot at the family as their father offered the cops a bribe, pleading to let them go. "My father told them to take our money and not to shoot their guns. But they started firing," Umair said in the video broadcast widely across Pakistan news outlets and social media.

Police initially defended their response saying terrorists with links to the Islamic State group were in the car using the family as a human shield. But this "encounter" was fundamentally different to others - it was filmed on phones and the videos posted online. Authorities have since backtracked as furor grew with the prime minister vowing to mete out "exemplary punishment" to the guilty. Five officers were hit with murder charges

and protests erupted in nearby Lahore.

"People... know that a video they make from their cell phone can have far more impact than the camera of a news channel," said Pakistani digital rights activist Haroon Baloch. "Had the nearby people not filmed the Sahiwal incident, nobody would have noticed the extrajudicial killing," he added. The incident is the latest instance of how phones are radically changing Pakistanis' relationship with power. During elections over the summer, a host of videos went viral, showing angry voters hounding elected representatives over their failure to serve their constituents.

And it's not just in Pakistan. In the US, the Black Lives Matter movement coalesced as outrage exploded following a series of viral videos allegedly showing police killing black Americans, bringing greater scrutiny to racial profiling and pushing some police departments to outfit patrol officers with body cams.

## Killing with impunity

The Sahiwal incident comes almost exactly a year after a similar killing of a young social media star in Karachi ignited an ethnic rights movement by the country's beleaguered Pashtun community. The movement it spawned - the Pashtun Protection Movement, or PTM - has been largely sustained by social media and videos captured on mobiles, piling even more pressure on authorities. But the killings continue, with analysts saying reforms are needed to challenge impunity in the police ranks.

"It's a culture of the police in Pakistan to kill people and make it look like an encounter," Mehdi Hasan - chairperson of the independent Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCIP) - told AFP. Data compiled by



LAHORE: In this picture taken on Jan 20, 2019, relatives mourn the deaths of members of a family who were gunned down in a police encounter in Sahiwal, during their funeral. — AFP

HRCIP showed that 4,803 people were killed in these "encounters" in Pakistan within the past three years alone. "The police need to be properly trained if such incidents are to be avoided in the future," Hasan added.

Security analyst Amir Rana however argued that increased police accountability and judicial reform were key to cementing lasting change. "This culture has existed in the police force for decades," Rana explained,

saying Pakistan's mammoth backlog of legal cases overloading its judiciary was part of the problem. "(Police) want quick results and they try to avoid... lengthy legal procedures which leads to staging encounters." — AFP

## Sanders asks why drug, once free, now costs \$375k

WASHINGTON: US Senator Bernie Sanders sent a letter to Catalyst Pharmaceuticals yesterday asking it to justify its decision to charge \$375,000 annually for a medication that for years has been available to patients for free. The drug, Firdapse, is used to treat Lambert-Eaton Myasthenic Syndrome (LEMS), a rare neuromuscular disorder, according to the letter, made available to Reuters by the senator's office. The disorder affects about one in 100,000 people in the United States.

The government is intensifying its scrutiny of the pharmaceutical industry and rising prescription drug prices, a top voter concern and a priority of President Donald

Trump's administration. Both the Democratic-led U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate, controlled by Republicans, have begun holding hearings this year on the rising costs of medicines. Sanders is an independent who usually votes with Democrats.

In the letter dated Feb 4, Sanders asked Catalyst to lay out the financial and non-financial factors that led the company to set the list price at \$375,000, and say how many patients would suffer or die as a result of the price and how much it was paying to purchase or produce the drug. Catalyst declined to comment on Sanders' letter. Catalyst shares fell nearly 8 percent to \$2.31.

For years, patients have been able to get the same drug for free from Jacobus Pharmaceuticals, a small New Jersey-based drug company, which offered it through a US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) program called "compassionate use". The program allows patients with rare diseases and conditions access to experimental drugs outside of a clinical trial when there is no viable alternative. — Reuters

## Iran women see new opportunities...

Continued from Page 1

traditional society," said Mina, a 25-year-old linguistics student in Tehran. Mina didn't tell her father she was studying for the university entrance exam. "He couldn't believe it when I was accepted, that I would go to some other city to live. He actually stopped talking to me for some time," she said.

"Whatever you do, your gender is the deciding factor," said 26-year-old archaeology student Sara. "It makes you believe that you have to have kids, you have to be modest. You can barely believe that you can be independent, be seen as an individual with a character," she added. She said discrimination was rife in her field. "Male archaeologists prefer not to work with women even if they're competent. They say it's just trouble. The women must keep their hijab at all times... they won't be taken seriously by laborers," she said. "If a woman is successful in a line of work like this, she's fought very hard. And not all women are capable of fighting so much."

Iran's rulers claim that Islamic gender laws - particularly "hijab" rules that require women to wear a headscarf and modest clothing - are designed to protect women. Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei tweeted in 2018 that the #MeToo movement was evidence of

how Western society had failed women. "The Western model for women is symbolic of consumerism, cosmetics, showing off for men as a tool of male sexual arousal," he wrote.

Nonetheless, clothing norms in Iran have gradually but significantly changed in recent years. It is now unremarkable, especially in wealthier areas, to see women in tight jeans with loose, colorful headscarves. The morality police that patrolled the streets, adjusting headscarves or bursting into cafes to make sure any couples were related, are now rarely seen.

The authorities still draw the line at actively protesting the compulsory hijab: Several women were arrested last year for doing so, and a prominent rights lawyer, Nasrin Sotoudeh, jailed after taking on their cases. But many also recall how much they have clawed back since the early days of the revolution. "It's nothing like it was. You couldn't even get a lift with a male friend," said a female journalist in Tehran. "We were terrified of being stopped, because they were out there, checking cars. Or going for lunch with a (male) friend - it would never happen! Now no one even thinks twice about these things."

Many were still dismayed that "moderate" President Hassan Rouhani, who ran on promises to improve citizens' rights, again failed to appoint a female minister after his 2017 re-election. "There is a glass ceiling and it will continue," said Fereshteh Sadeghi, a political journalist in Tehran. "When Rouhani reached power it seems he didn't want to fall out with the ayatollahs, and backed down. Little by little, women are getting their rights but for now there is no women's movement." — AFP

Asad without meeting a single Iraqi official.

Officially, Iraq says there are no American bases on its soil - only instructors deployed at Iraqi bases. Kurdish MP Sarkawt Shams tweeted that the mission of US troops in Iraq was "to help Iraqi security forces against terrorism, not 'watching' others". "We are expecting the United States to respect our mutual interests and avoid pushing Iraq into a regional conflict," he said. Washington has had troops in Iraq since the 2003 US-led invasion that toppled dictator Saddam Hussein. At the height of its fight against insurgents, it had up to 170,000 US troops in the country, before a partial withdrawal starting in late 2011. — Agencies

Development Khaled Mehdi said the number of nationals employed in the private sector remains unsatisfactory. He attributed the status quo to what appears to be Kuwaitis' overwhelming preference to work in the government sector, saying the private sector offers various perks in a bid to lure more employees. Chairman of Kuwait Industries Union Hussein Al-Kharafi agreed that the private sector has "struggled" to beef up its workforce, saying the sector is "obligated" to accomplish this goal. — KUNA

## Unpalatable numbers: Statistician who rocked Indian govt had to take a stand

NEW DELHI: P C Mohanan grew up in a village without electricity, studied statistics at a public university, and then spent more than three decades crunching numbers for the Indian government. But in the past week, the mild-mannered official has been caught up in a political storm that has threatened to undermine Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government months before a general election. On Jan 28, Mohanan resigned as acting chairman of the National Statistical Commission (NSC), a government-funded advisory body that checks the quality of India's official data, in protest at a delay in releasing a new set of jobs statistics. Another member of the NSC, J Meenakshi, quit with him.

Three days later, some of those jobs numbers were leaked to the Business Standard newspaper, which reported that India's unemployment rate in the year ending June 2018 rose to 6.1 percent, its highest level in at least 45 years. The figures are potentially crucial before the election, due to be held by May, as Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) struggles to win over voters concerned about depressed farm incomes and a lack of job creation. India needs to create more than a million jobs each month just to find employment for young people entering the workforce.

Officials from NITI Aayog, a government think tank formed by Modi in 2015 that is not normally involved in official releases of economic data, have rejected the job numbers reported by the Business Standard. They said the report was still in "draft" form and argued that more quarterly data was required to publish a "comparable" jobs report. Finance Minister Arun Jaitley

also told Reuters news partner ANI the report was a draft "which has not been approved".

But in an interview with Reuters this weekend, Mohanan, 63, says he has no regrets about walking out in protest at the delay. He said the NSC, which was supposed to be the final authority on statistics before they were published, had been repeatedly sidelined by the government in recent months, and the delay in the jobs figures was the final straw. "Data should be released as per the calendar, whether it is to your liking or not liking," he said. "Otherwise, where is credibility in the system?"

It is unclear where the Business Standard got the figures. Mohanan stresses it wasn't from him, and declined to discuss the specifics of the jobs report with Reuters. Mohanan, who says he is not active politically, said the NSC approved the report on Dec 5, and expected it to be released soon after. When it didn't happen, he reached out to top officials, including the chief statistician, Pravin Srivastava, even flying to New Delhi from Mohanan's home in southern India, for a meeting with him in late January. He says he didn't get a satisfactory explanation for the delay in any of those discussions.

With the report still unreleased, Mohanan and Meenakshi quit a few days later. Mohanan said he felt it was important that he stood up for the integrity of the organization, the NSSO, where he built his career. He had joined the NSC as a member in 2017, two years after retiring from India's statistics service, which includes the NSSO. When he became the acting head in Nov 2018 he found the NSC's role had diminished under the Modi government. It was starved of resources and it wasn't engaged in major statistical initiatives as they should be under ministry guidelines.

There was also a controversy over the release in November of historical GDP data with a new base year, which was used by the government to attack the opposition Congress party. The data showed growth was lower than previously thought during the previous Congress-led government. — Reuters

## Salvadorans elect outsider Bukele...

Continued from Page 1

We are going to call the president-elect to wish him luck in facing the challenges in this country," said Calleja, the runner-up with 31.62 percent of votes. The FMLN's Martinez took third place with 13.77 percent.

Meanwhile, Organization of American States (OAS) secretary general Luis Almagro congratulated Bukele on Twitter. "We congratulate @nayibbukele for his historic victory in the first round. We celebrate his proposal for a new chapter for El Salvador. And we salute the political maturity of the contending candidates in accepting his victory," Almagro said.

Some 5.2 million people participated in the election, according to the elections authority chief Julio Olivo. Voters formed long lines outside polling stations in parts of San Salvador, where gang violence and insecurity are endemic. El Salvador is among the world's most violent countries with a murder rate of 51 per 100,000 citizens. "It's honestly scary to go out alone in the street, you never know what can happen you," first-time voter Gabriela Solorzano, 19, said at a polling station in the gang stronghold of Mejicanos in the capital's north, her brother holding her hand.

In nearby streets, where graffiti on the walls testify to the presence of criminal gangs, many voters arrived aboard buses laid on by the political parties. But outgoing President Salvador Sanchez Ceren, of the FMLN, said voting proceeded "very calmly and very normally". Some 23,000 police officers and 15,000 soldiers were deployed to protect the sixth presidential election since

democracy was restored in 1992 - after 12 years of bloody civil war between state security forces and leftist guerrillas.

For analyst Roberto Canas, Salvadorans "buried" the bipartisanship that "could not read the needs of the people, such as the insecurity experienced daily on the streets". Confronting insecurity will certainly be a key challenge for Bukele, who Canas said "personified the population's tiredness". According to authorities, gang violence was the source of most of last year's 3,340 reported murders - and gangs are said to have 70,000 members, with 17,000 behind bars.

"The new president must offer daring security solutions," Carlos Carcach, an analyst and professor at the Higher School of Economy and Business in El Salvador, told AFP. In the past, rightwing governments opted for repression or secret negotiations with gangs. Meanwhile under the FMLN's Mauricio Funes (2009-2014), there was a truce between the country's two main gangs which temporarily reduced homicides.

Another task will be to reduce illegal immigration to the United States - as President Donald Trump has threatened to cut off aid if the flow of Central American migrants is not stemmed. During the last few months of 2018, more than 3,000 Salvadorans joined caravans marching towards the United States, fleeing gangs and a lack of jobs. The other main worry for Salvadorans is the economy. Although it grew by 2.6 percent in 2018, its biggest rise in five years, that is considered insufficient to cover the demand for new employment.

Bukele will have to juggle the need to raise taxes to cover an external debt of more than \$9.5 billion while trying to maintain social programs in a country where the minimum wage of \$300 a month is barely enough to buy food. Just over 30 percent of El Salvador's 6.6 million inhabitants live below the poverty line. — AFP

## Trump comments spark demands for...

Continued from Page 1

Trump's latest remarks had made passing such a law "a national duty". Deputy speaker of parliament Hassan Karim Al-Kaabi, also close to Sadr, said they were a "new provocation", weeks after the US president sparked outrage in Iraq by visiting US troops at Ain Al-

## Kuwait on course to nationalize...

Continued from Page 1

During a panel discussion, the Secretary General of Kuwait's Supreme Council for Planning and



Sports

# Irving scores 30 as Celtics snap Thunder NBA win streak

## Raptors rip Los Angeles Clippers 121-103, Grizzlies win

NEW YORK: Kyrie Irving scored 30 points and passed out 11 assists on Sunday as the Boston Celtics snapped Oklahoma City's seven-game NBA win streak with a 134-129 home triumph. Marcus Morris added 19 points and Marcus Smart netted 18 as eight of nine players taking the court for Boston scored in double figures and the Celtics improved to 34-19, matching Philadelphia for third in the Eastern Conference.

"We have great continuity, great rhythm," Irving said. "Playing the best we can every single day." The Thunder fell to 33-19, four games adrift of Western Conference leaders Denver and Golden State, despite a sixth consecutive triple double from Russell Westbrook, who had 22 points, 16 assists and 12 rebounds.

Westbrook hit a 3-pointer, made a steal and sank two free throws to pull the visitors within 121-119 in the final minutes. Jerami Grant's 3-pointer pulled the Thunder within 129-128. Boston's Jayson Tatum hit only 1-of-2 free throws but Irving forced a Westbrook turnover and Tatum added two more from the line to give the Celtics a 132-128 edge with 7.4 seconds to play.

Westbrook sank a free throw but missed the rim on his second attempt trying to set up a Thunder rebound and the Celtics took the ball. Smart hitting two final free throws to seal the victory.

"Down the stretch it's winning time. Just like that," Irving said. "That's a great team over there. It was a great challenge." Paul George led the Thunder with 37 points and New Zealand's Steven Adams added 16 points and nine rebounds for Oklahoma City.

The Thunder reeled off 11 points in a row in just over two minutes for a 76-73 lead in the third quarter but Morris answered with a corner 3-pointer to begin a 12-2 Boston run and the Celtics bounced back to lead 99-93 entering the fourth quarter.

"We played with more aggressiveness on offense and we moved better on defense," said Celtics coach Brad Stevens, whose club improved to 20-0 at home when leading after three quarters. The Celtics hit a season-best 59 percent of their shots from the floor.

### RAPTORS, GRIZZLIES WIN

At Toronto, the host Raptors ripped the Los Angeles



BOSTON: Jayson Tatum #0 of the Boston Celtics drives to the basket during the game against the Oklahoma City Thunder on Sunday at the TD Garden in Boston, Massachusetts. —AFP

### NBA results/standings

Memphis 96 New York 84; Boston 134 Oklahoma City 129; Toronto 121 Los Angeles Clippers 103.

Eastern Conference					Western Conference				
	W	L	PCT	GB		W	L	PCT	GB
Milwaukee	38	13	0.745	—	Golden State	37	15	0.712	—
Toronto	38	16	0.704	1.5	Denver	37	15	0.712	0
Boston	34	19	0.642	5	Oklahoma City	33	19	0.647	4
Philadelphia	34	19	0.642	5	Portland	32	20	0.615	5
Indiana	33	19	0.635	5.5	San Antonio	32	22	0.593	6
Brooklyn	28	26	0.519	11.5	Houston	30	22	0.577	7
Charlotte	26	26	0.500	12.5	Utah	30	24	0.556	8
Miami	24	27	0.471	14	LA Clippers	29	25	0.537	9
Detroit	22	29	0.431	16	Sacramento	27	25	0.519	10
Washington	22	30	0.423	16.5	LA Lakers	27	26	0.509	10.5
Orlando	22	31	0.415	17	Minnesota	25	27	0.481	12
Atlanta	17	35	0.327	21.5	Dallas	24	28	0.462	13
Chicago	12	41	0.226	27	New Orleans	23	30	0.434	14.5
Cleveland	11	42	0.208	28	Memphis	21	33	0.389	17
New York	10	42	0.192	28.5	Phoenix	11	43	0.204	27

Clippers 121-103 behind 18 points from Kawhi Leonard plus 16 points and 12 rebounds from Congo-born Spaniard Serge Ibaka. Canada's Shai Gilgeous-Alexander, a 20-year-old guard playing in his homeland, led the Clippers with 19 points.

The Raptors improved to 38-16, second in the East by 1.5 games to Milwaukee, while the Clippers fell to 29-25, clinging to the last Western Conference playoff spot by one game over Sacramento.

Memphis guard Mike Conley scored 25 points and Spanish big man Marc Gasol added 24 to spark the

Grizzlies over the NBA-worst New York Knicks 96-84 at Madison Square Garden.

Conley added eight rebounds and seven assists while Gasol contributed nine rebounds and five assists for Memphis, which also had 19 points from Justin Holiday. New York's league-worst record slid to 10-42 after a 13th consecutive loss while the Grizzlies, second worst in the Western Conference, improved to 21-33.

Kevin Knox led the Knicks with 17 points while DeAndre Jordan, in his first game after arriving in a deal with Dallas, contributed 12 points and 12 rebounds. —AFP

## Toyota Hilux steals show claiming victory at 2019 Dakar Rally

DAKAR: From the Arabian Desert, to the frozen polar wastes, Toyota's vehicles proved themselves as trusted top performers, whatever the environment. Now it has gone further in its world-conquering achievements by claiming Toyota's first victory in the 41st edition of the grueling Dakar Rally. GAZOO Racing South Africa's modified Hilux led throughout ten days and more than 3,000 miles (4,828 kilometers) of harsh desert driving in Peru to claim the win in the car category.

Even though the pick-up was specially adapted to deal with the challenge - including a mid-mounted V8 engine - its success is another demonstration of the reliable and hard-wearing quality of the engineering that has defined Hilux for decades. Our customers who use the Hilux for their day-to-day business will enjoy a versatile pick-up with built-in ruggedness that combines the essence of Toyota's learnings from tough motorsports events with high levels of safety and comfort, making it a robust all-rounder.

Toyota President Akio Toyoda commented: "I would like to sincerely thank all teams that chose Toyota for this year's Dakar Rally. Thank you for your hard work! Nasser and I drove the winning Hilux in Spain in late 2017. At that time, the team presented me with the second-place trophy from a past event, promising me that next time they would secure the first-place trophy. I am thrilled that they were able to fulfill that promise!"

Toyoda added: "There are no proper roads in the desert! However, if cars cannot run in such harsh conditions, they are without a raison d'être. Cars must be able to run wherever drivers want to go. I believe passionately that, 'roads make cars.' This year and going forward, the Toyota Group as a whole will strive to continue making 'ever-better' cars by traversing a wide variety of roads and terrains across the world. Thank you for your continued support."

The challenges faced by the GAZOO

Racing South Africa Hilux on the Dakar were exceptional, but Nasser Al Attiyah and co-driver Mathieu Baumel successfully negotiated the ten stages to seal a historic first victory for Toyota in one of the world's toughest motorsports events. Their triumph adds to the recent impressive successes Toyota has clinched in international competitions, such as the Le Mans 24 Hours and the manufacturers' title in the FIA World Rally Championship.

Nasser Al Attiyah, who has won Dakar Rally twice previously, said: "We are so happy to win, not only for ourselves, but also for Toyota and the entire GAZOO Racing SA team. Everyone has worked so hard for so long and really deserve this. Thank you for letting us drive this car."

Team Principal Glyn Hall said: "This victory was long overdue. Winning the Dakar is never easy, there are a lot of people trying. This year's race was no exception and it brought a rollercoaster of emotions and results for the team." Since 2012, the team had posted five podium places and seven top-five finishes, whereas Al Attiyah's win comes after a second-place result in 2018. The Hilux was also the first petrol vehicle in its class to take victory since the start of the Dakar's South American era, being powered by a mid-mounted, normally aspirated V8.

There was further success for Toyota in the event with the Team Land Cruiser Auto Body (TLC)'s #350, driven by Christian Lavieille and Jean-Pierre Garcin, winning the Dakar Production Division category for the sixth consecutive year. Meanwhile, #349, driven by Akira Miura and Laurent Lichtleucher, secured second place in the category.

Christian Lavieille said: "I feel amazing that we were able to both finish with a 1-2 finish and also get our 6th consecutive win in the Production Category. This year's rally was incredibly difficult, we got stuck many times and had many punctures, but with our two cars working



together with our mechanics providing us with perfect maintenance. This is an amazing team and I am incredibly grateful to all of the fans that supported us."

Over the years, Toyota has been participating in many different forms of motorsports, including Formula One, the World Endurance Championship (WEC), and the Nurburgring 24 hours endurance race. Toyota's participation in these events was overseen by separate entities within the company until April 2015, when Toyota established GAZOO Racing

(GR), to consolidate all of its motorsports activities under one in-house brand. Representing Toyota's belief that 'the roads build the people, and the people build the cars,' GR highlights the role of motorsports as a fundamental pillar of Toyota's commitment to making 'ever-better' cars. Harnessing years of experience gained under the extreme conditions of various motorsports events, GR aims to forge new technologies and solutions that bring the freedom, adventure, and joy of driving to everyone.



## Larkham dumped as Wallabies assistant coach

CANBERRA: Stephen Larkham was axed as Wallabies assistant coach yesterday after disagreements with Michael Cheika over strategy and game philosophy just months away from the World Cup in Japan.

Rugby Australia said he will move to a new role as national high performance coach advisor, focusing on mentoring and skills development across the Sevens

and junior teams. Larkham, a former World Cup-winning flyhalf, said he was "disappointed". "Ultimately Michael is responsible for the performance of the team," he said of head coach Cheika.

"We have differences in attacking strategy and overall game philosophy. We couldn't agree on these key points and it is in the best interest of the team that they receive clear and consistent messages from their coaches."

"I am obviously disappointed with this outcome as I had chosen to pursue the experience of taking the Wallabies through to the World Cup," he added. The move comes less than two months after Cheika himself survived the axe and had his powers curtailed over an alarming slide in the team's form.

From March, he will have to report to Scott Johnson

in his newly-created role of director of rugby. Cheika must also now work with a three-man selection panel-himself, Johnson and an independent.

The move followed a mounting backlash from dismayed fans and former players after the Wallabies won just four of their 13 Tests last year-their worst campaign in decades. Rugby Australia chief executive Raelene Castle said she was glad Larkham was staying on in another role.

"He was one of our greatest ever Wallabies and has developed a strong depth of experience during his coaching roles with the Brumbies and Wallabies," she said. "It was very important from Rugby Australia's perspective to retain Stephen's services and to ensure his experience is used to grow and develop coaches and players in our next generation." —AFP

## Dutch boxer who fought Ali still riding punches in Bulgaria

KOSHARITSA: Former Dutch boxing champion Rudi Lubbers, who lost to Muhammad Ali on points in a 12-round heavyweight fight in Jakarta four and a half decades ago, is back on his feet again after taking one of the heaviest punches of his life.

The 73-year-old and his partner Ria have been living in poverty in southeastern Bulgaria for the last two months, only to receive help after his story grabbed huge attention in the Netherlands following a TV documentary shown last Sunday.

They survived the freezing conditions in a broken-down van, lacking electricity, water and sanitary facilities, and looking after stray dogs, but Ria's health deteriorated suddenly and she was rushed to hospital on Friday in critical condition.

Lubbers said her condition had improved slightly but she would remain in hospital for a few more days at least. "The most important (thing) now is that my girlfriend returns in good condition and can see the dogs again," Lubbers told Reuters just outside the dilapidated van in the countryside near the village of Kosharitsa.

"In Bulgaria it's impossible to live in a house with so many dogs. It's possible if you have three or four dogs but at one moment I had 16 dogs with babies. "I would live a normal life but I don't know if I can live in a house. I'm more like a camper."

Lubbers, who represented the Netherlands at the 1964 and 1968 Olympic Games before turning professional in 1970, said his fight with former world champion Ali, for which he earned \$125,000, made him mentally stronger.

"I've learned from the fight, so I could survive here," he said, adding that he and Ria had received food and clothes from local people as well as Bulgarian mastika (strong anise-flavoured drink) to keep them warm in the freeze.

Many in the Netherlands were shocked to see their boxing hero in such a desperate situation and more than 12,500 euros was collected after a crowd-funding campaign was launched. Rudi's son Marco, who hasn't been in touch with his dad for two years, arrived in Bulgaria after watching the documentary while Dutch people, living in the Balkan country, arranged a temporary shelter for the dogs.

Lubbers worked at funfairs with Ria for several years after retiring but became homeless after she was declared bankrupt in 1999 and they lived in Lebanon, Morocco, Egypt, United Arab Emirates and Portugal before arriving in Bulgaria a few years ago.

Lubbers said he had remained friends with Ali who fought him in 1973 as he prepared for a rematch with his great rival Joe Frazier. "Years after the fight, he (Ali) came to Holland," said Lubbers who revealed that Ali had told him something he would remember forever. — Reuters

## Sports

# Starc on fire as Australia thrash S Lanka to win series

## Tourists skittled for 149 in second Test at Canberra

CANBERRA: A resurgent Mitchell Starc took five wickets as Australia wrapped up a confidence-boosting 2-0 series thrashing of Sri Lanka yesterday, with the tourists skittled for 149 in the second Test at Canberra.

In front of a sparse crowd on day four, Sri Lanka resumed on 17 without loss, needing a daunting 516 to win and ending 366 short. There was little resistance from the under-strength visitors who wilted under a pace onslaught led by spearhead Starc, who ended with 5-46 and took 10 wickets in the game as he emphatically bounced back from a lean spell.

"It's nice to get some reward. I've said all summer this group has been working really hard," said skipper Tim Paine. "I think we're starting to build towards something so it's great to get some reward for the work

we've been putting in."

He was especially pleased with his bowlers, who worked well as a unit. "The wicket didn't offer a lot but they kept smacking away and bowled beautifully. For our group to get some belief out of this will be excellent moving forward."

Paine set the big run chase after declaring Australia's second innings at 196 for three, following their mammoth first innings 534 for five declared. Sri Lanka were bowled out for 215 in reply.

"We were outplayed as a team in all departments," Sri Lankan skipper Dinesh Chandimal said. "Credit goes to Australia. They have played some outstanding cricket throughout the series," he added.

"It was really tough. Especially in the last six months we couldn't get the right combination to finalise our best XI." Dimuth Karunaratne and Lahiru Thirimanne had survived a tough six overs on Sunday ahead of stumps, and they resumed with hopes high of taking the game into a fifth day to provide momentum ahead of an upcoming Test tour to South Africa.

But Karunaratne failed to add to his overnight eight with Starc, bowling at close to 145 kph (90 mph), clipping his leg bail in only the third over of the day. It was a big blow with the experienced opener their best batsman in the first innings before he was struck in the head by a Pat Cummins bouncer.

Chandimal also failed to deliver, struggling against the speed and bounce of a fired-up Starc, bowling at perhaps his best over the past year. He poked at an away swinger and was caught at slip for four by Marnus Labuschagne, capping a miserable series in which he managed just 24 runs in two Tests.

Niroshan Dickwella, promoted to number four from his usual six, was building a handy partnership before Thirimanne was removed by Cummins for 30. Thirimanne tried to fend off a short ball but it ricocheted off his bat and Cummins took an athletic diving catch.

It went from bad to worse with Dickwella bowled by Starc for 27 just before lunch and Kusal Perera, cleared to play after taking a hit on the helmet on Sunday, out for a golden duck next ball.



CANBERRA: Australian players pose with the winning trophy after defeating Sri Lanka's in the second Test cricket match between Australia and Sri Lanka at the Manuka Oval Cricket Ground in Canberra yesterday. —AFP

Dhananjaya de Silva fell soon after the break and while young gun Kusal Mendis added a brisk 42, the tail soon folded.

It extended a dire run of Test results for troubled Sri Lanka, who were missing their three injured strike bowlers in Canberra. They have now lost a home series to England 3-0, then away to New Zealand 1-0 to go with their two defeats in Australia.

Australia won the first Test in Brisbane by an innings and 40 runs and end their summer on a high after losing an intense home series against top-ranked India.

While they were outplayed by Virat Kohli's men, they at least broke a century drought stretching back to October in Canberra, with Joe Burns, Travis Head, Kurtis Patterson and Usman Khawaja all cashing in.

Their knocks put them in prime position for the Ashes tour to England—their next Test assignment later this year, where champion seam bowlers Jimmy Anderson and Stuart Broad await. Starc's Canberra performance cemented his place in the side, while Richardson emerged as a handy compliment to fellow pace bowlers Josh Hazlewood and Cummins. —AFP

### SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at the conclusion of the second Test between Australia and Sri Lanka in Canberra on day four yesterday:

**Australia 1st innings 534-5 dec** (J. Burns 180, T. Head 161, K. Patterson 114 no; Fernando 3-126).

**Sri Lanka 1st innings 215** (D. Karunaratne 59; M. Starc 5-54)

**Australia 2nd innings 196-3 dec** (U. Khawaja 101 no, T. Head 59 no; Rajitha 2-64)

**Sri Lanka 2nd innings (overnight 17-0)**

D. Karunaratne b Starc	8
L. Thirimanne c & b Cummins	30
D. Chandimal c Labuschagne b Starc	4
N. Dickwella b Starc	27
K. Mendis c Patterson b Labuschagne	42
K. Perera c Paine b Starc	0
D. de Silva c Head b Richardson	6
C. Karunaratne c Paine b Cummins	22
D. Perera c Paine b Cummins	4
K. Rajitha not out	2
V. Fernando b Starc	0
Extras (lb, b, w, 2)	4
Total: (10 wickets; 51 overs)	149

**Fall of wickets:** 1-18 (D. Karunaratne), 2-28 (Chandimal), 3-58 (Thirimanne), 4-83 (Dickwella), 5-83 (K. Perera), 6-97 (De Silva), 7-143 (Mendis), 8-143 (C. Karunaratne), 9-148 (D. Perera), 10-149 (Fernando)

**Bowling:** Starc 18-2-46-5, Richardson 9-1-29-1, Lyon 13-1-51-0, Cummins 8-2-15-3, Labuschagne 3-1-6-1.

## Smith and Warner to play 'huge' part in Ashes series: Paine

CANBERRA: Skipper Tim Paine yesterday said he expects the banned Steve Smith and David Warner to play "a huge" role in this year's Ashes series against England, with Australia now in "a really good place." After a torrid 12 months marred by the ball-tampering row and poor form without their top stars, Australia ended their summer on a high by emphatically winning two Tests against Sri Lanka.

They claimed the first in Brisbane by an innings and 40 runs and the second in Canberra by 366 runs, following a tough home series defeat to top-ranked India.

Smith and Warner's bans for their role in trying to alter the ball in South Africa expire late next month and they are widely expected to quickly return to the national set-up. "I think everyone to a degree has to earn their stripes. I think those two have got plenty of runs in the bank if you like," Paine said when asked if they could slot straight back in.

"Look, I see us going to the Ashes and them having a huge part in us winning the series. That's how I see how important they are to this team. "We know how good they are and hopefully once their bans are up they'll be welcomed back and they will win Test matches like they did before."

Without the experienced pair, Australia struggled. But at least they broke a century drought stretching back to October in Canberra, with Joe Burns, Travis Head, Kurtis Patterson and Usman Khawaja all cashing in. Their knocks put them in prime position for the Ashes against an England side reeling from an embarrassing capitulation in the West Indies. Following a 381-run defeat by the hosts in the first Test in Barbados last month, England suffered a 10-wicket thrashing in Antigua on Saturday to lose the three-match series 2-0.

With the imminent return of Warner and Smith, there are now question marks over Marcus Harris and number four Marnus Labuschagne.

Harris struggled in Canberra on a batting-friendly wicket as fellow opener Burns hit 180, while Labuschagne managed just six and four in his two innings. Khawaja's snapping of a run drought is widely seen as being enough for him to remain at first drop, with Head's 161 and 59 not out sealing his place at number five. Paine said he has a "fair idea" of what the Ashes team might look like.

"What we have seen over this summer is we are starting to build a squad with plenty of depth. There's probably anywhere between 16 and 25 players we think are now in the mix, which is a really good place to be," he added.

For Paine, heading to England, and as skipper, is something that has been on his mind for months. "I've been dreaming about it actually," he said. "I'm happy now that we've got this (Sri Lanka series) out of the way and I can put everything into it because every Australian cricketer can't wait to go and play an Ashes series, particularly in England." —AFP

## Kuwait Amir's 8th Int'l Shooting Grand Prix kicks off next Saturday

KUWAIT: Head of Kuwait and Arab Shooting Federations Duaij Al-Otaibi said more than 420 shooters from 42 Arab and foreign countries will participate at the Amir's 8th International Shooting Grand Prix, which will start next Saturday at the Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Olympic Shooting Complex. Al-Otaibi, who chairs the organizing committee, said in a press conference held on Sunday His Highness the Amir's support of the Grand Prix made the championship one of the important tournaments on the calendar of the International Federation, featuring the world's most sharp shooters.

Al-Otaibi stressed Kuwaiti shooters' readiness to compete in the tournament, pointing out that the

## Rask helps Bruins solve Capitals

WASHINGTON: David Krejci gave Boston the lead in the second period, and goalie Tuukka Rask made 24 saves as the visiting Bruins ended a long string of frustration against Washington with a 1-0 victory over the Capitals in a Sunday matinee. For Boston, this victory snapped a 14-game losing streak against Washington. The Bruins also had dropped three in a row and five of their last six games, and Rask became the franchise's all-time leader in wins (253). It was Rask's second game back after being out since Jan. 19 due to a concussion. Boston played from the start like it was determined to end its skid against the Capitals. The Bruins out-shot Washington 39-24, getting 15 shots in each of the first two periods. Alex Ovechkin rejoined the Washington lineup for this game. He sat out the last one after being suspended for skipping the All-Star Game, but the Capitals could not do much on offense.

### FLAMES 4, HURRICANES 3

Three players who were with Carolina last season scored for Calgary in a victory over their former team in Raleigh, N.C. Former Hurricanes Elias Lindholm, Derek Ryan and Noah Hanifin each had a goal, providing the team with enough offense so that coach Bill Peters' return to Raleigh was a happy homecoming for all of them. Peters left his Carolina coaching position in the summer to become the coach of the Flames, while Lindholm and Hanifin were acquired in a

trade later in the offseason. Dougie Hamilton, who was part of the offseason trade with Calgary, scored for the Hurricanes, who had a four-game points streak snapped.

### CANADIENS 4, OILERS 3 (OT)

Jonathan Drouin scored the game-winning goal 58 seconds into overtime as Montreal downed Edmonton. Drouin took the puck from behind Montreal's goal and rushed the length of the ice down the right side. The speedy winger then cut left at the right circle and fired in his 15th goal. Max Domi had a goal and an assist, and Shea Weber and Jesperi Kotkaniemi also scored for the Canadiens, who improved to 6-1-1 in their last eight. Edmonton's Leon Draisaitl scored twice and Connor McDavid tallied for the 31st time. Ryan Nugent-Hopkins and Darnell Nurse each posted two assists for the Oilers, who have lost five straight (0-3-2) and blew a third-period lead for the second time in two days. — Reuters



Shooting Club is also working on preparing its young players to develop their skills for future competitions. He praised the support of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah which contributed to the superiority of Kuwaiti shooters who were making remarkable achievements in the international events. For his part, the club's secretary general Obaid Al-Osaimi said that the Organizing Committee was preparing all

fields to be ready for the competitions. He welcomed all Gulf, Arab and foreign delegations to the tournament.

The Head of the African Shooting Federation Hazem Hosni noted that the tournament will witness the participation of some of the best shooters in the African continent. Hosni pointed out that Kuwait hosted several Afro-Asian championships, noting the efforts of Al-Otaibi in developing the Arab shooting sport. — KUNA



MONTREAL: Goaltender Carey Price #31 of the Montreal Canadiens makes a stick save near teammate Shea Weber #6 against the Edmonton Oilers during the NHL game at the Bell Centre on Sunday in Montreal, Quebec, Canada. —AFP

## Windies captain Holder banned for slow over-rate

DUBAI: West Indies captain Jason Holder has been suspended for the third and final Test against England due to his team's slow over-rate during their victory in Antigua last week, the ICC announced yesterday.

Cricket's governing body banned Holder, despite the hosts playing four seamers and the regular fall of wickets as England were bowled out for 187 and 132. The ICC said in a statement that the Windies were two overs short of their

target for the match.

Holder was previously found guilty of a slow over-rate during his team's third Test defeat by Sri Lanka last June. ("Match referee) Jeff Crowe... imposed the suspension on Holder after the Windies were ruled to be two overs short of their target after time allowances were taken into consideration," the ICC said.

The 27-year-old all-rounder, who has taken seven wickets and scored 229 runs in the series so far, was also fined 40 percent of his match fee, while all the other Windies players were fined 20 percent each.

The Windies, who also thrashed England by 381 runs in the first Test, have sparked hopes of an upturn in form with their excellent performances against a side ranked five places higher than them at third in the Test rankings. The final Test in St Lucia starts on Saturday, with the Caribbean side looking for a famous series whitewash. — AFP

## Sports

# Santander stuns Inter, Roma rescue a point against AC Milan

## Fiorentina battle back to share point in 1-1 draw with Udinese

**MILAN:** Federico Santander scored the winner as struggling Bologna stunned Inter Milan 1-0 to pile the pressure on coach Luciano Spalletti as Roma rescued a point with a 1-1 draw to AC Milan in Serie A on Sunday.

Santander's header gave new coach Sinisa Mihajlovic the perfect start as his relegation-threatened side earned their first win in over four months. But Spalletti's Inter were booed off the pitch at the San Siro after their third-place cushion was cut to four points on city rivals AC Milan, who occupy the final Champions League berth, with Roma a further point back in fifth.

Paraguayan forward Santander broke through after 33 minutes with his header enough to seal just a third win this season and first since September 30. Inter are still searching for their first win of 2019, being held to a goalless draw by Sassuolo and losing 1-0 to Torino in Serie A before exiting the Coppa Italia on penalties to Lazio in the San Siro this week.

"Unfortunately when we have to fight or to cope with difficulties we lack something, that bit of dash that can make you make a difference," said Spalletti. "In any case, I repeat, I don't feel under scrutiny. The team is still behind me, I'm convinced," added the former Roma and Zenit St Petersburg coach.

The damage could have been worse but for a solid performance from goalkeeper Samir Handanovic, with captain Mauro Icardi proving wasteful, extending his goal drought in Serie A to six games.

Bologna keeper Lukasz Skorupski denied Andrea Ranocchia a late equaliser as the northern side reignited their push for top-flight survival. "I couldn't have

dreamed of a better start," said Serb Mihajlovic. "This proves that if you are brave you can do anything - you can beat Inter at the San Siro."

At the Stadio Olimpico, Roma eased the pressure on their coach Eusebio Di Francesco who was still stunned by a 7-1 Coppa Italia whipping by Fiorentina. AC Milan's Lucas Paqueta combined to set up fellow new boy Krzysztof Piatek to tap in after 26 minutes for his third goal in two outings. But Roma piled on the pressure with AC Milan saved by goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma's heroics denying Patrik Schick and Edin Dzeko before the break. Just after the interval Nicolo Zaniolo equalised for the hosts who were boosted by the return of veteran midfielder Daniele De Rossi.

Donnarumma again came to the rescue to frustrate Dzeko, while a searing Lorenzo Pellegrini header rattled the post, with Roma goalkeeper Robin Olsen denying Diego Laxalt late. "It's a pity we need a slap in the face before waking up," said Di Francesco. "This was a positive response to Florence, but could never wipe out that game, even if we had won."

"The lads showed character and I hope it is yet another starting point." "Roma probably deserved a little more, but I really liked our second half performance," said Milan coach Gennaro Gattuso.

Both Milan and Roma edge closer to Inter but Atalanta and Lazio have a chance to close in on the top four against Cagliari and Frosinone respectively.

Earlier Fiorentina battled back to share a point in a 1-1 draw with Udinese, as the Tuscan side sit five points off the Champions League places. The match



**ROME:** AC Milan's Italian goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma (R) deflects a shot to save a goal during the Italian Serie A football match AS Roma vs AC Milan on Sunday at the Olympic stadium in Rome. — AFP

was halted at the 13th minute as the fans remembered former Fiorentina captain Davide Astori, who died before last year's game in Udine. Elsewhere Paraguayan

striker Toni Sanabria scored his second goal in as many games for Genoa since his loan move from Real Betis, in a 1-1 draw with Sassuolo. — AFP

## Dembele stars as Lyon end PSG's unbeaten run

**PARIS:** Moussa Dembele scored and won a penalty as Lyon stunned Paris Saint-Germain 2-1 on Sunday to end the runaway leaders' hopes of an unbeaten Ligue 1 campaign. Angel Di Maria fired PSG into a seventh-minute lead, but Dembele equalised and Nabil Fekir scored the winner from the spot three minutes after half-time.

"I don't know if the defeat was deserved. In the first half it was deserved, but after half-time, we still dominated," said PSG forward Kylian Mbappe. The reigning champions remain 10 points clear of second-placed Lille at the top of the table despite the defeat, with two games in hand, while Lyon strengthened their grip on third spot, three points further back.

"We did what we had planned, namely high pressing, quick transitions, and to cause them problems every time we had the ball," said Lyon coach Bruno Genesio. "I don't think they're used to that in Ligue 1."

All eyes will now turn to the Champions League for PSG, with only a French Cup tie at third-tier Villefranche and a home game against Bordeaux to come before the last-16, first-leg clash with Manchester United at Old Trafford on February 12. Man United boss Ole Gunnar Solskjaer and his assistant Mike Phelan were both in attendance at the Groupama Stadium on Sunday, just hours after their side's 1-0 Premier League win at Leicester. The pair would have learned plenty from watching Lyon regularly slice through the PSG defence against seemingly little resistance, while Mbappe shouldered the majority of the attacking responsibility in the absence of the injured Neymar.

"I'm not worried about the Champions League," insisted Mbappe. "We must take it match by match and wait for the Champions League." On paper, this looked the toughest test remaining for PSG in their bid to go through the



**DECINES-CHARPIEU:** Paris Saint-Germain's French goalkeeper Alphonse Areola (L) shoots the ball next to Lyon's Ivorian forward Maxwell Gnaly Cornet (R) during the French L1 football match between Olympique Lyonnais (OL) and Paris-Saint Germain (PSG) at Groupama stadium in Decines-Charpieu, near Lyon, on Sunday. — AFP

league season unbeaten, having won on just two of their previous 13 Ligue 1 visits to Lyon, losing seven.

But Thomas Tuchel's men almost forged ahead inside the first two minutes, as Kylian Mbappe raced clear only to shoot tamely at Lyon goalkeeper Anthony Lopes. The away side did not have to wait long to strike, though, as Houssein Aouar carelessly gifted possession to Julian Draxler, who strode forward and teed up Di Maria to slot in his 10th goal of the season. But Lyon, on a six-match unbeaten run in the league themselves, quickly improved and twice wasted clear-cut chances to level, as PSG keeper Alphonse Areola denied Bertrand Traore from point-blank range before Dembele nodded wide.

Areola had to be alert again, springing to his right to tip away a vicious long-range drive from Nabil Fekir, before producing a wonderful double stop from Traore and Memphis Depay. However, just seconds after another excellent save to deny Fekir, Areola was totally at fault for

Lyon's 33rd-minute equaliser. The 25-year-old misjudged Leo Dubois' cross, allowing Dembele the simplest of tasks to head into the net. PSG almost snatched a half-time lead against the run of play, but Lyon centre-back Jason Denayer made an incredible diving header to keep out Draxler's close-range shot. Lyon, who face Barcelona in the Champions League knockout stage, continued to dominate after the restart, and were awarded a spot-kick when Dembele was brought down by Thiago Silva, with Fekir doing the rest.

That provoked PSG into life, and Lopes made two brilliant saves from Mbappe in the space of just 20 seconds. Mbappe was PSG's best hope of salvaging their unbeaten record, but he saw Lopes divert away a low drive, before former Celtic striker Dembele wasted a golden opportunity to wrap up the points as he was again foiled by Areola. But Lyon held on anyhow, ending their opponents' 21-game unbeaten run in the French top flight. — AFP

## Benzema on target again, Real close gap at the top

**MADRID:** Real Madrid gained ground on both Barcelona and Atletico Madrid in La Liga as Karim Benzema and Vinicius Junior each scored in a 3-0 win over Alaves on Sunday. Benzema, Vinicius and Gareth Bale started together for the first time and two thirds of the newly-dubbed 'BBV' delivered as Madrid capitalised on Barca being held by Valencia and Atletico losing at Real Betis.

Mariano Diaz, on as a substitute, added a third late on. After 22 rounds, this is the first in which Madrid have been the only winners from the established three clubs, which is as much an indication of their own inconsistency as the sturdiness of Atleti and, particularly, Barca.

Madrid could now overtake Atletico if they win the city derby next weekend but the difference behind Barcelona, whom they face in the Copa del Rey on Wednesday, is still a considerable eight points. "We will fight for everything until the end," Solari said. "Today there was a real hunger to cut the gap." It may have been the 5-1 loss to Barca in October that proved the final straw for Julien Lopetegui but Alaves' 1-0 victory at Mendizorrotza, their first over Real in 87 years, was perhaps the team's rock bottom.

Benzema has been the revival's ringleader since and his latest goal was his sixth in four games, his best streak since January 2016. The only La Liga player to have scored more in all competitions this season is Lionel Messi.

He did it starting alongside both Bale and Vinicius but it was the latter, not the former, that looks to be Benzema's most dangerous partner.

Bale endured one of his quieter nights and it was noticeable that while Benzema and Vinicius both departed to rousing ovations late on, there was a scattering of disgruntled whistles when the Welshman was replaced by Marco Asensio shortly after the hour. "It was difficult," Solari said. "Alaves defended very well, they were determined and there weren't many spaces."

It was Vinicius' clever reverse pass through the legs of Carlos Vigaray that led to Benzema's opener as Sergio Reguilon was set free down the left, his cross ensuring the Frenchman could not miss.

Alaves defended so deep at times that Madrid's defence were playing more as creative midfielders but the visitors were not without chances on the break. Tomas Pina took too long to shoot and Jony Rodriguez forced a smart save from Thibaut Courtois.

Madrid, though, ended any hopes of a comeback with 10 minutes left as Asensio picked out Vinicius at the back post. The teenager controlled, picked his spot and put it there.

Mariano's diving header in injury-time from Isco's cross added a final flourish.

Earlier, there had been another first for Atletico up front as Alvaro Morata made his debut but it ended in disappointment after a 1-0 loss to Real Betis. Atleti could have reduced the deficit to three points at the top but Sergio Canales' second-half penalty means that Barcelona finish the weekend one point further ahead than when they started it.

"The match was clear," Atletico coach Diego Simeone said. "A few chances for both teams, they took advantage of the penalty we gave them and that was enough." Morata enjoyed the occasional link on the counter-attack with Antoine Griezmann but there was little to suggest the pair's chemistry will be instant. Diego Costa is expected back from injury soon. Morata has limited time to stake his claim.

"In the few days that he has been with us, Alvaro has worked very well," Simeone said. "Hopefully he can find a way to score goals, which is what we need." Betis' penalty came after Filipe Luis put his hand up while anticipating a cross and looked away at the crucial moment. Canales' shot clipped Jan Oblak's hand but nestled in the corner. — AFP

## Longevity has its place as Qatar's project 2022 reaps rewards

**ABU DHABI:** He may not get there with them, but if Qatar's fast-improving squad do make a decent fist of their World Cup campaign in 2022, the host nation will have plenty to thank Felix Sanchez for.

On the face of it, the amiable Spaniard has transformed the footballing fortunes of the oil-rich nation since taking over as their 11th head coach in the space of a decade in July, 2017. After finishing pointless and ranked 13th out of 16 teams at the last Asian Cup in 2015, not a great deal was expected of the Qataris, 93rd in the FIFA rankings, in the United Arab Emirates.

Sanchez had expectations, however, and his team fulfilled them, storming to a first continental title with seven wins in seven matches-four against former Asian champions.

"This is one step more to continue developing the team," Sanchez told reporters after the 3-1 final win over Asian powerhouse Japan. "We play another big tournament in the summer and we will be ready in 2022 to represent Qatar as a really competitive team in the World Cup."

The roots of the Asian Cup triumph go back a lot further than 2017, however. Sanchez first coached many of the players in his squad at Qatar's Aspire Academy when they were as young as nine-years-old. He moved up with them through the age-group national teams, leading them to a first title at the Asian under-19 championship in 2014 and the semi-finals of the under-23 tournament in 2018. — Reuters

## 'Don't send me to Bahrain': Refugee footballer pleads in Bangkok

**BANGKOK:** A refugee footballer fighting an extradition request appealed for his freedom yesterday, pleading "please don't send me to Bahrain" as he arrived in shackles at a Bangkok court, which extended his detention by another two months.

Hakeem al-Araibi, a Bahraini refugee and Australian resident, fears torture and even death if he is returned to his homeland. Araibi was convicted in absentia on charges of vandalising a police station in Bahrain, but says he was out of the country playing in a match at the time of the alleged offence.

The player has said he believes he is being targeted over his criticism of Asian Football Confederation (AFC) president Sheikh Salman bin Ibrahim Al Khalifa, a member of Bahrain's ruling family. Araibi was stopped at Bahrain's request at a Bangkok airport in November when he arrived in Thailand for his honeymoon. He has been held in detention since then as Thai courts decide whether to send him back to the Gulf state.

"Please don't send me to Bahrain," he pleaded as he arrived at the court where former Australian football captain Craig Foster and other campaigners were on hand to lend support to the embattled player.

"Your wife sends her love! Hakeem, Australia is with you, mate," Foster shouted. The court said Araibi would be given 60 days to object to the extradition request and would need to present his case in April when the judges reconvene.

Along with the objection papers, the footballer's lawyer Nadhasiri Bergman said they needed to submit evidence "to show the court that Hakeem's extradition to Bahrain will pose danger to his life." Outside the court, Foster, who has been leading a protest in the football community for Araibi's freedom, said the case was politically motivated



**BANGKOK:** Hakeem al-Araibi, a Bahraini refugee and Australian resident, is escorted to a courtroom in Bangkok yesterday. — AFP

and represented "retribution from Bahrain to Hakeem".

"We continue to call on the Thai prime minister to show some mercy.... Don't be pushed around by Bahrain and just let him go home," Foster said.

Australian premier Scott Morrison has previously called on his Thai counterpart to release the 25-year-old, saying that returning him to Bahrain would infringe on his rights under international law. "We are asking the Prime Minister to allow Hakeem al-Araibi to return to Australia," Australian ambassador-designate Allan McKinnon reiterated yesterday outside the court, adding that representatives of 15 other countries were present to observe the proceedings. Araibi had played for Bahrain's national youth team before he fled his homeland and was granted asylum in Australia, where he plays for the semi-professional club Pascoe Vale FC.

"We believe if Hakeem is not released there have to be some sanctions levied on Bahrain and Thailand," international players' union FIFPro's vice president Francis Awaritefe, a former Australian football player, told reporters outside the court.

Both countries "should at least be excluded from being able to host" international matches, he added. FIFA's head of sustainability and diversity, Federico Addiechi—who was present for the hearing—told reporters FIFA has had numerous exchanges at a "formal and informal level" with Bahrain, Thailand, Australia and the AFC. — AFP

**25** Irving scores 30 as Celtics snap Thunder NBA win streak

**26** Starc on fire as Australia thrash S Lanka to win series

**27** Santander stuns Inter, Roma rescue a point against AC Milan



## Patriots topple Rams for sixth title

Patriots WR Edelman snags Super Bowl MVP honors



ATLANTA: Julian Edelman #11 of the New England Patriots celebrates with the Vince Lombardi Trophy after his team's 13-3 win over the Los Angeles Rams during Super Bowl LIII at Mercedes-Benz Stadium on Sunday in Atlanta, Georgia. — AFP

ATLANTA: The New England Patriots claimed the Lombardi Trophy for a record-tying sixth time, defeating the Los Angeles Rams 13-3 in a Super Bowl LIII slugfest Sunday in Atlanta. A clash of generations at quarterback and head coach, this was billed as a battle between 41-year-old Tom Brady and 66-year-old Bill Belichick of New England and 24-year-old Jared Goff and 33-year-old Sean McVay of Los Angeles.

Instead it was the placekickers, punters and the defensive play-callers, Wade Phillips of the Rams and Brian Flores of the Patriots, who controlled much of the action-or lack thereof. It was the first Super Bowl without a touchdown by either team through three quarters, and the lowest-scoring Super Bowl (3-3) entering the fourth.

"It's sweet," Belichick said while accepting the Lombardi Trophy. "Everybody counted us out, from the beginning of the season to midseason, but we're still here." Brady being Brady, he came through when it mattered and helped the Patriots match the Pittsburgh Steelers with six Super Bowl rings.

Taking over at their own 31 after the Rams' ninth punt, the Patriots marched 69 yards in five plays to score the

game's only touchdown and take a 10-3 lead with 7:00 to play. Brady was 4-for-4 for 67 yards on the drive, including a 29-yarder to Rob Gronkowski to set up Sony Michel's 2-yard touchdown run. It was the rookie's sixth TD of the postseason.

The Rams roared right back, driving to the New England 27 in five plays. On the sixth play, Stephon Gilmore and Duron Harmon broke up a potential touchdown catch by Brandin Cooks. On the seventh play, Gilmore picked off an errant throw to Cooks with 4:17 left as Goff tried to avoid a Patriots blitz.

"To be honest, I couldn't believe he threw it," Gilmore told reporters afterward of the play. Capping a nine-play, 72-yard drive, Stephen Gostkowski then iced the game for the Patriots with his second field goal. His 41-yarder stretched the lead to 10 with 1:12 remaining.

Brady completed 21 of 35 passes for 262 yards and one interception. Julian Edelman caught 10 passes for 141 yards to claim Super Bowl MVP honors, and Michel rushed 18 times for 94 yards. "It was an unbelievable year," Brady told CBS on the field after the game. "We just fought through it more so than anything. It's unbelievable to win this game. ... We've been this far and lost,

which is really tough. I wish we had played a little better on offense, but we won and it's unbelievable.

"... I'm so happy for my teammates. This is a dream come true for all of us." Goff finished 19 of 38 for 229 yards and the one pick. Cooks had eight grabs for 120 yards. "It kills," Goff said of the loss, calling it the toughest of his life. "It hurts. ... It hurts me knowing how well our defense played, against that team, against Tom, and us not holding up our end of the bargain. It's our job to score points and we didn't do that tonight."

McVay put plenty of blame on himself. "I'm pretty numb right now," he told reporters. "Definitely I got out-coached, and I didn't do nearly enough for our football team." After eight straight Johnny Hekker punts to begin the game, the Rams made it 3-3 on Greg Zuerlein's 53-yard field goal with 2:11 left in the third quarter. Los Angeles left some points on the field, however, as three plays earlier, Goff was late throwing to a wide-open Cooks in the back of the end zone, with the throw broken up by Jason McCourty.

"I just took off," McCourty said of the play, in which he came from across the field for the breakup. "I saw Cooks wide open and really wasn't sure if I was gonna

get there in time, but I was able to get the ball out and we were able to live to see another play." After two weeks of buildup, the showdown started slowly with the ninth scoreless first quarter in Super Bowl history. The Patriots have been involved in five of those-and won all five. New England took a 3-0 lead into halftime on Gostkowski's 42-yard field goal in the second quarter.

The Rams had more punts (six) in the first half than first downs (two) or completions (five). The NFL's No. 2 offense in both scoring and yards during the regular season, L.A. reached intermission with 57 total yards.

"We weren't great on third downs today," C.J. Anderson told NFL Network. "Couldn't extend drives." The Patriots tallied 12 first downs and gained 195 yards in the half but mustered only three points, despite four trips inside the Rams' 35. Gostkowski missed his first field-goal attempt (46 yards), and Brady had the half's only turnover, a deflected interception on his first pass attempt. New England also failed on fourth-and-1 late in the half. Neither team reached the red zone before the break. It was the second-lowest-scoring first half in Super Bowl history. The Pittsburgh Steelers led the Minnesota Vikings 2-0 at halftime in Super Bowl IX. —Reuters

## Body found underwater in wreckage of Sala's plane

LONDON: British investigators said yesterday they had spotted a body in the wreckage of a plane that disappeared in the Channel two weeks ago carrying Argentine footballer Emiliano Sala and his pilot.

Sala, 28, was flying from France to join his new club, Premier League side Cardiff City, when the light aircraft disappeared on January 21 north of the island of Guernsey. A wreck was found on the seabed on Sunday and closer inspection by a remotely operated vehicle

(ROV) confirmed both that it was the missing plane, and that a body was inside.

"Tragically, in video footage from the ROV, one occupant is visible amidst the wreckage," the British government's Air Accident Investigation Branch (AIB) said in a statement. "The AIB is now considering the next steps, in consultation with the families of the pilot and passenger, and the police."

The AIB also released a grainy image showing a part of the fuselage with the aircraft registration. The depth indicated on the image was 67.7 metres (222 feet). Sala's father Horacio earlier spoke of his shock that the plane had been found, after a private search organised by the family.

"I can't believe it. It's a bad dream," he told Cronica TV from his home in Progreso, Argentina, before the news about the body was announced. Sala was flying to Cardiff after transferring from French team Nantes in a 17 million euro (\$19.3 million) move—a record deal for the Welsh team.

The plane, a Piper PA-46 Malibu, vanished from

radar around 20 kilometres (12 miles) north of Guernsey, with British pilot David Ibbotson the only other person aboard.

Local police called off the search after a few days, saying it was very unlikely anyone would still be found alive. But Sala's family launched a crowd-funding campaign for a private search, which raised over 300,000 euros. They hired shipwreck hunter David Mearns, whose vessel used sonar equipment to identify the plane wreckage on Sunday morning within a few hours of starting the search. Another vessel, hired by the AIB, then used its remotely operated vehicle to survey the seabed. "Based on analysis of ROV video footage, the AIB investigators on board the vessel concluded that the object is wreckage from the missing Piper Malibu aircraft," the AIB said yesterday.

Suspected debris from the plane washed up on the Normandy coastline in France last Wednesday, further dampening any hopes of finding the footballer and his pilot alive. "This is about the best result we could have hoped for the families," Mearns had earlier told Sky

News. Top footballers were among more than 4,500 contributors to a crowdfunding page to look for the wreckage, launched by Sala's family. Horacio was the only relative to stay behind in Argentina as the others rushed to France and Guernsey to try to help with the search.

"I talk to them every day," he said. "They kept saying days were going by, and that there had been zero word on Emiliano, or on the plane." At Cardiff's match against Bournemouth on Saturday, Sala's photograph appeared on the front cover of the matchday programme.

The two captains laid floral tributes on the halfway line before what the club called a "silent reflection". Sala's name, in the Argentina colours, was also spelled out behind one of the goals as supporters held cards aloft. Cardiff manager Neil Warnock said Sala would have been "really proud" of the team after they won 2-0 in their first home match since the plane vanished. Programme notes, penned by owner Vincent Tan and the rest of the Bluebirds' board, said events had shaken "Cardiff City to its very core". —AFP