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## Assembly panel says expats still a majority in judiciary

Lawmakers amend law for the disabled, submit article 16 replacement

By B Izzak

### Zain Group 2018 profit soars to reach KD 197m



Zain Vice-Chairman and Group CEO Bader Al-Kharafi

**KUWAIT:** Zain Group, a leading mobile telecom innovator in eight markets across the Middle East and Africa, announced its consolidated financial results for the full-year 2018, and fourth-quarter ended Dec 31, 2018. Zain serves 49 million customers, reflecting a 5 percent increase year-on-year (Y-o-Y).

For the full-year 2018, Zain Group generated consolidated revenues of KD 1.3 billion (\$4.4 billion), an impressive 28 percent Y-o-Y growth, while consolidated EBITDA for the period increased by 25 percent Y-o-Y to reach KD 519 million (\$1.7 billion), reflecting an EBITDA margin of 39 percent. Consolidated net income reached KD 197 million (\$649 million), up 23 percent and reflecting earnings per share of 45 fils (\$0.15). The board of directors of Zain Group recommended a cash dividend of 30 fils per share, reflecting a total distribution of KD 130 million, subject to the annual general assembly and regulatory approvals. (See Page 11)

**KUWAIT:** The National Assembly's budgets committee said yesterday that expatriates are still a majority in senior judiciary jobs and called on the government to employ more citizens in such key professions. The committee said the ministry of justice has so far failed to achieve the required target in replacing expatriates with Kuwaitis in top judicial positions. The committee said the ministry should appoint more Kuwaitis, especially in jobs like judges, advisors, prosecutors, district attorneys and others.

Member of the Assembly's manpower development committee MP Mohammad Al-Dallal said yesterday that the Civil Service Commission has submitted a plan to appoint more Kuwaitis to replace expatriates in government jobs. He said the plan looks good, but the commission explained to the committee the difficulties of replacing expatriates in the ministries of health and education.

The committee has been established by the Assembly to accelerate plans to appoint more Kuwaitis in government jobs replacing expatriates, and create an environment to encourage Kuwaiti graduates to seek jobs in the private sector. Committee officials have repeatedly complained that replacement policies being adopted by the government are not sufficient and called for better policies to find jobs for citizens.

Meanwhile, the Assembly committee for the handicapped yesterday introduced a number of changes to the law governing disabled people. Dallal said the law stipulates to provide services extended under the legislation to handicapped bedoons who are children of Kuwaiti women. The law grants those with serious disability two people to look after them, besides financial aid provided to their relatives. Dallal said members of the panel took care so that the amendments introduced to the law are acceptable to the government, adding that he believes the report on the amendments will be submitted to the Assembly soon.

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### Amir attends cadet oath ceremony



**KUWAIT:** HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah honors a Kuwaiti officer commissioned as a cadet during a graduation ceremony yesterday — KUNA (See Page 3)

### COFE App secures \$3.2m in funding

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait-based COFE App, a coffee-centric marketplace app, announced yesterday that it has secured \$3.2 million in their Pre-Series A funding, attracting a multinational cross-sector base of entrepreneurs and venture capital (VC) funds from the Middle East and Silicon Valley. The round was led by KISP Ventures, a fund established by KFH Capital (Kuwait) and Cedar Mundi (Lebanon), Towell Holding International (Oman), Takamol Capital and Dividend Gate Capital (Bahrain), Nizar Al-Nusif Sons Holding and Arab Investment Company (Kuwait). The investment was facilitated by FTL Legal Services.

Conceptualized in Kuwait and developed in Silicon Valley, COFE App connects coffeehouse chains and independent coffee roasters with coffee lovers via a seamless, easy and efficient user interface. COFE App was founded in the summer of 2017 by Ali Al-Ebrahim. Early funding for the app was generated by him and other investors who are coffee enthusiasts. The app was beta launched in February 2018. Since then, the app has been featured in Forbes Middle East's annual list of "Top 50 startups to watch for in the Arab world" and was chosen among the most promising 100 Arab startups by The Arab Youth Centre in Dubai.

The Pre-Series A investors include: KISP Ventures (Kuwait): A fund established by KFH Capital to invest in innovative venture capital opportunities and high-tech startups in technology sectors. Cedar Mundi Ventures (Lebanon): CMV is a Lebanese venture capital firm investing in international technology



startups, having substantial economic presence in Lebanon and growth opportunities in the Middle East and in Europe. CMV funds best-in-class technology/digital startups, seeking expansion capital and support from CMV group's resources to access the Middle

East and European markets. CMV is the VC arm of Kuwait Holding group, a leading principal investor, asset manager and tech-driven conglomerate based in Kuwait, with listings on the Kuwait and Dubai stock exchanges.

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### US fails to halt Iran bid to free frozen billions

**THE HAGUE:** An international court yesterday ruled Iran can proceed with a bid to unfreeze assets in the United States, rejecting Washington's claims the case must be halted because of Tehran's alleged support for international terrorism. Washington had argued that Iran's "unclean hands" - a reference to Tehran's suspected backing of terror groups - should disqualify its lawsuit to recover \$2 billion in assets frozen by the US Supreme Court in 2016.

But the International Court of Justice in The Hague threw out the US challenges, and said that it had the right to hold full hearings at a later date as to whether Tehran will get the money

back. Chief judge Abdulqawi Ahmed Yusuf said the UN's top court "unanimously rejects the preliminary objections to admissibility raised by the United States of America". The court also "finds that it has jurisdiction" in the case, Yusuf said at the end of an hour-long reading of the decision.

Tehran said the United States had illegally seized Iranian financial assets and those of Iranian companies - and with Iran's clerical regime facing economic difficulties after sanctions and a fall in its currency resolving the case remains crucial. The US Supreme Court had said Iran must give the cash to survivors and relatives of victims of attacks blamed on Tehran, including the 1983 bombing of a US Marine barracks in Beirut and the 1996 Khobar Towers bombing in Saudi Arabia.

Iran said the freezing of the funds breached the 1955 Treaty of Amity with the United States, an agreement signed

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### El Chapo heads to prison where he can't escape

**NEW YORK:** Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman, the Mexican found guilty in a US court on Tuesday of running a criminal enterprise that smuggled drugs into the United States, is likely headed to a "supermax" prison where repeating his past escapes would be nearly impossible. No one has broken out of Administrative Maximum Facility (ADX) in Florence, Colorado, since it opened in 1994 to house the most dangerous inmates in the US prison system.

"ADX is the kind of prison that was designed for a high-profile inmate like El Chapo," Larry Levine, a former federal inmate who is the director and founder of Wall Street Prison Consultants, said in a phone interview. Guzman, 61, the leader of the Sinaloa Cartel who escaped

twice from maximum-security Mexican prisons before his most recent capture in 2016, faces a possible life prison sentence at a hearing scheduled for June 25 in New York.

US authorities have been tight-lipped about where Guzman will be imprisoned. But it has been widely anticipated that, if convicted, he would be sent to ADX Florence, ever since his extradition to the United States in January 2017. "For someone like Guzman, the chances of escape from a facility like that are nil," said L. Thomas Kucharski, a professor at John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York. Officials from the US Bureau of Prisons (BOP) could not be reached for comment on Tuesday.

ADX Florence, located in a complex of prisons in a remote area about 185 km

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Joaquin Guzman

### News in brief

#### No school fee hikes allowed

**KUWAIT:** Education Minister Hamed Al-Azmi yesterday issued a ministerial resolution extending the validity of resolution number 10/2018 issued last year suspending private school tuition fee hikes. Accordingly, demands made by private school owners to increase their schools' fees were rejected, and they were warned that legal actions would be taken against them in case of any violations. — A Saleh

#### 3 killed in collision

**KUWAIT:** Three people died and a fourth was injured after a car and a truck were involved in an accident. Firemen from Kabd fire center rushed to the scene to free those trapped in the wreckage, but found only one survivor, who was rushed to hospital. — Hanan Al-Saadoun



#### Road repairs will start soon

**KUWAIT:** Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Housing Affairs Jenan Bushehri said yesterday that she had issued several decisions concerning damage inflicted on the roads due to heavy rains in November. "The decisions were made according to the orders of HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah to hold those responsible accountable for their actions," the minister said. "The investigation resulted in referring several senior officials to retirement and suspension of 12 construction companies and two architectural offices. The amount of damage to the roads was very heavy and the ministry will start the repair process soon," she added. — KUNA

## Local

## Amir, Crown Prince receive officials



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. — Amiri Diwan and KUNA photos



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday at Bayan Palace His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. His Highness also received Speaker of the National Assembly Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem and Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Iraq Mohammed Rikan Al-Halbusi on the occasion of his official visit to the country. The meeting was attended by Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah. His Highness also received His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah on the occasion of his return to the country after he paid an official visit to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince received Ghanem, His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and Deputy Premier and Minister of Interior Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah. — KUNA



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Iraq Mohammed Rikan Al-Halbusi.

## Premier hosts UNICEF Executive Director

KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace yesterday UNICEF's Executive Director Henrietta Fore. Ambassador Nasser Abdullah Al-Hayen, the Assistant Foreign Minister for International Organizations' Affairs, attended the meeting. — KUNA



KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with UNICEF's Executive Director Henrietta Fore. — KUNA

## Commercial Bank hosts 'Treasure Quest' activity

KUWAIT: The Commercial Bank of Kuwait (CBK) recently organized a "Treasure Quest" event for the holders of its @Tijari account at the Boulevard Park in Salmiya. A large number of CBK @Tijari account

holders attended the activity upon invitations the bank sent to them through various social media networks. The quest included three phases: looking for the treasure, submitting it to the jury panel and looking up the symbols hidden around the park. The competition was held in a joyful atmosphere, and the first three winners were given three Apple watches plus cash prizes, the bank said in a statement. Notably, @Tijari is a saving account for clients aging between 14 and 24 years which aims at helping this category succeed in achieving their respective goals.



## Kuwaiti designs for refugees' housing win contest

KUWAIT: Members of the three winning teams of Kuwait Office of Engineers without Borders (EWB) made a video call yesterday through satellite with a group of peers from the United Nations Office in Nairobi. During the video call, EWB-Kuwait team presented projects and designs of housing units for a refugee camp in Nairobi. In this regard, Director of UN office Human Settlements Program (UN-Habitat) in Kuwait Amira Al-Hassan expressed her pride in the winning projects of Kuwaiti students in the Challenge contest, hoping these designs would be applied on the ground, contributing to solving the problems of sheltering refugees. She clarified that these projects presented by the winning teams involve innovations, pointing to the strong cooperation between (UN-Habitat) and (EWB) in Kuwait.

Meanwhile, Founder and Director of EWB-Kuwait Zainab Qarashi said the conference, held at the UN office through satellite, created a great opportunity for teams' members to contact with UN officials and present their projects. The call helped to know possibility of implementing these projects on the ground and benefiting from them in construction of sustainable housing units in the Dadaab refugee camps in Kenya, which includes about 245 refugees. EWB signed earlier a memorandum with (UN-Habitat) to expand ways of cooperation between the two sides to help youth reach a better future



KUWAIT: Members of the three winning teams of Kuwait Office of Engineers without Borders are seen during a video call they made yesterday with a group of peers from the United Nations Office in Nairobi. — KUNA

through sustainable development in cities where the projects will be executed in and outside Kuwait, Qarashi explained.

The call was attended by Director of UN office Human Settlements Program (UN-Habitat) in Kuwait Amira Al-Hasan, Founder and chief of EWB-Kuwait Zainab Qarashi, Head of Energy Projects Group-EWB Yusef Al-Anjari, while on the other side of the Video call there was Deputy Regional Director of UN-Habitat Program Erfan Ali. The three Kuwaiti winning teams participated in the Challenge contest last October in London and were honored after pre-

sending their winning projects at a meeting of one of the Committees of the World Federation of Engineering Organizations (WFEO).

As for the winning team, the first team 'Engineers for Peace' included Hanadi Al-Holi, Huda Al-Qahtani, Omaira Al-Fassam and Shibnam Mahmoudi. The second team 'The Engineers Team' included Nouf Al-Hamdan, Badria Al-Refaie, Nourah Al-Refaie, and Sarah Al-Awadhi, while the third team 'The RB Team' included Fatimah Al-Zalzalah, Marwa Al-Zalzalah, Kawther Baron, Ghanema Al-Kandari and Alaa Mubarak. — KUNA

## Iran seeks to strengthen relations with neighbors: Envoy

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: The priority of Iranian foreign policy is to strengthen relations with neighboring countries. "We believe regional countries are able to achieve security and stability through cooperation without the need for foreign forces, as security cannot be imported from abroad. We call on the region's countries to ensure its prosperity, and any conflict can be resolved peacefully," said Ambassador of Iran to Kuwait Mohammad Irani during a reception held by the Iranian Embassy on Tuesday to celebrate its National Day and the 40th anniversary of the Islamic Revolution.

The security and stability of Iran is connected to the security of the region. "The prosperity of any neighboring country - especially Kuwait - is connected to the prosperity of Iran, as it is an important part of this area. For this reason, we are fighting terrorism in Syria and Iraq, and many of our soldiers have died in this war against terrorism. We also collaborate with neighboring countries to fight this phenomenon," he added.

Bilateral relations between Kuwait and Iran go back many centuries. "We have strong historical, social and geographic relations with Kuwait, and they are getting stronger, especially due to the wise leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah," Irani said.

"After 40 years, Iran is still challenging the circumstances and the embargo. Iran is considered a developed country in many scientific fields including technology, nuclear energy, space sciences and especially medicine. Today, Iran produces over 90 percent of the medicine to meet local demand. In addition, we produce petrochemical and aluminum products, vehicles, building materials and large ships. Our economy has become very developed on the international level," concluded Irani.



KUWAIT: Ambassador of Iran to Kuwait Mohammad Irani (left) cuts the cake during a ceremony held to celebrate his country's national day. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



Ambassador of Iran to Kuwait Mohammad Irani and officials tour a gallery held as part of the event.



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and top state officials attend a graduation ceremony for Kuwaiti army officers at Ali Al-Sabah military academy yesterday. — Photos by Amiri Diwan, Defense Ministry and Yasser Al-Zayyat



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah signs a book as His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah looks on.



An army graduate salutes His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives a sword gifted to him by a newly-graduated army officer.

# Amir sponsors, attends new cadets' graduation ceremony

## Minister of Defense expresses pride in graduated students

KUWAIT: The latest batch of Kuwaiti army officers were commissioned as cadets amid a graduation ceremony yesterday, sponsored and attended by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. Addressing the teeming crowd of officials from across Kuwait's political spectrum, the assistant superintendent of the Ali Al-Sabah military academy thanked His Highness the Amir for sponsoring this event on a yearly basis. The newly graduated cadets will sacrifice their lives in defense of the nation, he said, point-

ing out that amid these tumultuous times, meticulous preparation from a military standpoint is crucial. He said the officers, who can now reap the benefits of their tireless and diligent work, have an obligation to protect the nation from all perils that threaten its security. He went on to wish the country's persistent development and prosperity, under the sage leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

Meanwhile, First Deputy Prime Minister and

Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sponsored yesterday the graduation ceremony of the 22nd class of college army-officers at Ali Al-Sabah Military Academy where Chief of General Staff of the Army Lieutenant General Mohammed Al-Khedr distributed certificates to graduates. In a speech he delivered during the ceremony, Sheikh Nasser expressed his pride in those students hoping they would apply what they learned in their military units. He also congratulated college employees and

workers, along with leaders, officers, teachers, trainers and administrators for their work. He prayed to the Almighty God to protect Kuwait under the presence of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces. The ceremony was attended by Undersecretary of the Ministry of Defense Sheikh Ahmad Mansour Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Deputy Chief of Staff General Abdullah Nawaf Al-Sabah, members of the Military Defense Council and senior army officers.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah attend the ceremony.



First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and top Defense Ministry and Kuwait army staff pose for a group photo with the new graduates.



The fresh army graduates march at the ceremony.



A fresh graduate celebrates with his family.



A graduate is congratulated by his family members.



A graduate celebrates with his family members.



A graduate is carried by celebrators during the event.

## Local

# Worker dies under falling steel rods in Amghara scrap yard

## Head of department embezzled KD 22,000 in traffic violations

By Hanan Al-Saadoun and Agencies

**KUWAIT:** An Asian worker was killed after steel rods fell on top of him in Amghara scrap yard. Firemen retrieved the body from under the metal. An investigation was opened to reveal the circumstances behind the incident. Separately, Bidaa fire station men extinguished a fire that broke out in Hawally educational zone. No injuries were reported.

### Malfunctioned breaks

Authorities are investigating a video clip in which a vehicle was seen driving on the pavement and running a red light between Adan and Sabah Al-Salem. It then collided with a car driven by a woman, who suffered a broken hand as a result. The suspect turned himself in to police. He said that his vehicle's brakes malfunctioned and he had to climb the pavement. In other news, Abdaly customs officers arrested an Arab driver who arrived from Iraq with 1.25 kg of shabu.

### Embezzlement

The cassation court sentenced a head of a department

at the interior ministry to seven years in jail, and discharged him from his job after he was found guilty of embezzling KD 22,000 he received from citizens and expats for traffic violations. Meanwhile, the criminal court decided to jail an employee at the traffic department for five years and discharged him from his job for asking for and receiving a bribe, Al-Rai reported. Director of the traffic department had received information that a head of a department embezzled funds from traffic violations, so a committee was formed and a KD 22,000 deficit was discovered. The officer was referred to the prosecution and returned the KD 22,000, before being sent to court.

### Drug dealers arrested

Criminal detectives arrested two Egyptians in Farwaniya for pushing drugs. Both had shabu and other illicit drugs. Detectives learned about the duo's activities, so following investigations, a warrant was obtained. As soon the main accused saw them, he resisted but was controlled, and drugs were found in his house, reported Al-Rai. He confessed he has a partner who delivers the drugs, who was also arrested.



**KUWAIT:** This picture shows steel rods that fell on a worker in Amghara scrap yard, leaving him with fatal injuries.

## Rights watch team 'pleased' with developments in Kuwait

By A Saleh and Meshal Al-Enezi

**KUWAIT:** A Human Rights Watch delegation currently visiting Kuwait is scheduled to hold meetings with a number of officials, including members of the national human rights diwan and representatives of NGOs, said informed sources, adding that the delegation hailed the development in human right issues in Kuwait, namely those related to domestic helpers. In this regard, the head of Kuwait Society for Human Rights' domestic helpers committee Meshari Al-Sanad said that the society discussed various issues with the HRW delegation, including bedoons and domestic helpers.

Sanad added that the delegation pointed out that compared to last year, much improvement has been made in some human rights issues, including those concerning domestic helpers in the form of new legislations set to protect their rights. Sanad also noted that the delegation stressed that abuses against domestic helpers are only individual cases similar to those detected in all countries hiring foreign domestic helpers.

### Roads authority

The committee entrusted to investigate the recent rainfall problem recommended keeping the Public Authority for Roads and Transport (PART) because its establishment was a leading idea followed in most GCC states, said an official source in the committee. The official added that the problem was in those running the authority rather than in PART itself. He explained that 12 companies executing PART projects had made serious mistakes and were referred to relevant authorities for further actions, including the possibility of excluding them from any further Ministry of Public Works (MPW) projects. The official said the committee recommended indicting some officials, and accordingly, MPW would most likely witness several reshuffles and transfers in various sectors.

### Subsidies

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI) yesterday announced that it had spent around KD 238,144,700 on various kinds of subsidized food supplies and construction material in 2018. The ministry statement explained that the sum included KD 108,200,000 for basic food supplies and KD 4.5 million for various types of baby formula and nutrients, adding that KD 125.3 million was spent on construction materials. The statement also explained that beneficiaries from food supplies in December totaled 2,055,130.

## Municipality in Farwaniya crackdown



**KUWAIT:** Municipality inspectors carried out a field inspection campaign in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh and Farwaniya, Kuwait Municipality's public relations department said in a statement. In this regard, Farwaniya municipality manager Ahmad Al-Hazem stressed that yesterday's campaign was the start of further tours to be conducted in various governorates to remove all violations on property, as well as renting houses to bachelors in residential areas, random market places, in addition to safety and cleanliness violations. Hazem added that the teams filed various citations for unauthorized use of public property, road blockage, cleanliness, peddlers and unlicensed ads.



## Kuwait calls for peaceful solution in eastern Ukraine

**NEW YORK:** Kuwait has called for the need to find a peaceful solution to the crisis in eastern Ukraine in accordance with the Security Council resolution and the agreements reached between the parties concerned, including the Minsk agreements, which represent the only agreed framework for settling the crisis in its regional scope and through its mediation efforts carried out by parties that enjoy respect and appreciation of both parties to the conflict and the international community as a whole. This came in Kuwait's speech at the meeting of the Security Council on Ukraine, which was delivered by Permanent Representative of Kuwait to the United Nations Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi yesterday.

Otaibi said that the United Nations was created with the aim of saving future generations from the scourge of war. Its main role is to prevent conflicts. Under the Charter of the United Nations, the Security Council has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. The Council was taking the lead in identifying a threat to peace or security and calling on parties to the dispute to settle them peacefully to avoid eruption of an armed conflict.

"We are meeting today at the fourth anniversary of the Minsk Peace Accords, which included a roadmap for resolving the conflict in Ukraine, and we would like to celebrate this occasion to achieve a lasting and sustainable peace," he said. He pointed out that there are still violations of the cease-fire committed by weapons that were supposed to be removed under the agreements, adding that continued existence of such weapons in an environment of mistrust and security contributes to the escalation of violence.

Otaibi called on all sides to immediately cease hostilities and fully abide by the cease-fire and to avoid any provocative actions that may lead to further tension. "We reaffirm our commitment to the unity and sovereignty of Ukraine and its territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders and non-interference in its internal affairs, hoping that all parties concerned to fully implement resolution 2202, the Minsk Peace Accords and the presidential statement of June 6, 2018," he noted. — KUNA



**KUWAIT:** Sea fire department carried out a practical exercise in cooperation with the coast guard and medical emergencies department in addition to Environment Public Authority. The exercise was about a fire in a marine vehicle with oil leaking to the sea, with some crew members sustaining injuries. Firemen dealt with the incident, then a meeting was held to discuss the results. — By Hanan Al-Saadoun



On its meeting held on December 31, 2018, the board of directors of **Kuwait Journalists Association (KJA)** decided opening candidacy for membership in the 2019-2020 board of directors in the period from Sunday, February 17 till Thursday, February 21, 2019. KJA also announced that members wishing to run for the new board's elections should check with KJA secretariat to fill in candidacy application forms and submit copies of their passports and 2019 membership cards during the official working hours from 9 am to 1 pm and from 5 pm to 8 pm at KJA's temporary headquarters in Shuwaikh industrial area, the press street, Al-Balagh newspaper building, 2nd floor.

# First cardiac electro-physiological procedure performed at Hadi Clinic

First ever procedure of its kind performed in a private hospital in Kuwait



(From left to right) Dr. Fawzia Al Kandari, Dr. Moaz Alanbaei and Dr. Darar Al Khudair in Cardiac Cath laboratory.

**KUWAIT:** In pursuit of its endeavors towards improving the quality of health care provision in Kuwait, Hadi Clinic is pleased to announce its first cardiac electro-physiological procedure, which was conducted using the highly sophisticated three-dimensional imaging and mapping technology. The procedure is the first of its kind to be undertaken in a private hospital in Kuwait, and was successfully performed by the renowned Dr Fawzia Al-Kandari, consultant Cardiac Electro-physiologist. The procedure is pivotal in establishing the diagnosis and providing curative management for patients suffering from cardiac arrhythmias, often manifesting as fast or slow heart beats.

Two procedures have been performed. The first was an electro-physiological study of a middle-aged patient suffering from accelerated ventricular arrhythmia, where three-dimensional mapping technology was used to locate the arrhythmia source and treat it with curative radio-frequency ablation. The second procedure involved the implantation of a permanent cardiac pacemaker in a patient in his sixth decade of age. Dr Fawzia has successfully conducted those two procedures in collaboration with the cardiac catheter laboratory team at Hadi Clinic. Dr Fawzia has a distinguished scientific and medical expertise in the field of cardiac electro-physiology, with extensive experience in the use of modern technology and in the training of doctors

in the field, both inside and outside Kuwait. "Hadi Clinic is equipped with a state-of-the-art cardiac catheter laboratory that is staffed by a fabulous team of clinical expertise," Dr Fawzia explained. "We are now able to deliver unparalleled sets of services in the private sector. We always aspire to materialize the hopes of our patients."

#### Proven track record

Dr Abdul Wahid Baluch, Medical Director at Hadi Clinic, stressed on the importance of Dr Fawzia's collaboration with the hospital, explaining that she is one of the most renowned cardiologists in the region with a proven track record in the field of innovative scientific research. Dr Abdul Wahid also voiced Hadi Clinic's commitment to develop a cardiology centre of excellence that best serves the needs of the patients. Dr Talal Mudawi, consultant cardiologist and Head of the Intensive Care Unit, confirmed that Hadi Clinic Cardiology Centre has been regularly and successfully performing emergency diagnostic and therapeutic cardiac catheterization procedures for the treatment of acute coronary artery blockages and sudden heart attacks 24 hours a day. He further stated that Hadi Clinic's cardiac catheter laboratory is entrusted by the American Military mission in Kuwait to treat their officials and contractors, many of whom have successfully



Chest X Ray showing a permanent pacemaker.

undertaken their cardiac catheter procedures and stents at Hadi Clinic.

#### Moment of pride

"This is a moment of pride and celebration for our cardiology team at Hadi Clinic," stated Dr Faten, Hadi Clinic's Deputy General Manager. "The success of those two procedures has not only encouraged us to further continue to provide the best possible care for heart patients in Kuwait, but it has also provided conclusive proof that our investment in medical services, human resources and technology does and will continue to provide the highest quality of health care to our patients and their families. The secret that has kept us at the forefront of private healthcare organizations is our unwavering commitment to the provision of best quality healthcare. Our Wellness program - a concept that encompasses the provision of physical, emotional and spiritual wellbeing - ensures that we remain focused on treating our patients not as mere diseases, but as whole individuals, with compassion, kindness, love and professionalism. The pursuit of Happiness, for both our patients and our staff, is our goal and I am proud to say that we have achieved some significant milestones towards that endeavor. We welcome Dr Fawzia to Hadi Clinic and it's a real privilege having her with us."

## Kuwait, Azerbaijan renew deal

**KUWAIT:** The State Audit Bureau (SAB) of Kuwait announced on Tuesday the renewal of a cooperation agreement with Azerbaijan's Accounting Chamber (AAC) with the aim of developing mutual collaborative domains and supporting bilateral ties. Khalil Al-Wazzan, a senior official at the SAB, made the press statement while receiving the AAC's head Vugar Gulmammadov who is currently visiting the country. The visit aims to booster relations with Kuwait.

Renewing the cooperative deal is a chance to promote knowledge on the Azerbaijan's chamber, Wazzan said, referring that the two sides are keen on promoting cooperation in auditing and control fields as well as professional training. Among the agreement's objectives is upgrading skills and potentials of the two bodies' staff through launching training initiatives and visits of experts as well as sharing technical information and research results in line with the agreed-upon technical cooperation program, he noted.

The deal also stimulates the two sides to coordination and cooperation on issues related to international and regional organizations in which the two parties take part, the Kuwaiti official made clear. The action plan of the deal will start in 2020 until 2023 that contains several topics on environment, climate change, public debt, information technology control and others, Wazzan clarified.

The visit's agenda included a visual presentation by the SAB's staff on management information system and another one on how to prepare an annual training plan, and select trainers and programs, he said. The presentation contained also disseminating information culture to help generations be aware of the role of the Audit Bureau on maintaining public fund and the role of information technology in auditing, he said.

Azerbaijan's officials made a show on their chamber, activities and operations as well as control cooperation with the European Union, Wazzan pointed out.—KUNA

## Conference pushes for more advanced education

**KUWAIT:** Participants in the Education Technology Conference 'Vision for the Future' called yesterday for the necessity of implementing the national development plan of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah vision by 2035 for more advanced education. Participants in the conference stressed the need to work on the implementation of the projects especially the one related to the development of the educational system in the country that aims to prepare young people to become competitive and productive members of the national workforce.

Chairman of Kuwait Public Relations Association Jamal Al-Nasrallah, said that the conference, which lasted for two days under the patronage of Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education, discussed many axes by presenting visions of experts, specialists and educators in five working sessions that will be submitted to the Ministry of Education and the General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development and the cabinet. The conference recommended the need to work and cooperate with the United Nations and international organizations to benefit from successful international experiences in the field of e-learning, he said. It also recommended necessity of carrying out more applied and experimental research to identify the

advantages and challenges associated with the implementation of e-learning plans and programs and evaluate the experiences of local e-learning in public and private education and higher and applied education to identify best practices in this field, Nasrallah said.

Nasrallah also called for the need to create a comfortable and attractive learning environment equipped with the necessary technologies, resources and educational materials and to organize the teaching process in the classroom in an interesting format and encouraging the thinking of students using educational software and research tools and social networking educational networks and encourage students to innovate. It also suggested to employ modern interactive techniques in order to create stimulating methods for learning and thinking, as it stressed the need to make the e-learning a mean of support to the process of education and transformation.

The conference called for working on the provision and use of modern educational techniques in schools to expand the options of learners in learning, including interactive e-book, multimedia, the Internet and tablets, and electronic and virtual reality software and enhanced reality, he added. The kindergarten students should be encouraged to use e-learning programs in the pre-primary education stage inside and outside the school to prepare a modern generation capable of interacting with modern technologies from an early age, Nasrallah said. The conference called for the need to organize and develop professional development programs for teachers and specialists in order to train on the basic principles of information technology and how to employ e-learning programs and create an e-learning environment. — KUNA



## ABK joins Porsche World Roadshow

**DUBAI:** Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) held an exhilarating day for clients at the New Kuwait Motor Town Race Circuit, as part of the Porsche World Roadshow. The day-long event, led by Porsche specialists that flew in from Germany, included a variety of interactive entertainment experiences, as well as a special ABK lounge area, where clients could enjoy live music over lunch. In addition, everyone had the opportunity to experience the thrill of learning driving techniques such as braking and track laps with certified Porsche drivers.

The specialists shared tips and insights aimed at facilitating the development of autocross driving skills for racing enthusiasts in the audience. The day ended with an awards ceremony, where racing aficionados present in the audience were given prizes for various activities. Yousef Al-Muhailan was recognized for perfecting the 'slalom' as he raced across a winding course avoiding all obstacles and Hussain Al-Otaibi took the prize for the best driving style, as he throttled towards the finishing line.

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Imprisoned PKK leader and Turkey's 'nemesis'

## Protesters in India claim victory as citizenship bill stalls

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BAGHOUZ: A female fighter with the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) keeps watch as civilians flee from the Baghouz area in the eastern Syrian province of Deir Ezzor. — AFP

# IS defends last Syria redoubt

## Jihadist fighters' wives and children flee

**BAGHOUZ:** Jihadist fighters made a desperate last stand in eastern Syria yesterday, while their wives and children fled the final, blood-soaked implosion of the Islamic State group's "caliphate". The US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces on Saturday launched a final push to expel IS fighters from the sole remaining morsel of the proto-state they declared in 2014 across parts of Syria and Iraq.

Thousands of people have flooded out of the so-called "Baghouz pocket" near the Iraqi border in recent days - mostly women and children, but also suspected jihadists. Yesterday, about 300 women and children, almost all of them Iraqi, sat in small groups in an open field serving as the main civilian reception location. They fled Baghouz by foot on Tuesday afternoon, walking four kilometers to a first SDF-held position, before being shuttled on trucks and military vehicles to the main spot at dusk.

Most had spent the night out in the open. "I tried to go get a blanket for my kids but there weren't enough," said Umm Ayham, a young Syrian woman from the northern province of Raqa. "Some people had lit a fire, burning plastic they found on the ground and baby diapers, so I went by it to get warm." Hundreds of people fled the IS holdout in the night of Tuesday to Wednesday, SDF spokesman Mustafa Bali

said. Inside yesterday, the Kurdish-led SDF were advancing slowly against hundreds of jihadists. "We have retaken positions lost in a counterattack launched two days ago by IS. We have progressed and taken new positions," Bali said.

### Retina scan

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights also said the SDF fighters were making painstaking progress. "There are mines throughout the sector," said Rami Abdel Rahman, the head of the Britain-based war monitor. "The SDF are firing rockets," he said, and both sides were locked in heavy clashes on the edges of Baghouz village. Since December, more than 38,000 people, mostly wives and children of IS fighters, have fled into SDF-held areas, the Observatory says.

That figure includes around 3,500 suspected jihadists detained by the SDF, according to the monitor. Near the gathering point for new arrivals earlier, two dozen members of the coalition forces searched men

who had escaped. A line of about five waited to be patted down, including one man in a rickety wheelchair. A coalition force member led one of the younger men to a subsequent point for a retina scan. Further on, those that had been searched were kneeling on the ground with coalition troops circling around them.

The alliance launched a military offensive to expel IS from the eastern banks of the Euphrates in the oil-rich province of Deir Ezzor in September. Since then, more than 1,300 jihadists as well as 650 SDF fighters have been killed, while more than 400 civilians have lost their lives, the Observatory says. SDF spokesman Bali said at the weekend that up to 600

jihadists could remain inside the pocket, as well as hundreds of civilians. US President Donald Trump on Monday said the coalition may declare victory over IS in Syria within days.

### Foreign jihadists

A victory in Baghouz would allow the United States

to withdraw all its 2,000 troops from Syria, as announced by Trump in December. Acting Pentagon chief Patrick Shanahan on Tuesday made an unannounced visit to Baghdad, during which he met with the Iraqi premier. Asked whether they had touched on the possibility of US troops in Iraq deploying across the border into Syria for operations against IS, Shanahan said: "It just did not come up."

Trump's pullout announcement shocked Washington's allies, as well as US military commanders. In a report last week, the US Department of Defense warned that without sustained counterterrorism pressure, IS could resurge within months. Syria's Kurds hold hundreds of suspected foreign IS fighters and have long urged their home countries to take them back, but these have been reluctant.

A senior Pentagon official told reporters travelling with Shanahan that Washington was pressing its allies to repatriate their nationals. "We think coalition members need to take responsibility for their citizens who are fighters. It's been a message we've delivered time and time again. And we are seeing hopeful progress," he said. Syria's civil war has killed 360,000 people since it started in 2011 with the brutal repression of anti-government protests. It has since spiraled into a complex conflict involving world powers and jihadists. — AFP



**Victory would allow US to pullout all its 2,000 troops**

## Written in the stars: Thailand politicians turn to clairvoyants

**BANGKOK:** A hand-drawn map of constellations and planetary orbits shows Thailand in the throes of a "gateway" year of change, says astrologer Pinyo Pongcharoen - one of a legion of fortune tellers sought out by politicians in chaotic and unpredictable times. "The stars are all in place," the president of Thailand's International Astrological Association said. "There will be a big change, a big confrontation, a big negotiation."

His forecast might lack precision but it carries weight for Thais, who have long turned to fortune tellers for a hint of what lies in store at school, in business, love and politics. And politics is currently dominating conversations, following a series of dramatic events which have lit up the political landscape ahead of elections set for March 24. Thailand's King Maha Vajiralongkorn on Friday slapped down the unprecedented prime ministerial candidacy of his sister Princess Ubolratana, which brought the revered monarchy into frontline politics, as a "highly inappropriate" move.

She was proposed for premier by the Thai Raksa Chart party, which is aligned with the powerful Shinawatra clan and is now waiting to see if it will be censured for the bold, perhaps foolish, move. The upheaval triggered rumors of a possible counter-coup to oust junta leader Prayut Chan-O-Cha, speculation he denies. Pinyo-who has read the fortune of

a former prime minister, though he declined to say who - refused to be drawn into unpicking what it all means, saying only that there will be a showdown between "liberal and conservative" forces. "It's a fight between the people who have a new thinking and the people who keep the old way of thinking," he said cryptically.

### Aligning with the cosmos

Thailand's history is steeped in astrology, with every twist in the country's volatile history of coups, protests and short-lived civilian governments informed by the stars, said Edoardo Siani, a cultural anthropologist of Thailand at Kyoto University. It is common for Thais to discern meaning in everyday symbolism and they are conscious of auspicious dates, places and colors. Politicians capitalize on this fluency, he added.

Thai Raksa Chart, the party which proposed the princess' ill-fated bid for prime minister, announced her candidacy at 9:10 am last Friday - with the timing rumored to symbolize her connection with her father, the late King Rama IX, and her brother, current King Rama X. "It is about aligning the individual with the greater cosmos," said Siani. Uncertainty in politics feeds the fortune-telling industry as people are unable to discuss rival sides openly because of legal controls and the country's sharp divisions. "You don't know what's going to happen, so you become interested in prophecies and it gives you answers that you can't even ask about," Siani said.

### 'Their time is up'

While astrology is often favored by the elite, tarot cards have gained popularity among ordinary people. They provide more definitive answers than complex astrological



BANGKOK: Pinyo Pongcharoen, president of Thailand's International Astrological Association, referencing an astrology textbook during an interview in Bangkok. — AFP

maps. Dao Dao, a fortune teller in a central Bangkok district, flips over a tarot card featuring "The Wheel of Fortune". "Yes, (junta leader Prayut) will come back as prime minister," she said. Her premonition of Prayut's evolution from junta chief to civilian leader matches the prediction of Warin Buaviratlerd, a renowned army astrologer who has known the gruff former general for 20 years.

"The group of people who are serving the country now will come back and serve again," Warin told AFP, adding that he believes the Shinawatra clan is done. Thai politics has revolved around billionaire ex-premier Thaksin Shinawatra for almost two decades, and his party and its proxies have won every election since 2001. But analysts say the recent upheaval linked to Ubolratana's fleeting tilt for office has seriously undercut Thaksin's position and if Thai Raksa Chart is dissolved, it would deal a serious blow to his affiliated parties' electoral chances. "Their time is up," said the astrologer. — AFP

## Germany anti-Semitic offences up sharply

**BERLIN:** Anti-Semitic offences rose almost 10 percent in Germany last year, and violent attacks were up more than 60 percent, crime statistics showed yesterday. Police recorded 1,646 offences motivated by hatred against Jews, said a government answer to a request by far-left Die Linke party lawmaker Petra Pau. Among these were 62 violent offences that left 43 people injured, up from 37 physical attacks the previous year.

Germany, like other western countries, has watched with alarm as anti-Semitic and other racist hate speech and violence have increased in recent years as the political climate has coarsened and grown more polarized. A mass influx of mostly Muslim refugees and migrants to Germany from 2015 drove the rise of the far-right and anti-immigration Alternative for Germany (AfD) party, which since late 2017 is the biggest opposition group in parliament.

Leading AfD members, aside from railing against Islam and multicultural-

ism, have also made comments that play down the Holocaust. Party co-leader Alexander Gauland described Nazi Germany's industrial-scale murder of Jews and other minorities as a mere "speck of bird poo in over 1,000 years of successful German history". Another leading AfD politician, Bjoern Hoecke, has criticized the sprawling Holocaust memorial in Berlin as a "monument of shame". The president of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, Josef Schuster, and other Jewish community leaders have accused the AfD of fomenting hate against refugees, Muslims and Jews.

### Belt attack, Holocaust denial

At the same time, Germany has also witnessed a rise in anti-Semitic attacks committed by migrants from Arab states. In one prominent case last year a 19-year-old Syrian man was convicted for assault after lashing out with his belt at an Israeli man wearing a Jewish kippa skullcap while shouting "yahudi", Jew in Arabic. A video of the street assault, filmed by the victim on his smartphone, had sparked widespread public revulsion as it spread on social media, and triggered street rallies in solidarity with Jews. News of the belt attack coincided with another public outcry, over a rap duo who made light of Nazi death camp prisoners but went on to win the music industry's sales-based Echo award, which was subsequently axed. — AFP

## International

# Philippines' journalist at odds with President Duterte arrested for libel

## Rappler fighting numerous cases lodged by Philippine government

**MANILA:** The award-winning head of a Philippine news website known for its tough scrutiny of President Rodrigo Duterte was arrested yesterday on libel charges, the latest in a series of legal cases against perceived adversaries of the government. Maria Ressa, chief executive of Rappler, is accused of cyber libel over a 2012 article, updated in 2014, that linked a businessman to murder and trafficking of humans and drugs, citing information contained in an intelligence report from an unspecified agency.

National Bureau of Investigation officers escorted Ressa through a phalanx of media that poured into the Manila office of Rappler when news of the agents' arrival went viral on social media. "People should know that the line has been crossed," Ressa told reporters, adding she would seek bail. The justice ministry filed the case on behalf of the businessman, who denies any wrongdoing.

Ressa was among several people named "Person of the Year" by Time Magazine in 2018 for leading what it said was Rappler's "fearless reporting on President Rodrigo Duterte's propaganda machine and extrajudicial killings", referring to his bloody war on drugs. Rappler has borne the brunt of what activists say is a state-sponsored campaign to intimidate Duterte's opponents by hitting them with legal measures, or subjecting them to a torrent of online hate whipped up by social media "influencers", some of whom held government posts.

Presidential spokesman, Salvador Panelo, said a crime had been

committed, a court had found probable cause and Rappler was not being penalized for its reporting. "This is nothing to do with freedom of expression or freedom of the press," he told news channel ANC. London-based right group Amnesty International said the charges were trumped up and "brazenly politically motivated". Ressa's arrest is the latest problem Rappler has faced. Its operating license was rescinded in 2018 over alleged ownership violations, and it is also dealing with a case involving alleged tax evasion. Both cases are going on. "These cases are intended to intimidate us," Chay Hofilena, Rappler's investigative editor, told media.

"We know that's the intent, we are not buckling," Rappler's reporters are regularly threatened by elements of Duterte's online support base, part of what Rappler's investigations say is an organized "weaponising" of the internet by the government. The government denies that. For his part, Duterte said he does not need help from online trolls, and insists he has never punished anyone for criticizing him. He has called Rappler a "fake news outlet", and even suggested it might be linked to the US Central Intelligence Agency. The National Union of Journalists of the Philippines called Ressa's arrest "a shameful act of persecution by a bully government". — Reuters



### Amnesty: Charges 'politically motivated'



**MANILA:** CEO of Philippine news website Rappler, Maria Ressa speaks to the media at the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) headquarters in Manila. — AFP

## How refugee footballer's honeymoon turned into extradition nightmare

**BANGKOK:** The honeymoon that Bahraini footballer Hakeem Al Araibi and his wife had hoped to have in Thailand late last year did not go according to plan. As the 25-year-old, who has refugee status in Australia, got off a plane in Bangkok on Nov 27, Thai immigration police were waiting to arrest him based on an Interpol "red notice" from Bahrain. What followed was more than two months of diplomatic wrangling and intense scrutiny from global rights and sports organizations as they lobbied for Araibi's release from a prison in Bangkok, where he awaited possible extradition to the Gulf country.

Araibi fled Bahrain in 2014 after being accused of vandalism during the 2011 Arab Spring protests and sentenced in absentia to 10 years in prison. He denies the charges and has lived as a refugee in Australia ever since. The Middle East nation calls him a fugitive; Araibi said he would be tortured if he were sent back there. "It was a big surprise when I arrived at Bangkok airport," Araibi said.

### Refugee status

Araibi had contacted Australia's Home Affairs department, the agency responsible for his refugee status, before his honeymoon and was assured that it was safe to travel, said Fatima Yazbek, a rights activist who has been in close touch with the couple. Australian Home Affairs officials did not immediately comment. But as the couple's flight took off from Melbourne, where Araibi plays for the Pascoe Vale football club, an Interpol notification went out alerting both Bahrain and Thailand of his movements.

Thai authorities say they acted on the alert from Interpol Australia and an extradition request hours later by Bahrain, which had put out the red notice weeks

before on Nov 8 - the same day the couple was granted Thai visas from the embassy in Australia. "The authorities knew his seat number and had a copy of the (Bahraini) passport that he had had when he was 16 years old," Phil Robertson of Human Rights Watch, who was in contact with the couple, told Reuters. It was not immediately clear why Araibi's refugee status, which should have prevented an Interpol red notice, was not flagged when the travel notification went out. Activist Yazbek says it was a lack of coordination among Australian agencies.

Australia's embassy in Bangkok said it was "not initially aware" that a red notice had been issued despite Araibi's status as a protected refugee. "When the Australian Government became aware of the situation, we ensured the red notice was rescinded as soon as possible," the embassy said in a statement. That took three days, during which Araibi remained detained. By Nov 30, the Interpol red notice had been lifted and the footballer was told he could soon leave Bangkok. But the delay proved costly. By the time the red notice was lifted, Bahraini authorities had contacted Thailand, asking for his detention and eventual extradition.

### Shackles

Araibi was detained throughout the weeks-long process, which saw him appear in court on Feb. 4 with his bare feet in shackles as he begged authorities not to send him to Bahrain. The case drew international criticism and a public campaign to free Araibi gained momentum, spearheaded in Australia by footballers and rights activists. Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison and officials from world soccer governing body FIFA joined calls for his release.

"The photos of footballer Hakeem in leg irons at the court prompted a huge, spontaneous upsurge of global revulsion in social media, making it quite clear to Thai policymakers that the global campaign would grow and intensify if they continued with the extradition process to Bahrain," Robertson said.

On Monday, the Thai attorney general's office sudden-



**MELBOURNE:** Supporters of refugee footballer Hakeem Al-Araibi welcome him at the airport in Melbourne on February 12, 2019. — AFP

ly said it was dropping the extradition case after Bahrain abandoned its request. It was not clear when or why the Gulf kingdom changed its mind. The move came on the heels of a meeting between Thai Foreign Minister Don Pramudwinai and Bahrain Crown Prince Salman bin Hamad al Khalifa on Sunday in Manama, though the agenda of that meeting was not disclosed. Bahrain's foreign ministry said the 10-year jail sentence imposed on Araibi remained in place and reaffirmed its right to "pursue all necessary legal actions against him."

Within hours of Thailand's decision, Araibi boarded a plane back to Melbourne, where he was welcomed by hundreds of supporters on Tuesday. Araibi said the trip to Thailand was the first time he and his wife, who is also Bahraini, had travelled out of Australia together. She does not face any legal issues in her home country and is a university student in Australia, he said. Araibi told Reuters he did not plan to travel for a while after their ordeal. "Now I am waiting for my Australian citizenship and I am not going to travel again until I get it," he said. "I also need the Australian government to ensure that I am not going to get arrested again if I travel abroad." — Reuters

## Imprisoned PKK leader and Turkey's 'nemesis' Ocalan

**ANKARA:** Abdullah Ocalan, the jailed Kurdish militant leader labeled the "nemesis" of the Turkish state, remains a highly influential figure in the Kurdish movement despite being cut off from the outside world. Turkey captured Ocalan, then public enemy number one, on February 15, 1999 after a relentless hunt. He has been imprisoned on the heavily fortified island of Imrali in the Sea of Marmara for two decades and has not been allowed to see his lawyers since 2011. But while the government brands the burly 69-year-old a "baby-killer", to Kurds he is known as "Apo" or uncle.

The pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) say more than 300 detainees are on hunger strike to protest what they call Ocalan's isolation—an indication of his continued importance for the movement. As he has not been seen or heard in public for years, the popular image of Ocalan remains that of a man with a round face and thick black moustache. But in photographs released a few years ago "we found that he had aged, his hair and moustache were white", one of Ocalan's lawyers, Ibrahim Bilmez said. "He has been in isolation at Imrali for 20 years, so it is normal that he is worn down," Bilmez added.

### Student politics

Ocalan was born into a poor peasant family in the village of Omerli in Turkey's southeast. His official birthdate is April 4, 1949, but this may not be exact, says Aliza Marcus in the book "Blood and Belief: The PKK and the Kurdish Fight for Independence". He became a left-wing militant during his time at university in Ankara, where he studied politics and threw himself into the Kurdish cause, leading to his first incarceration of seven months in 1972. In 1978, Ocalan and a group of fellow students founded the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), a Marxist-oriented movement fighting for Kurdish autonomy. Two years later he was in exile, most often in Damascus or Lebanon's Beqaa Valley which was then under Syrian control and where he set up the PKK's headquarters.

Ankara branded Ocalan its "nemesis" after Ocalan led the movement on to a path of armed struggle in 1984, planning to carve out a chunk of Turkey to found an independent Kurdish state. Security forces hit back hard in response to PKK attacks, plunging Turkey's southeast into a state of near civil war. The group was blacklisted as a terrorist organization by Ankara, the US and the EU. Ocalan's first call for a unilateral ceasefire came in 1993, then again in 1995 and 1998, each time seeking a political



**ROME:** In this file photo, Kurds with portraits of Kurdish rebel Abdullah Ocalan, leader of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) read the Italian press as they sit in front of Cello military hospital in Rome. — AFP

agreement with Ankara in return. But authorities said they refused to negotiate with the "terrorist chief" with blood on his hands.

### Influence beyond Turkey

Ocalan's influence stretches beyond Turkish borders. His image can be widely seen in areas controlled by the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) in northern Syria. Turkey says the US-backed YPG militia is a "terrorist" offshoot of the PKK. Syria's permission for Ocalan to seek refuge there caused major friction between Damascus and Ankara, and political pressure forced him out in 1998. He tried to seek political asylum across Europe, including in Greece, but in 1999 Turkish secret agents nabbed him in the Kenyan capital Nairobi outside the Greek embassy. He was swiftly sentenced to death for treason, which was commuted to life imprisonment when Turkey abolished capital punishment in 2002.

With Ocalan in custody, Turkey believed the head of the PKK had been cut. But even behind bars, he continued to exert control over the movement by issuing instructions to

his lawyers and the Kurdish MPs who visited him. Following Ocalan's arrest, the PKK had said it would strive only for cultural rights rather than an independent Kurdish state. It entered what proved to be its longest truce, which lasted until 2004. During that period, Turkey undertook some modest reforms for the Kurds. Then in 2012, it was once again Ocalan who ordered the end of a hunger strike by 700 detained Kurdish lawmakers.

When Recep Tayyip Erdogan, then prime minister and now president, threatened on a wave of nationalist sentiment to bring back the death penalty for him, he was still seeking dialogue with Ocalan. In 2013, Ocalan called for another ceasefire to allow peace talks a chance to reach a negotiated settlement. Two years later however, the bloody clashes resumed. Today there appears little chance of a political solution to a conflict that has cost more than 40,000 lives. But "for a large majority of Kurds... (Ocalan) is the uncle who embodies the Kurdish nation in its totality" and he would be a key player if talks were to resume, said Hamit Bozarslan of the Paris-based School for Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences. — AFP

## Key dates of the Kurdish conflict

**ANKARA:** With roots in the carve-up of the Ottoman Empire, the drive by Kurdish groups for autonomy from Turkey repeatedly spilled into bloodshed, with conflict in recent decades costing tens of thousands of lives and sparking harsh reprisals by Ankara. In 1984, Kurdish separatist leader Abdullah Ocalan launched an armed struggle with the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) he co-founded and the fighting has left more than 40,000 dead. Here is a timeline of a century of Kurdish rebellion:

### 1920: Autonomy promised

After the Ottoman Empire is defeated by Allied powers in World War I, the 1920 Treaty of Sevres envisages—among its many provisions—the creation of an autonomous Kurdistan.

But Turkish nationalists led by Ottoman army general Mustafa Kemal Atatürk oppose the harsh terms of the treaty, which chops off large parts of Ottoman territory, and launch a successful "Independence War". It results in a new accord, the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne, which establishes the boundaries of modern Turkey and effectively backtracks on Kurdish autonomy. Kurds remain straddled across Iran, Iraq, Syria and Turkey. Until 1938 Kurds mount several rebellions to demand independence, but they are subdued by force, resulting in the deaths of thousands.

### 1978: Kurdish group formed

In 1978 Abdullah Ocalan and a group of Marxist-Leninist students found the PKK in southeastern Turkey to seek an independent Kurdish zone in that area. Most of Turkey's 15 million Kurds, 20 percent of the population, live in its southeast near areas of Iran, Iraq and Syria, countries which also have Kurdish populations.

### 1984: Armed struggle

In 1984 Ocalan orders from exile the PKK to start an armed struggle. Its first attacks are against Turkish authorities in the southeastern towns of Erzurum and Semdinli. It steps up its military campaign with strikes against security forces, tourist sites and the pro-Ankara "village guards" militia. Ankara declares a state of emergency in Kurdish provinces in 1987.

### 1992: Under attack in Iraq

In 1992 the Turkish army mounts a vast air and land operation against PKK bases in northern Iraq's Qandil mountains, from where they are launching attacks across the border in Turkey. The Iraqi Kurds back the Turkish army, which carries out regular incursions into the area involving thousands of troops.

### 1999: Ocalan arrested, jailed

In 1999 Ocalan—on the run since 1980—is captured in Kenya during an undercover operation by Turkish security forces. He is sentenced to death in June for treason, separatism and murder. The sentence is commuted in 2002 to life in prison after Turkey abolishes the death penalty. In concessions to the Kurdish population, the Turkish parliament allows Kurdish-language television programs and education.

### 2013: Ceasefire

After several failed attempts for talks, secret negotiations start in late 2012 between the Turkish intelligence service and Ocalan. In March 2013 the jailed leader announces a unilateral ceasefire, telling fighters to lay down their arms. But in September the PKK halt a planned pull-out of their fighters from Turkish soil, saying reforms promised by Ankara in exchange had not gone far enough.

### 2015: Conflict resumes

The fragile truce is ripped apart in July 2015 by an attack that kills more than 30 people in the mainly Kurdish town of Suruc on the border with Syria. It is blamed on the Islamic State (IS) group, who since 2011 had been waging war in Syria, but Kurdish guerrillas retaliate against the Turkish security forces, accusing them of not protecting the local population. Ankara in turn launches a "war against terrorism" that targets simultaneously the PKK and IS in Syria with air and ground strikes. "The conditions for maintaining the ceasefire... have been eliminated," says the PKK's military wing. In 2016 Turkey sends troops into Syria in a bid to push back from its border the Syrian Kurdish YPG militia. Ankara views the group as linked to the PKK and having the same objective of creating an autonomous Kurdish "canton" on the border. — AFP

## International

# Nigeria election: The young voters and old candidates

## Main candidates twice as old as half the electorate

**LAGOS:** Two men in their 70s are contesting a Nigerian presidential election in which half the registered voters are aged between 18 and 35. Both are familiar faces. It is the fifth election campaign for President Muhammadu Buhari, 76, who was a military ruler in the 1980s, and the fourth for main opposition candidate Atiku Abubakar, 72, who was vice president from 1999 to 2007. It means Saturday's vote offers little hope of change for young people in a country where nearly a quarter of the workforce is unemployed - a source of frustration that has the potential to spill over into violence.

"I should be happy, but I'm not happy because the two candidates aren't what I expected," said Dorcas Nathaniel, a student in the capital, Abuja, who planned to vote for the first time. Nathaniel said she had hoped at least one of the candidates would have policies she found inspiring, but neither did. At 20, she is in the under-35 age group who make up 51 percent of the 84 million registered voters. Anyone seeking an alternative - someone who, unlike the main two candidates, is not a well-known, elderly, northern Muslim man from the Fulani ethnic group - has been disappointed.

The similarities between the two are largely due to an unofficial power-sharing agreement under which the presidency alternates between the north and south after every two four-year terms. It is now the turn of the mainly Muslim north. The rest of the more than 70 presidential candidates lack access to funds available to Buhari and Atiku through parties that have governed

Nigeria since military rule ended in 1999 - the All Progressives Congress and People's Democratic Party. The two men have also developed patronage networks over decades in politics.

### Buying votes

John Sunday, a 23-year-old student in the Makoko shanty town built on stilts in a lagoon in Lagos, said many people in the community were more interested in accepting cash from political parties than choosing their preferred candidate. "People are after money, they're not after the future of their children. They are selling their votes," said Sunday, a political science student. "Vote buying" is not new but Sunday said for many in the slum district - where people travel in canoes through waterways littered with plastic waste, and the stench of excrement hangs in the air - life is getting tougher.

Nearly a quarter of the workforce is unemployed. Hardest-hit are those aged 15-35, of whom 55 percent are out of work or not in full-time jobs. The cost of living has also risen rapidly, with inflation hitting a seven-month high of 11.4 percent in December. Cheta Nwanze, head of research at Lagos political consultancy SBM Intelligence, said poverty and higher living costs were a cause of violent crime as young, unskilled men tried to make money outside official employment. "The economy isn't growing anywhere near enough to support them," he said. "When you have such a situation, the outcome is that all sorts of people will rise up to fill in the gaps."



**ABUJA:** Nigerian President and candidate to his re-election for the All Progressives Congress (APC) Muhammadu Buhari (center) and Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) presidential candidate Atiku Abubakar (2nd right) pose yesterday, during their meeting at International Conference Center in Abuja to sign the national peace accord for the preparation of the presidential election of February 16. — AFP

### Insecurity

Nigeria's security forces face challenges ranging from Islamist insurgencies, banditry, kidnappings in the oil-rich Niger Delta and communal violence over land use. Nigeria also has a history of violence at election time, sometimes involving thugs paid to intimidate voters but also as a result of anger at alleged vote rigging. Buhari and Atiku have both sought to address the needs of those unable to find work in a weak economy struggling to

recover from its first recession in 25 years. The president said the expansion of a nationwide vocational skills program could yield more than 15 million new jobs. And he said education was a priority, vowing to retrain teachers to focus on science, technology and mathematics. Atiku wants to expand the role of the private sector to create growth and jobs. These include pledges to privatize the state oil company and create a \$25 billion fund to support private sector infrastructure investment. — Reuters



### Top presidential hopefuls are familiar figures

#### News in brief

##### Macedonian name change

**SKOPJE:** The Macedonian government said yesterday it had officially informed the United Nations of the country's new name following its historic agreement with neighboring Greece. Skopje and Athens buried a 27-year dispute in agreeing in June last year to rename Macedonia as North Macedonia. The new name came into force on Tuesday after constitutional changes were published in the Official Gazette and Skopje's foreign ministry said both countries had informed the UN by letter that the change is now in force. Skopje is already using the new full name - Republic of North Macedonia - on its official website and Twitter page while the authorities were due later to change border signs. Since 1991, Athens had objected to its neighbor being called Macedonia because Greece has a northern province of the same name. — AFP

##### Deadly stampede in Nigeria

**YENAGOA:** A number of people were killed in a stampede at a rally in support of Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari, local officials from his party said on Tuesday, days ahead of an election in which he is seeking a second term. The incident happened at an event in the southern city of Port Harcourt, which is in the country's Niger Delta oil-production heartland. Voters in Nigeria, Africa's biggest democracy, will go to the polls on Saturday. Buhari's main challenger in the race to govern the continent's top oil-producing nation is Atiku Abubakar, a businessman and former vice president. — AFP

##### Attack on minority Ahmadis

**DHAKA:** Police fired rubber bullets and tear gas at hundreds of hardline Islamists who attacked minority Muslims in northern Bangladesh, leaving at least 25 people injured, officials said yesterday. The clashes erupted Tuesday night after days of tensions over a planned convention of the Ahmadi Muslim minority community in the town of Ahmadnagar. Majority Sunni Muslim groups demanded the event be cancelled. Hardline Islamists do not consider the Ahmadis to be Muslim and have called for them to be banned. The 100,000 Ahmadis in Bangladesh have faced repeated attacks and are often barred from establishing mosques. The group is banned in Pakistan. Police said several Sunni groups have been holding protests against the Ahmadis' local convention, scheduled to start in just over a week. — AFP

##### Cash van driver nabbed

**LILLE:** The driver of a cash delivery van who disappeared near Paris with his vehicle and an estimated 3.4 million euros (3.85 million dollars) has been arrested, police sources said Tuesday. The 28-year-old driver and a large part of the money were tracked down to a flat in the centre of the city of Amiens, some 160 kilometers north of Paris, the sources said on condition of anonymity. The driver and his truck disappeared after stopping outside a Western Union office at around 6:00 am on Monday in Aubervilliers, a suburb just north of the capital. The driver stayed behind the wheel as two of his colleagues went inside. "When they came back out, the van and the driver were gone," a police source said. The van was found soon afterwards a few blocks away with its doors wide open, but without the bags of cash. Initial reports had put the value of the haul at about one million euros. — AFP

## US Southern Baptist churches embroiled in sex abuse scandal

**CHICAGO:** The United States' largest Protestant denomination, the Southern Baptist Convention, is facing a sexual abuse crisis after a bombshell report revealed hundreds of predators and more than 700 victims since 1998. The report by two Texas newspapers found some 380 church leaders and volunteers have faced public accusations of abuse, mostly of children as young as three years old. Some of the accused continued to work at Southern Baptist churches, the newspapers said. In response to the report, church officials acknowledged the number of victims could actually be higher and urged survivors to come forward.

"One of the things I'm encouraged by are the number of pastors that are actively engaged right now," in the report's aftermath, convention leader Russell Moore told AFP on Tuesday. The revelations threatened to engulf the denomination-with some 47,000 churches and 15 million members mostly in the southern US-in the same type of scandal that has roiled the Catholic Church. A more comprehensive response was likely to come from the Southern Baptist organization next week when president JD Greear "is scheduled to give an update on a sexual abuse study he commissioned last summer," said spokesman Roger Oldham.

### Lax oversight

Unlike the Vatican, the Southern Baptist Convention is a loose network of churches allowed to run autonomously, ordain their own ministers-who are not required to be celibate-and hire staff and volunteers

## Facing cronyism and no work, young Haitians protest or flee

**PORT-AU-PRINCE:** Whether using social media to fight corruption or marching in protests that have brought the country to a halt, the anger of Haiti's youth at their lack of prospects is boiling over in increasingly dramatic ways. Marco Beausejour, a graduate who struggles to make ends meet driving a motor-bike-taxi, said that embattled President Jovenel Moise "launched clean-up programs which he said would create 50,000 jobs."

"So young people are graduating from university and he has only brooms to offer them?" he asked. "Our parents made huge sacrifices to pay for our education and then the only choice we have is to sweep the roads?" fumed the 27-year-old, who studied accounting at university. "This president really does not respect us." Despite the hardship of his situation, Beausejour acknowledged that at least he had the chance to get a higher education: many of the youths from the capital's vast slums never even finish high school.

Demonstrating, as hundreds of them did Monday, gives young people from shantytowns like Cite Soleil a chance to vent their rage at an unjust system, even if some see it as an opportunity to smash

store fronts and engage in a bit of looting. More than half the population of this impoverished Caribbean nation is under the age of 25, yet young people have almost as little representation in the corridors of powers as they do in the workforce. "Getting into business is tough because it's a closed shop and corrupt," said Pascale Solages, 31. "You can't get a loan to start a business and any jobs on the market demand years of experience which people obviously don't have."

based on each church's own standards. The decentralized system, which lacks a shared database of personnel records, has been rife for exploitation by sexual abusers, according to the investigative report first published over the weekend by the Houston Chronicle and the San Antonio Express-News. Lax oversight allowed some abusers with criminal convictions-even registered sex offenders-to continue working at Southern Baptist churches, according to the report, which found 220 offenders who were convicted or took plea deals.

"In the denomination, each congregation governs its own affairs. There are no bishops. There are no supervisors," Moore said. "But churches can decide with whom they fellowship," he said. "No one can use church autonomy as an excuse." In at least 35 cases, abusers were able to leave one church and find work in another over the last two decades. In some cases, congregations knew about the past abuse. For example, Illinois pastor Leslie Mason was convicted in 2003 on two counts of sexual assault. After being released from prison, he went on to lead a different church nearby.

### 'Changes are coming'

Florida pastor Darrell Gilyard, released from prison in 2011 after a criminal sex abuse conviction involving two girls, returned to preach services which children could not attend, because a court order required him to stay away from minors. Moore said some Southern Baptists held erroneous views of forgiveness that "assumes these predators should be simply given a second chance."

In other instances, he said, churches believed horrific crimes could not occur within their ministries. Moore also acknowledged that the Southern Baptist Convention rejected a proposal in 2007 that it should establish a registry to track abuse claims and prevent predators from getting rehired by other churches. The newspapers found hundreds of abuse cases in the years

### Cronyism

With the private sector concentrated in the hands of a few powerful families, the public sector is the main employer in Haiti, yet the administration is far from being representative of the population. The most recent survey of civil servants, published in February 2018, showed that 80 percent of state employees were 35 or older. The frailty of the pension system means people are reluctant to retire, one reason why there are so few opportunities for young people to break into the sector. But the main challenge to recruiting the best young candidates into the public sector is cronyism.

"Corruption means that the administration is packed with senators and deputies who use their office to find jobs for their friends and relatives, people lacking experience or expertise, said Solages, who works on an anti-graft campaign called the "Petrocaribe Challenge." The movement, launched last year on social media, is calling for full transparency in the distribution of money from the Petrocaribe fund, a development program launched by oil-rich Venezuela more than



**HOUSTON:** Second Baptist Church, Cypress Campus is pictured in Houston, Texas. — AFP

since. And past church leaders have been accused of concealing or mishandling complaints. "As a denomination, now is a time to mourn and repent. Changes are coming. They must," said Greear, the convention's current president, on Twitter. — AFP



**PORT-AU-PRINCE:** A man falls as he tries to carry the body of a dead demonstrator while police shoot during clashes in the center of Haitian Capital Port-au-Prince. — AFP

a decade ago. In January, a court issued a report accusing a dozen former ministers and senior officials of disastrous mismanagement and possible embezzlement of the aid fund, with no clear accounting of some \$2 billion.

### 'Youths dying at sea'

Frustrated at the lack of job opportunities, and struggling with rising inflation, many young people see leaving their homeland as the only way to build a future. Some 165,000 Haitians have already wound up in Chile in the past four years. Faced with this unprecedented wave of migration, the Chilean govern-

ment began in April demanding entry visas for citizens of the poorest nation in the Caribbean. And while Chile starts to close its doors, the United States-the other traditional destination for Haitians seeking a better life-is also looking less inviting. The so-called Temporary Protected Status granted to Haitians after the 2010 earthquake is due to expire in July unless the Trump administration-which is actively cracking down on migration-decides to extend it. Despite those obstacles, many young Haitians are still determined to undertake the perilous journey into exile that can cost them everything. —AFP

International

# Missing Uighurs' families demand 'proof of life' videos from Beijing

## Ethnic Uighurs launch a global campaign #MeTooUyghur

BEIJING: Ethnic Uighurs have launched a global campaign to press China for video proof that their missing relatives are alive, turning the tables on Beijing's use of video to counter claims that a renowned Uighur had died in custody. The social media campaign was launched Tuesday under the hashtag #MeTooUyghur after China released a video of a man who identified himself as Uighur poet and musician Abdurehim Heyit saying he was alive and well. That video was made public to rebut Turkey's claim that he had died in a Chinese prison, which Ankara made in a broader statement condemning China for herding vast numbers of Muslim minority Uighurs into "re-education" camps in the country's remote northwestern Xinjiang region.

Under the hashtag, posts from around the world show Uighurs holding pictures of mothers, fathers, sons, daughters or friends missing in Xinjiang. "Chinese authorities showed video as proof Mr Heyit is still alive. Now, we want to know, where are millions of Uyghurs?" said Halmurat Harri, a Finland-based Uighur activist, who created the hashtag. He told AFP his own parents were detained previously but released last year. The hashtag — along with its Uighur-language version #Menmuuyghur — has been used hundreds of times on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, which are blocked in China.

It was not seen on China's own heavily censored social media platforms. A UN panel of experts says nearly one million Uighurs and other Turkic-speaking minorities are being held in extrajudicial detention in camps in Xinjiang, where most of China's more than 10 million Uighurs live. Beijing at first denied the allegation, but later admitted putting put people into "vocational education centers". Arslan Hidayat, son-in-law of prominent Uighur comedian Adil Mijit, posted a Facebook video saying his father-in-

law was missing and calling for a "proof of life video" for him and others "who have been locked up in Chinese concentration camps".

Xinjiang has long suffered from violent unrest, which China claims is orchestrated by an organized "terrorist" movement seeking the region's independence. It has implemented a massive, high-tech security crackdown in recent years. But many Uighurs and Xinjiang experts say the violent episodes stem largely from spontaneous outbursts of anger at Chinese cultural and religious repression, and that Beijing plays up terrorism to justify tight control of the resource-rich region. Critics allege Uighurs in the camps are being brainwashed in a massive campaign to enforce conformity with Chinese society and the abandonment of Islam.

### Ordinary voices

Abdul Mukaddes said his cousin Erpat Ablekrem, a professional football player, has been missing since last March and that if China responds by releasing further videos it would prove they were "illegally holding people for months or years" without charge. Xinjiang's regional government, which Chinese state media said released the original Heyit video, did not respond to a request for comment about the social media campaign. Patrick Poon, a researcher at Amnesty International, said the movement gives worried Uighurs a rare outlet while undercutting China's terrorism assertions.

"These people are ordinary people. The Chinese government simply can't claim that they are all extremists or terrorists," Poon said. It also adds pressure on the world community to speak out, he said. The Muslim world in particular has been conspicuously quiet, possibly to avoid



ISTANBUL: Hidayat, the son-in-law of Uighur comedian Adil Mijit (right), calls for a 'proof of life video' of Mijit in Istanbul. —AFP

Chinese diplomatic or economic retaliation. Turkey's statement on Saturday was perhaps the strongest yet by any country, calling China's treatment of Uighurs "a great cause of shame for humanity". Turkey also said it had

learned that Heyit died serving an eight-year prison sentence "over one of his songs", but China rejected that on Monday, pointing to the video released by Xinjiang and calling the Turkish statement "vile". —AFP

## Protesters in India claim victory as citizenship bill stalls

GUWAHATI: Protesters in northeast India claimed victory yesterday after a bill that the government says will help Hindus in neighboring countries settle in India lapsed before it could be ratified by parliament. The Citizenship Amendment Bill is aimed at helping Hindus and members of other non-Muslim minority communities in neighboring Muslim countries move to India. But critics say the legislation is an attempt by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to burnish its Hindu-nationalist credentials ahead of a general election, that must be held by May.

The bill had incited exceptional opposition in remote, ethnically diverse northeastern states where for years residents have complained that migrants from Bangladesh are a burden on society. For days, protesters have taken to the streets, bringing chaos to several cities in the region. Authorities have responded with curfews and blocks on broadcasters in an attempt to quell the unrest. The lower house of parliament passed the bill last month but it was not ratified by the upper house before the end of its last session before the election yesterday. Activists in the northeast welcomed parliament's failure to push the legislation through.

"This is a moral victory for the people of the northeast with the BJP forced to bow down to the voices of struggle," Samujjal Bhattacharya, a leader of the All Assam Students' Union, one of the protesting groups said. Members of the Assam state organization had threatened to "shed blood" to block the bill. Protests over recent days have also rocked the small state of Manipur, where authorities imposed an indefinite curfew and suspended mobile internet services for five days late on Tuesday, following violent protests. Police said people were defying the curfew yesterday. Protests also erupted in Mizoram state, where some activists have given voice to old separatist aspirations. —Reuters

## China warns its citizens in Turkey to 'be vigilant'

BEIJING: Beijing has warned its citizens in Turkey to "be more vigilant" as bilateral tensions rise after strong Turkish criticism of China's treatment of its minority Uighur community. Nearly one million Uighurs and other Turkic-speaking minorities are being held in extrajudicial detention in camps in Xinjiang, according to a UN panel of experts, where most of China's more than 10 million Uighurs live.

## Cash-strapped Pakistan to host Saudi crown prince

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is preparing to welcome Saudi Arabian Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman for a state visit over the weekend, the foreign ministry confirmed yesterday, as Islamabad hopes to sign various investment deals to prop up its slumping economy. The two-day visit will kick off on February 16 and include a raft of high-level talks with Prime Minister Imran Khan along with Pakistan's military chief. "During his stay, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia will be signing a number of agreements ... related to diverse sectors," Pakistan's foreign ministry said in a statement. "The two countries will also discuss ways and means to develop a robust follow-up mechanism to ensure

effective implementation and quick progress on tangible areas of cooperation." Two five-star hotels have been fully booked by the Saudi delegation while the Kingdom's elite royal guards arrived in Pakistan earlier this week to assist with security arrangements, according to a municipal official in Islamabad. The trip comes as the crown prince continues to be tarnished by his alleged links to the brutal murder of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi amid new revelations he spoke of going after the writer "with a bullet". The CIA has concluded the Saudi operation was likely directed by the powerful crown prince, but the White House has sidestepped that finding amid strenuous denials by Riyadh.

### Gulf ties

Despite the controversy, Riyadh and Islamabad-decades-old allies-have been involved for months in talks to iron out details of the deals in time for the crown prince's visit. Saudi Arabia is reportedly preparing to sign a record investment package with

Turkey wrote on its website: "We call once more on Chinese citizens in Turkey and Chinese tourists going to Turkey to be more vigilant and pay attention to their personal security as well as the security of their belongings."

The warning was posted on Sunday, the day after the declarations by the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Violent anti-China protests against the county's treatment of the Uighurs have previously broken out in Turkey. In 2015, militant Turkish nationalists burnt a Chinese flag in front of China's embassy in Ankara. A popular Chinese restaurant in Istanbul also had its windows smashed and a group of South Korean tourists who were visiting the city was attacked because they were mistaken for Chinese. —AFP

Pakistan, aiming to provide welcome relief for its cash-strapped Muslim ally.

At the heart of the investment is a reported \$10-billion refinery and oil complex in the strategic Gwadar Port on the Arabian Sea, the ultimate destination for the massive multi-billion dollar China Pakistan Economic Corridor. The visit comes just weeks after Pakistan rolled out the red carpet for Abu Dhabi's Crown Prince Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, shortly after the emirate pledged to provide \$3 billion to support Pakistan's battered economy.

The Wall Street Journal reported last month that both Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates-Islamabad's biggest trading partner in the Middle East-have offered Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan some \$30 billion in investment and loans. Pakistan has been courting its Gulf allies for months as Khan's new government desperately seeks to stave off an ongoing balance of payments crisis and reduce the size of any potential bailout from the International Monetary Fund. —AFP

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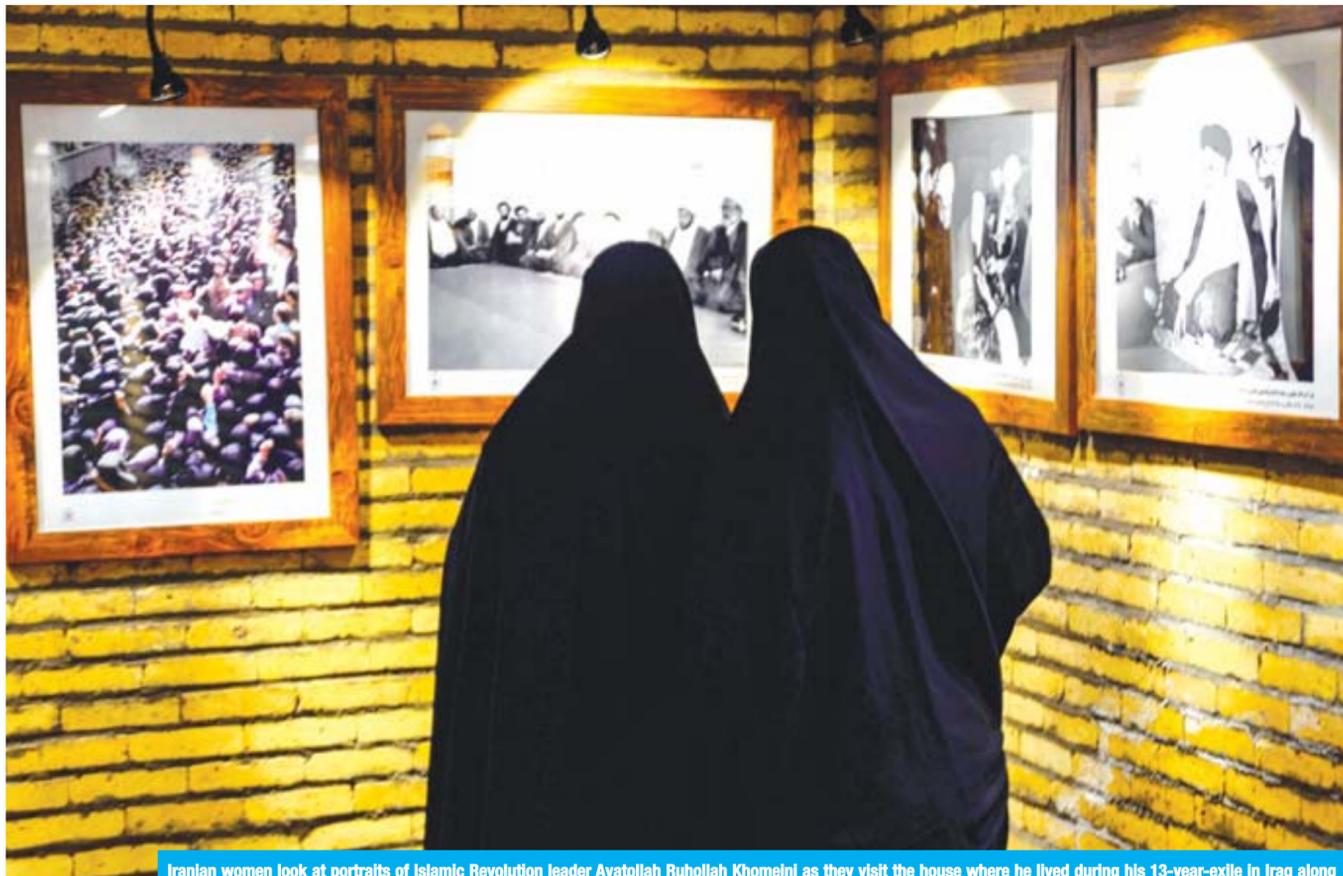
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Iranian women look at portraits of Islamic Revolution leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini as they visit the house where he lived during his 13-year-exile in Iraq along Al-Rasul Street near the shrine of Imam Ali in the central holy city of Najaf yesterday, while marking the 40th anniversary of the Islamic Revolution in Iran. — AFP

## US boardrooms gain women, minorities lag

In America's corporate boardrooms, diversity is making uneven progress: Women increasingly are pulling up a chair while racial and ethnic minorities still rarely get seats at the table. Twenty-seven percent of new directors at companies in the Russell 3000 Index were women during 2016-2018, up from 21 percent in the previous three-year period, according to estimates by ISS Analytics in an analysis for Reuters News. In 2018 alone, the figure was 32 percent.

Though women still are underrepresented, their gains have been more substantial than those of African-Americans and Latinos. These groups comprised only 5 percent and 2 percent, respectively, of new directors in 2016-2018, little changed from the previous three-year period. White men have long dominated US corporate boards, for reasons including bias and insular networks that don't necessarily invite in female or minority candidates. Some executives say it's hard to find qualified candidates of diverse backgrounds and difficult at times even to discern candidates' race or ethnicity.

Now, directors and experts say, women are gaining seats partly in response to pressure from influential investment firms and lawmakers. It is partly convenience. Women are easier to count and make up a larger pool to draw from. Advocates say greater gender diversity also can bring better financial performance, improve public image and is the right thing to do given that women are more than half the country's population. "All the big holders of securities are focused on gender," said Joe Johnson, a Boston-based partner at the Goodwin law firm who advises corporate boards "They'll move to minorities next," he said.

Dominique Mielle, a white woman who was named a director of REIT Anworth Mortgage Asset Corp in November, said forces like the "Me Too" movement have encouraged boards to add women first lest top investors withhold support in corporate elections. "If they will say no to your slate of directors, that's a problem" Mielle said.

A new California law requires that, by the end of 2021, at least three women sit on the boards of state-based publicly traded companies with six or more directors. At least four other states have passed or are considering similar measures on gender, but not race, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures. California Senator Hannah-Beth Jackson, a Santa Barbara County Democrat who authored the law, said it was aimed at breaking into "the man cave of the CEO suite".

### Lack of women 'a flag'

Other countries are more explicit in their demands for diversity - at least when it comes to gender. In Europe several countries have quotas, including France which requires 40 percent of board members at its largest listed companies to be women, while Germany has a 30 percent requirement. Britain has a government-backed target for women to make up a third of its 350 largest listed companies' boards by the end of 2020. In the US, those who favor diverse boards say they help companies respond more appropriately to causes like Black Lives Matter, or immigration reform. Diversity has also become something of a sales pitch for big asset managers like BlackRock Inc and State Street Corp, the largest and third-largest US asset managers.

State Street, for instance, placed the "Fearless Girl" statue near Wall Street in 2017 to promote gender diversity and an exchange-traded fund made up of companies with female leaders. Meanwhile BlackRock's proxy voting guidelines urge companies to have at least two women directors. They do not give a target figure for minority representation. Neither firm made executives available for an interview. A BlackRock spokeswoman said via e-mail, "We encourage companies to think about multiple elements of diversity and we use a lack of women as a flag to trigger a deeper conversation about how a company thinks about diversity."

Some research shows that gender diversity correlates with better financial results, perhaps because those companies are more likely to have engaged employees and lower turnover. But other studies suggest that companies with more women directors perform no better or worse. In a survey of 714 corporate directors, four-fifths of whom were men, consultant PwC in October found 84 percent said diversity enhances board performance. But 52 percent agreed, at least somewhat, that "board diversity efforts are driven by political correctness."

Some companies now provide diversity information in their proxy statements, with varying degrees of specificity. Last year consumer finance provider Regional Management Corp included a matrix showing which four of its eight directors were "White/Caucasian" and which four were "Hispanic/Latino". Regional director Roel Campos said investors probably want these additional details, as many of Regional's customers are Latino.

"We believe that by putting them out there investors are better informed and can judge for themselves whether our diversity is the type that helps deliver positive performance," said Campos, a former securities regulator who is also the incoming chair of the Latino Corporate Directors Association in Washington, DC. — Reuters

## Militia corners Iraq scrap metal market

The wrecks of vehicles used by Islamic State militants as car bombs and other metal debris left by the war in Iraq are now helping fund their Iran-backed enemies, industry sources say. Shiite paramilitaries that helped Iraqi forces drive IS out of its last strongholds in Iraq have taken control of the thriving trade in scrap metal retrieved from the battlefield, according to scrap dealers and others familiar with the trade.

Scrapyard owners, steel plant managers and legislators from around the city of Mosul, the de facto IS capital from 2014 to 2017, described to Reuters how the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) have made millions of dollars from the sale of anything from wrecked cars and damaged weapons to water tanks and window frames. The PMF deny involvement. "The PMF does not have anything to do with any trade activities in Mosul, scrap or otherwise," a PMF security official in Mosul said.

But interviews at scrapyards and with those in the industry corroborate accounts by lawmakers that the militias oversee or direct the transport of scrap, which is then melted down for use in building materials, and turn a large profit. These sources say PMF groups use their growing influence - and sometimes, according to some witnesses, intimidation - to corner the market and control transport of metal from damaged cities such as Mosul to Kurdish-run northern Iraq where it is bought and melted into steel.

Little of that steel is used to rebuild areas devastated by fighting. It goes instead to Kurdistan or southern Shiite provinces, they say. The trade is one way in which Shiite paramilitaries, which are now part of the Iraqi security forces, are transforming their control of land that used to be the IS "caliphate" into a source of wealth. The increasing influence of the PMF umbrella group, whose most powerful factions are backed by Iran, is worrying the United States and Israel as tension mounts with Iran, which is securing its sway over a corridor of territory through Iraq and Syria to Lebanon.

### 'I comply - they have guns'

At a scrapyard last month near a PMF checkpoint on the edge of Mosul, workers sorted through metal from a pile of car parts, electrical generators and crushed water tanks. The scrapyard owner said PMF groups buy tons of scrap each day and sell it in Kurdish areas for up to double

the price - or allow traders to do so in exchange for a cut of the profit, for passage through areas they control.

"This yard is controlled by one PMF faction, that one across the road by another," he said. He declined to give his name for fear of reprisals by militias. "I'm only allowed to sell to specific traders - they're either members of the militia or have a deal with them. You can't get scrap metal through checkpoints without a deal with the PMF," he said.

Ahmed Al-Kinani, a lawmaker representing the political

Mosul area in the months following the battle that ended in 2017, now make up less of the scrap.

In Anbar province, west of Baghdad, drivers and traders said the PMF held a heap of destroyed cars that is visible from the main highway near Fallujah, where fighting was intense in 2015. The traders said the PMF or companies the militias have agreements with hire drivers to transport metal from Anbar province to Kurdistan, or south to Basra. Alaa, a driver who used an alias, said permission for transporting scrap lay with the PMF. Lawmakers and traders said the PMF sometimes transported scrap more openly in their own trucks. Reuters could not verify this.

### Steel from the 'caliphate'

The volumes of scrap being moved have reduced since the immediate aftermath of the war with IS, but millions of tonnes of debris, including metal, still litter devastated areas. Mohammed Keko, the manager of a steel plant near Erbil in the Kurdish region, said he had purchased a minimum of 300 to 400 tons of mainly Mosul scrap each day since the city was recaptured from IS. "At the moment we buy for \$150 to \$160 per ton. It depends what traders have to pay for it," he said.

Keko said the PMF controlled transport of scrap, which sometimes was halted for months while militias disagreed on prices or traders could not pay enough to get cargo through. The steel construction rods that Erbil Steel Co makes from scrap are sold partly in the Kurdistan region but mainly in southern Shiite provinces of Iraq, Keko said. Nawfal Hammadi Al-Sultan, governor of Nineveh province where Mosul is the capital, also said the PMF buy scrap but dismissed allegations by some local lawmakers that he allows the paramilitaries to control the trade. "They buy it (but) there's no law that forbids anyone to buy scrap metal," he said.

Lawmakers say the steel should go back to the Sunni areas recaptured from IS to help reconstruction. They partly blame the removal of scrap metal for sale or use in other provinces for the slow pace of rebuilding. "It's stealing material that belongs to the state or people," said Mohammed Nuri Abed Rabbo, a former member of parliament. "The PMF make double whatever they or their traders buy the scrap for. We're talking hundreds of thousands of tons." — Reuters



## Paramilitary groups are backed by Iran

arm of Asaib Ahl al-Haq, a powerful paramilitary group that has 15 seats in parliament, blamed such trade on individuals "who take advantage of the destruction of war. "The PMF would not accept this. If there are individual, isolated cases, then the state needs to step in," he said.

But the scrapyard owner, who said he buys scrap for 100,000 Iraqi dinars (\$84) per ton and sells it for 110,000 dinars, said the PMF or traders they work with sell it in Kurdistan for up to \$200 a ton. He said the PMF had taken control of his yard. "One day two men arrived in a pick-up truck, carrying pistols, and told me to lower the price and sell only to them. I comply - they have guns," the owner said. A worker at the scrapyard opposite described a similar system and prices, although he did not mention intimidation.

Inside Mosul, scrap is bought even more cheaply. One boy said he sold for 50 dinars per kilo (\$42 per ton) to a scrapyard at Mosul's ruined Old City. The site belongs to a PMF group, he and several other residents said. The yard contained steel rods and roofing from destroyed buildings, and home appliances. The wreckage of car bombs and destroyed vehicles, many of which were taken out of the

## Libya dreams of mega port in historical east

A white foundation stone next to a deserted beach near the soporific Libyan port of Susah is all to show for a seven-year dream to build one of North Africa's biggest ports. Yet officials say Libya is now in final talks to award a US firm a \$1.5 billion deal to set up a "mega port" intended to transform the picturesque coast where families go for picnics into a vast container hub. Texas-based security firm Guidry Group confirmed to Reuters it planned to sign a 35-year deal to build and operate the project in a region once occupied by the ancient Greeks, before handing it back to the local authority.

Such major foreign investment would be rare for Libya, in chaos and conflict since the 2011 toppling of Muammar Gaddafi. "The biggest container ships will be able to dock," enthused one of the project's main architects, Salah Elhasi, who heads the eastern port authority, in his modest villa-turned-office. Abdalla Al-Hasse, a consultant for Guidry, said sea depth of up to 40 m would enable containers to load goods on smaller vessels headed for other Libyan cities as well as neighbors like Egypt or Tunisia without similar ports.

Ravaged by fighting between rival groups and split into different administrations, Libya urgently needs jobs for youths who otherwise look to a bloated public sector or take up guns to earn their daily bread. Beyond oil, Libya has little successful economic activity, even importing milk. The port could provide 2,500 jobs. Guidry

wants to win local and foreign investment to help with financing and would like to start construction in October, Hasse said.

"Funding for the Port of Susah project is expected to come from a variety of sources, including international multilateral agencies, major financial institutions and international project finance investors as this project is a public private partnership," Guidry said in an email. The company has traditionally specialized in kidnap and ransom resolution, but now wants to expand into infrastructure. "Libya is ripe for business and investment right now. I do not want the Chinese or the Russians in Libya first," CEO Michael Guidry was quoted as saying in the Libya Herald last year. "I want to get a foothold in there now."

### Heritage fears

Beyond financing, there are other major challenges. For starters, Libya still needs to fix its pot-holed roads and build a railway infrastructure. The road from Susah to the next large city Bayda, for example, is unsuitable for trucks as it curves round steep cliffs with spectacular views of Roman rock tombs but no fence. Some also fear a port may damage ancient historical sites. Susah, with its sleepy fishing harbor next to historic temple columns and also some underwater sites, is close to the ancient Greek mountain city of Cyrene.

"We have a real fear of this project being built near Susah," said Ahmed Hussein, head of the eastern antiquities department, who fears Ptolemaic era ruins could be damaged if the port leads to a new coastal road from Susah to Benghazi. To counter some concerns, the planners say the port will be built 5 km outside Susah. Their goal is for Libya to fully exploit its privileged Mediterranean location to become a major commercial hub between Africa and Europe. — Reuters

## Victory ends long asylum battle of Afghan interpreters

They served the French army on the frontlines in Afghanistan, sometimes bearing arms during operations by international forces against the Taliban. But for years after the French troops pulled out, many Afghan interpreters were left exposed to revenge attacks by Islamist fundamentalists and denied asylum by the country for which they worked. Their long fight for protection from France ended on Feb 1 when a top French court ordered the state to give immediate protection to all those who had been previously turned away.

As Afghanistan sinks further into violence, those who serve or have served foreign militaries are particularly at risk from the Taliban, who view them as traitors. Zainullah Oryakhail, 30, served as an interpreter for a French battalion from 2009 to 2013 - a role for which he was occasionally armed with a French assault rifle to use in the event of an ambush. On Jan 7, his long quest for asylum ended when he arrived in France with his family, a year after he fled his village 38 km north of Kabul.

Oryakhail, who had been denied asylum by France in 2015, had already survived a drive-by shooting at his home and then been wounded in a suicide motorcycle bombing as he spoke to a NATO patrol outside his house. Convinced both attacks were linked to his work with the French military, over which he had received multiple threats, he moved to a freezing, one-

room apartment in a suburb of Kabul.

He survived by doing odd jobs, living in constant fear, until Dec 2018, when France's Council of State, the country's highest administrative court, ordered he be given immediate protection, along with five other interpreters whose asylum requests had been rejected in 2015. In the landmark ruling, the court said that the state owed local staff a duty of "functional protection". In a follow-up decision on Feb 1 the council went further, extending the protection to all the interpreters whose asylum requests had been rejected, including those who missed a government deadline to apply.

The ruling, which also sets a precedent for local people employed by the French army in other conflict zones such as the Sahel region of West Africa, comes too late for some Afghans who sought safety in France. Qader Daoudzai, an interpreter for the French military from 2010 to 2012 whose visa application was rejected in 2015, died in a bomb blast in Kabul on Oct 20. He left behind a pregnant wife and three children. Yusefi Z, another former interpreter who cannot be fully identified for safety reasons, was severely wounded, and his step-brother killed, in mid-January in a bomb blast in Kabul, where he remains in hiding.

France was the fifth-biggest contributor of troops to the NATO-led mission in Afghanistan from 2001 to 2014, when the last of its soldiers left the country. Over the course of its long deployment, the military employed 770 local staff in positions such as interpreters, drivers and warehouse workers. A total of 224 interpreters received visas to move to France in three waves of relocations between 2013 and 2018, according to the Association of the French Army's Afghan Interpreters, but many were then turned down. — AFP

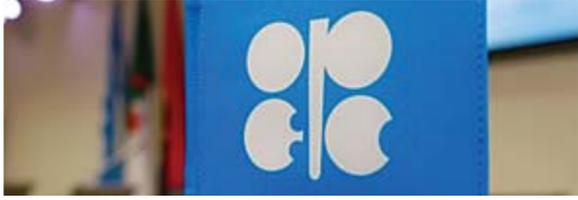
# Business

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## Zain Group 2018 net profit soars 23% to reach KD 197 million

Board of Directors recommends a cash dividend of 30 fils per share

**KUWAIT:** Zain Group, a leading mobile telecom innovator in eight markets across the Middle East and Africa, announces its consolidated financial results for the full-year 2018, and fourth-quarter ended 31 December, 2018. Zain serves 49 million customers, reflecting a 5 percent increase year-on-year (Y-o-Y).

For the full-year 2018, Zain Group generated consolidated revenues of KD 1.3 billion (\$4.4 billion), an impressive 28 percent Y-o-Y growth, while consolidated EBITDA for the period increased by 25 percent Y-o-Y to reach KD 519 million (\$1.7 billion), reflecting an EBITDA margin of 39 percent. Consolidated net income reached KD 197 million (\$649 million), up 23 percent and reflecting Earnings Per Share of 45 Fils (\$0.15).

For the full-year, foreign currency translation impact, predominantly due to the 47 percent currency devaluation in Sudan from an average of 16.9 to 31.9 (SDG / USD), deprived the company \$216 million in revenue, \$79 million in EBITDA and \$27 million in net income.

The Board of Directors of Zain Group recommended a cash dividend of 30 fils per share, reflecting a total distribution of KD 130 million, subject to the Annual General Assembly and regulatory approvals.

For the fourth quarter (Q4) of 2018, Zain Group recorded consolidated revenues of KD 411 million (\$1.4 billion), up 57 percent when compared to Q4, 2017. EBITDA for the quarter amounted to KD 195 million (\$642 million), reflecting an EBITDA margin of 47 percent. Net income for the period amounted to KD 59 million (\$196 million), up 59 percent Y-o-Y, and representing Earnings Per Share of 13 fils (\$0.05).

Specifically, for Q4 2018, currency translation impact deprived the company \$78 million in revenue, \$25 million in EBITDA and \$10 million in net income, again predominantly due to currency devaluation in Sudan from 18.3 to 46.2 (SDG / USD), a 60 percent decrease.



Chairman of the Board of Directors of Zain Group, Ahmed Al-Tahous



Zain Vice-Chairman and Group CEO, Bader Al-Kharafi

up of our APIs across key markets are geared towards making us a more agile operator that can reap the lucrative opportunities in the digital space and move quickly in the face of the sweeping changes in the ICT sector."

Furthermore, Al-Kharafi recognized numerous milestones during the year that included, "The value accretive consolidation of Zain Saudi Arabia that has seen its market capitalization substantially increase over the last three months, the ongoing revival of Zain Iraq reporting a 70 percent increase in profit, and the robust revenue growth in data monetization programs that accounts for 33 percent of Zain's overall service revenues. Moreover, our focus and investment in exploiting Enterprise (B2B) opportunities, cloud services, as well as smart city initiatives in key markets, particularly Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, are growing efficiently. We will continue to foster these areas of the business."

Al-Kharafi concluded, "Zain is evolving into an organization for the 21st century from a number of different perspectives - operationally, financially, through our Gender Diversity initiative, and our corporate sustainability programs supporting the youth and digital innovation like the recent ZINC initiative in Kuwait and established ZINC facility in Jordan. We are establishing an ecosystem of services based on delivering the highest quality experiences to our customers, and we are firm believers that this outlook will keep us relevant and successful long into the future."

Operational review of key markets for the 12 months ended 31 December, 2018:

**Kuwait:** Maintaining its market leadership, the flagship and most profitable operation of Zain Group saw its customer base serve 2.6 million in a very challenging year that witnessed intense price competition in the market. Revenues remained stable at KD 331 million (\$1.1 billion), EBITDA amounted to KD 115 million (\$381 million) and net income came in at KD 82 million (\$272 million). Zain Kuwait reported an EBITDA margin of 35 percent for the year, with data revenues (excluding SMS & VAS) forming 35 percent of total revenues. For Q4 2018, Zain Kuwait reported \$72 million in net profit, an impressive 21 percent increase as a result of cost optimization and growth in B2B initiatives.

Transforming itself into a digital services provider, Zain Kuwait launched numerous digital innovative solutions in 2018. The Zain Life portfolio focused on the areas of Customer Experience, Smart Homes, and Digital Entertainment while zBot smart customer services utilized the latest artificial intelligence (AI) solutions to interact

and respond to customer inquiries in a fully automated manner. Zain Kuwait also launched eSIM services, an electronic SIM that replaces the traditional physical SIM card that is embedded in the device, allowing customers to add up to 10 individual numbers on one device. The operator launched an exclusive offer with Amazon Prime Video, through which customers gain access to award-winning movies and TV content on an advanced network. Similarly, Zain Kuwait launched a gaming platform with DoCoMo Digital, allowing customers to enjoy more than 1,000 popular high-quality games on iOS, Android and Windows.

In its 5G roadmap, the operator launched BEAM, the advanced wireless broadband technology, offering speeds that match fiber optics at 40 Mbps: the first telco to offer this revolutionary technology in Kuwait.

At the end of 2018, Zain Kuwait entered into an agreement with Zain Drone to undertake inspections of its tower infrastructure. The agreement, the first commercial deal for Zain Drone, demonstrates Zain Kuwait's drive to become a more agile and cost-efficient operator by deploying drone technology to inspect and maintain its infrastructure through comprehensive tower inspection and maintenance.

**Saudi Arabia:** Celebrating a decade of commercial operations in the Kingdom, Zain KSA reported consecutive and record full-year 2018 net profit, which soared to SAR 332 million (\$89 million), reflecting a 29-fold increase on the 2017 performance. For the full-year 2018, Zain KSA generated revenues of \$2 billion, a 3 percent Y-o-Y increase, while EBITDA for the year increased by 20 percent Y-o-Y to \$802 million, reflecting an EBITDA margin of 40 percent. The operator's total customer base stood at 8.1 million and data revenues (excluding SMS and VAS) represent 51 percent of total revenues. For the fourth quarter of 2018, Zain KSA recorded revenues of \$546 million, a 19 percent increase to the same period in 2017. EBITDA for the quarter reached \$292 million, reflecting a 54 percent EBITDA margin, up 86 percent from \$157 million recorded in Q4 2017. Net income for the three months reached an unprecedented \$106 million, reflecting a marked improvement on the loss of \$12 million recorded for Q4 2017.

Key operational highlights at Zain KSA include an agreement with the Kingdom's regulatory authorities to consolidate and reduce the annual royalty fee for commercial service by 5 percent from 15 percent to 10 percent of net revenues retrospectively, backdated to 1 January, 2018, with this 5 percent reduction set to

positively impact the company's financial results going forward. Furthermore, the agreement included the settlement of disputed amounts related to the payment of annual royalty fees by Zain KSA to the CITC for the nine-year period between 2009 and 2017, under certain conditions. The financial impact of this settlement is expected to reach SAR 1.7 billion (\$453 million) over three years.

During the fourth quarter of 2018, the company made a second early voluntary payment towards its Murabaha financing agreement, following a voluntary payment in September 2018. These early payments reflect the company's solid cashflow generation ability and shrewd cash management. Following such repayments, the net debt to EBITDA ratio of Zain KSA has improved.

**Iraq:** The improving socio-economic situation sweeping the country is providing the much-needed stimulus to support Zain Iraq's turnaround efforts. The operation performed exceptionally well when compared to the previous year. Revenues and net profit are consistently growing on a quarter-on-quarter basis, with full-year revenues reaching \$1.1 billion, a 3 percent increase Y-o-Y and EBITDA reached \$423 million, up 11 percent. The operation reported a net profit of \$49 million, up 70 percent Y-o-Y compared to a profit of \$29 million in the previous year, with EBITDA margin standing at 37 percent. The expansion of 3.9G services across the country and restoration of sites in the West and North (97 percent of all sites restored to date), combined with numerous customer acquisition initiatives, especially in core regions, resulted in an impressive addition of 1.3 million customers (9 percent increase) to reach 16 million. Another contributing factor to the operation's financial revival included cost optimization initiatives in areas such as repair and maintenance, as well as the significant growth of data revenues, robust growth in the Enterprise (B2B) segment and the revamping of Zain Iraq's call centers, which significantly improved customer service.

### HIGHLIGHTS

- Consolidation and profitable turnaround of Zain Saudi Arabia bolsters Group financials
- Board of Directors recommend cash dividend of 30 fils per share, reflecting a total distribution of KD 130 million
- 2018 full-year consolidated revenues up 28% to KD 1.3 billion (\$4.4 billion), EBITDA up 25% to KD 519 million (\$1.7 billion)
- Zain Iraq revival continues, reflecting full-year net profit growth of 70%
- Zain Kuwait reports impressive Q4 2018 net income growth of 21%
- Zain Saudi Arabia share price increased 71% over last 3 months reflecting a \$600 million increase in market capitalization, reporting \$89 million profit for 2018

**Sudan:** In local currency SDG terms, the operator continues to perform exceptionally well, as revenues grew by 37 percent Y-o-Y to reach SDG 9.7 billion (\$316 million, down 24 percent in USD terms) for the full-year 2018. EBITDA increased by 29 percent to reach SDG 3.7 billion (\$121 million, down 27 percent in USD terms), while net income increased 11 percent to reach SDG 1.2 billion (\$45 million, down 31 percent in USD terms). Data revenues (excluding SMS and VAS) formed 18 percent of total revenues, with an impressive annual growth of 56 percent.

**Jordan:** Although it maintained its market leadership, the intensification of price competition and return of refugees to their homeland resulted in Zain Jordan's customer base shrinking by 6 percent Y-o-Y, to serve 3.7 million customers at the end of the year. Y-o-Y revenues were stable at \$494 million, with EBITDA amounting to \$194 million, reflecting a healthy EBITDA margin of 39 percent. Net income reached \$73 million, down 19 percent. With the ongoing expansion of fiber and 4G networks and related digital offerings including B2B services, data revenues (excluding SMS & VAS) represented 38 percent of total revenues.

**Bahrain:** Celebrating its 15th year of operation in the Kingdom, Zain Bahrain team's focus on operational efficiency and the delivery of state-of-the-art technology was evident by the profit increase the operator recorded. The team also focused on the offer of appealing innovative digital services that provide greater value to enterprise (B2B) and individual customers. During 2018, Zain Bahrain reported a net profit of \$14 million reflecting a 20 percent Y-o-Y increase. Revenues amounted to \$176 million, down 10 percent Y-o-Y. EBITDA for the period reached \$41 million, down 30 percent, reflecting an EBITDA margin of 23 percent. The operation's completely revamped 4G network served a customer base of 668,000 with data revenues (excluding SMS & VAS) representing 45 percent of overall revenues.

### Group Key Performance Indicators (KD and USD) for the Full-Year 2018

Total Active Customers	49 million		
Consolidated Revenues	KD 1.3 billion	-	USD 4.4 billion)
EBITDA	KD 519 million	-	(USD 1.7 billion)
EBITDA Margin	39%		
Net Income	KD 197 million	-	(USD 649 million)

### Group Key Performance Indicators (KD and USD) for the 4th Quarter 2018

Consolidated Revenues	KD 411 million	-	(USD 1.4 billion)
EBITDA	KD 195 million	-	(USD 642 million)
EBITDA Margin	47%		
Net Income	KD 59 million	-	(USD 196 million)

Commenting on the results, the Chairman of the Board of Directors of Zain Group, Ahmed Al-Tahous said, "The company's impressive performance for both the full-year and fourth quarter of 2018 is a result of the Board's and management's focus on the profitable turnaround of key operations and the constructive actions undertaken to consolidate Zain Saudi Arabia. We are grateful for our positive relationships with government ministries and regulatory authorities across all our markets. These bodies have been our partners and the wisdom they have shown in dealing with the new industry dynamics, has been instrumental in supporting us to overcome challenges faced by our operations and the telecom sector."

Zain Vice-Chairman and Group CEO, Bader Al-Kharafi commented, "Our remarkable Group financial performance gives us confidence going into 2019 and beyond. These exemplary results are extremely satisfying on multiple levels as they confirm that our digital transformation strategy is on track. They also reflect the dedicated efforts of Zain's 6,000-strong talented workforce, who work with passion every day, in all that they do."

Al-Kharafi added, "The results are even more impressive when the various operational, regulatory, social and forex challenges we face across our footprint are taken into account."

Al-Kharafi continued, "We are creating the right foundation at Zain and investing heavily to be able to benefit from developments such as the forthcoming commercialization of 5G, the growing needs of enterprise users, and the interconnectivity created by the advent of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Initiatives such as optimizing the synergies between the Group, Omantel and all operations, huge investments in fiber and network upgrades and opening

Business

KAMCO Oil Market Monthly Report

# Trade tensions continue to steer oil market, but sanctions push prices

## Kuwait crude price gains 2.7% to average at \$58.7/b

**KUWAIT:** Oil prices were on an uptrend in the new year after bottoming in December-19 with Brent and OPEC crude grades witnessing strong and consistent gains. However, the momentum soon faded after three weeks of gains and almost flattened with crude hovering above the \$60/b mark during the first two weeks of February-19. The initial surge came amid a broad-based rally in almost all global markets and a majority of the asset classes globally.

Oil prices particularly got support from the US sanctions on Venezuela that is expected to affect 0.5mb/d in crude exports from the OPEC member. The news of sanctions overshadowed rising production in the US and supported oil prices in a market which continues to doubt near term demand. That said, supply continued unabated from the US as it pumps crude at record pace denting the support that came after the OPEC+ countries implemented the cuts this year.

On the economic front, all eyes were on the looming deadline for the imposition of US tariffs on China at the start of next month as trade talks between the two trading partners are yet to see any announced resolution. Demand prospects for the oil market got a further blow when economic growth rates for the European region were slashed by the European Commission for the years 2019 and 2020. The report highlighted the ongoing trade tensions between the US and China and domestic challenges in some of the biggest European economies including Germany, France and Italy as factors affecting economic growth.

Moreover, the greenback traded at a three month high that made crude costlier for oil importers while confusion over a repeat of US government shut down added to the pressure on oil prices which was later avoided after a tentative deal. On the other hand, key indicators from China were disappointing over the past few months. Positives on the demand side included an increase in demand for distillates in the US due to the extreme cold weather.

The story on the supply side continues to haunt the market indicating strict limits to any rally in oil prices beyond the current range. The US produced at a historical high level of 11.9 mb/d while inventories remained at more than 12-month high levels on the back of refinery outages at Cushing. US oil rig count went up for the second time in three weeks, although the trend looks flattening or even declining since the recent peak in late last year. On the other hand, Canada has also placed temporary curbs on production due to pipeline capacity constraints as well as a recent crude pipeline leak incident in Illinois, US.

OPEC oil production receded during January-19 after the implementation of the OPEC+ agreement. A Reuters report said that production during the month saw a steep decline as Saudi Arabia and its allies in the Gulf region over-delivered on their share of production cuts. On the other hand, production in Iran and Venezuela declined following US sanctions, while Libya continued to face weather conditions that disrupted the country's production.

### Oil Prices

After two consecutive months of double digit declines, average OPEC crude prices gained 3.2 percent during January-19 to reach \$58.74/b. Kuwait crude average price also gained but at a slightly smaller pace of 2.7 percent to average at \$58.7/b. On the other hand, average Brent crude witnessed the biggest gain of the three crude grades during January-19 with its price up 4.2 percent to average at \$59.4/b. Oil prices rallied during first few weeks of the year which saw OPEC crude peaking at \$62.32/b with a surge of 21 percent from last years close.

However, the momentum gradually flattened during the second week of February-19 led by reports of record production in the US, rising inventories and the slow progress related to trade talks between the US and China. Analyst consensus estimates for the near term also suggests marginal recovery in oil prices with the median prices at \$63.0/b for Q1-19 that is expected to gradually increase to \$70.0/b by the end of the year. Also, there was a deterioration

in consensus numbers as compared to January-19 estimates with marginal decline in expectations for price expectations for the first two quarters of the year. According to the latest EIA report, crude inventories in the US rose by 1.3 mb/d during the week ended 1-February-19. The data was in line considering record output in the US as well as rising oil rig count.

The agency also published its Short Term Energy Outlook in which it raised US oil production forecast for 2019 by 2.8 percent to 12.41 mb/d as well as for 2020 by 2.6 percent to 13.2 mb/d. Oil price outlook for 2019 was raised marginally by 0.8 percent to \$61.03/b for Brent crude while 2020 price outlook for the crude grade saw a bigger cut of 4.3 percent to \$62/b. The weekly rig count data from Baker Hughes also concurred with the rise in production in the US. According to the latest report, 7 additional rigs came online leading to a total of 854 working rigs. This was the second increase in the last three weeks as drillers expand production eyeing rising oil prices.

### World oil demand

After keeping it constant in the previous two months, world oil demand growth estimates for 2018 was lowered in the latest OPEC monthly report. According to the new estimates, world oil demand grew by 1.47 mb/d in 2018, a revision of 0.03 mb/d as compared to the previous estimates. Total demand is now expected to reach 98.76 mb/d after demand growth was slower-than-expected for OECD Europe, OECD Asia Pacific, Other Asia, Latin America and the Middle East during the last two quarters of 2018. Overall demand for the OECD countries was lowered by 0.1 mb/d. Demand estimates for the OECD Americas region was raised for Q4-18 led by better-than-expected demand for light and middle distillates and from the petrochemical and industrial sectors in the US resulting in a revision of 0.1 mb/d for Q4-18 demand figure for the country. For the OECD Europe region, demand growth estimates were lowered by 0.02 mb/d for 2018 due to slower-than-expected demand especially during 2H-18 led by lagging economic activity, a decrease in petrochemical feedstock requirements and warmer weather conditions during Q4-18.

In the OECD Asia Pacific region, lower-than-expected demand in South Korea's petrochemical sector in Q4-18 led to a downward revision of 0.01 mb/d for the full year. Non-OECD demand estimates were also lowered by around 0.02 mb/d primarily due to a downward revision of 0.03 mb/d in Q4-18 demand numbers for India led by lower-than-expected demand in November-18. The Middle East region also underwent a downward revision of 0.01 mb/d primarily reflecting lower demand from Saudi Arabia due to substitution effects, economic reform plans and subsidy reductions. World oil demand growth expectations for 2019 saw a bigger downward revision of 0.05 mb/d with demand now expected to grow by 1.24 mb/d to average at 100.00 mb/d for the year. The revision reflected an expected decline in economic growth in 2019 for some of the key global economies.

OECD oil demand was revised down by 0.02 mb/d due to lower expected growth rate in OECD Americas during Q1-19 and OECD Europe for the full year. For the non-OECD countries, demand was lowered by 0.01 mb/d and 0.02 mb/d for Latin America and the Middle East regions, respectively.

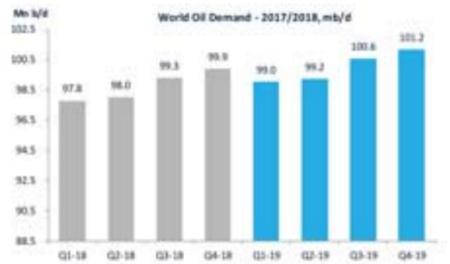
### World oil supply

According to preliminary data, global oil supply declined for the second consecutive month during January-19. Supply went below the 100 mb/d mark for the first time since November-18 to reach 99.32 mb/d in January-19 led by a decline in non-OPEC supply to the tune of 0.23 mb/d to average at 68.52 mb/d primarily led by Canada, FSU and China along with a decline of 0.8 mb/d for the OPEC countries to reach 30.81 mb/d. OPEC's share of global crude production reached 31.0 percent in January-19, a decline of 50 bps as compared to the previous month.

Non-OPEC supply growth projections for 2018 was once again revised upward by 0.11 mb/d and is



Source for the above charts : OPEC and Bloomberg



now expected to grow by 2.72 mb/d during the year to average at 62.17 mb/d. The revision reflected higher estimated supply from the US, Canada, Malaysia, China and the UK mainly during the last quarter of 2018 that was partially offset by a downward revision of 8 tb/d for supply estimates for Mexico and India. Supplies from the OECD countries were raised by 76tb/d from the previous estimates and are now estimated to have averaged at 28.11 mb/d in 2018. Of this, OECD Americas saw an upward revision of 66 tb/d of which Canada's supply estimates were raised by 35 tb/d, while OECD Europe numbers were revised up by 11 tb/d.

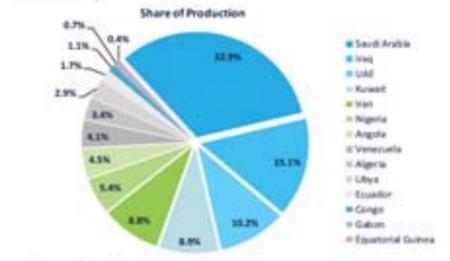
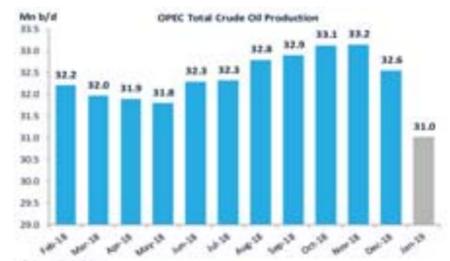
Non-OPEC supply growth forecasts for 2019 was also revised upwards by 0.08 mb/d to 2.18 mb/d and supply is now expected to average at 64.34 mb/d. The upward revision primarily reflected updated production forecast for the US Gulf of Mexico following which US liquids supply forecast was revised upwards by 94 tb/d to an average of 18.44 mb/d.

### OPEC oil production & spare capacity

OPEC crude production, which now excludes Qatar, witnessed a steep decline during Jan-19 as the OPEC+ agreement was implemented by the producers. According to Bloomberg, production declined by 0.93 mb/d to reach 31.02 mb/d while OPEC secondary estimates put the decline at 0.8 mb/d to average at 30.8 mb/d. Saudi Arabia reported the biggest decline in production by 0.45 mb/d to average at 10.2 mb/d during January-19.

Almost all the OPEC members reported a decline in output during the month. According to Reuters, some of the OPEC members took a bigger share of the cuts that resulted in a compliance level of 70 percent to the new OPEC+ agreement. In an interview, Saudi Arabia's Energy Minister said that the Kingdom plans to lower oil production to around 9.8 mb/d by March-19. It was also reported that Russia, which produced at a record pace in 2018, is yet to fully comply with the allocated production cuts and as a result it is affecting the compliance levels for the overall group. However, the producer is expected to gradually raise its compliance levels in the coming months as the Energy Minister said the country plans to cut 90-100 tb/d in Feb-19 as compared to Oct-18 levels.

Meanwhile, oil production in Libya was for the first time in five months reported below the 1 mb/d mark during January-19, to reach 0.9 mb/d as the country initially faced weather related issues that was followed by production disruptions at the country's largest oilfield. According to recent updates, the country's El Sharara oilfield, which produces at around 350 tb/d is ready to resume production. Oil production also declined in Nigeria during January-



19 led by pipeline shutdown due to leakages as well as maintenance.

Oil production in Venezuela continued to remain subdued and with the recent sanctions from the US, the country is looking for buyers of its crude elsewhere. According to a report, Venezuela has turned to India, its second largest buyer after US, to double its sales from the current 0.3 mb/d.

KAMCO Research believes that the current level of prices adequately represents the supply/demand situation in the market. Positive factors continue to remain fragile as the market tightening is temporary even after considering the OPEC+ cuts as exempt producers have the potential to significantly dent the efforts.

## EXCHANGE RATES

### Al-Muzaini Exchange Co.

#### EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES

US Dollar Transfer	304.400
Euro	346.560
Sterling Pound	394.500
Canadian dollar	231.310
Turkish lira	58.880
Swiss Franc	304.550
US Dollar Buying	297.100

#### ASIAN COUNTRIES

Japanese Yen	2.752
Indian Rupees	4.315
Pakistani Rupees	2.221
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.706
Nepali Rupees	2.697
Singapore Dollar	225.570
Hongkong Dollar	38.785
Bangladesh Taka	3.586
Philippine Peso	5.858
Thai Baht	9.758
Malaysian ringgit	77.852

#### GCC COUNTRIES

Saudi Rival	81.227
Qatari Rival	83.661
Omani Rival	791.163
Bahraini Dinar	808.820
UAE Dirham	82.931

#### ARAB COUNTRIES

Egyptian Pound - Cash	19.700
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	17.259

Yemen Rival/for 1000	1.223
Tunisian Dinar	103.890
Jordanian Dinar	429.640
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	0.203
Syrian Lira	0.000
Morocco Dirham	32.452

### Dollarco Exchange Co. Ltd

Rate for Transfer	Selling Rate
US Dollar	304.240
Canadian Dollar	229.562
Sterling Pound	393.780
Euro	345.630
Swiss Frank	308.270
Bahrain Dinar	809.085
UAE Dirhams	83.235
Qatari Riyals	84.475
Saudi Riyals	82.025
Jordanian Dinar	430.395
Egyptian Pound	17.303
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.708
Indian Rupees	4.288
Pakistani Rupees	2.192
Bangladesh Taka	3.626
Philippines Peso	5.828
Cyprus pound	18.099
Japanese Yen	3.750
Syrian Pound	1.590
Nepalese Rupees	2.689
Malaysian Ringgit	75.475
Chinese Yuan Renminbi	45.250
Thai Bhat	10.685

Turkish Lira	58.045
Singapore dollars	223.412

### BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
<b>Europe</b>		
British Pound	0.385486	0.399388
Czech Korune	0.005313	0.014613
Danish Krone	0.042136	0.047136
Euro	0.337305	0.351005
Georgian Lari	0.114604	0.114604
Hungarian Lari	0.001182	
Norwegian Krone	0.031266	0.036465
Romanian Leu	0.055655	0.072505
Russian ruble	0.004623	0.004623
Slovakia	0.009099	0.019099
Swedish Krona	0.028847	0.033847
Swiss Franc	0.296039	0.0307039
<b>Australasia</b>		
Australian Dollar	0.208599	0.220599
New Zealand Dollar	0.202035	0.211535
<b>America</b>		
Canadian Dollar	0.224971	0.233971
US Dollars	0.300300	0.305600
US Dollars Mint	0.300800	0.305600
<b>Asia</b>		
Bangladesh Taka	0.003053	0.003854
Chinese Yuan	0.043493	0.046993

Hong Kong Dollar	0.036697	0.039441
Indian Rupee	0.003728	0.004500
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000017	0.000023
Japanese Yen	0.002665	0.002845
Korean Won	0.000261	0.000278
Malaysian Ringgit	0.070711	0.076711
Nepalese Rupee	0.002610	0.002950
Pakistan Rupee	0.001568	0.002338
Philippine Peso	0.005798	0.006093
Singapore Dollar	0.219257	0.229257
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001341	0.001921
Taiwan	0.009764	0.009934
Thai Baht	0.009364	0.009914
Vietnamese Dong	0.00013	0.00013

#### Arab

Bahraini Dinar	0.792857	0.809357
Egyptian Pound	0.017118	0.019718
Iranian Rival	0.000084	0.000085
Iraqi Dinar	0.000211	0.000271
Jordanian Dinar	0.425039	0.434039
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000151	0.000251
Moroccan Dirhams	0.021744	0.045744
Omani Rival	0.784331	0.790011
Qatar Rival	0.079321	0.084267
Audi Rival	0.080087	0.081387
Syrian Pound	0.001290	0.001510
Tunisian Dinar	0.095813	0.103813
Turkish Lira	0.051292	0.062792
UAE Dirhams	0.081452	0.083152
Yemeni Rival	0.000989	0.001069

Business

# Risk of early vote as Spain lawmakers reject budget

All eyes now on Sanchez whether he calls early elections

**MADRID:** Right-wing and Catalan separatist lawmakers yesterday rejected Spain's draft 2019 budget, a move that could force Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez into calling early elections.

Sanchez, who came to power in June thanks in part to parliamentary support from 17 Catalan lawmakers, was depending on their votes to push his first budget through but they withdrew their backing. All eyes are now on whether the socialist premier, who leads a minority government, will call early elections with opinion polls showing one outcome could be a right-wing majority in parliament, including a newly emerged far-right.

Sanchez's socialists are already adopting a campaign-like tone, accusing conservatives and Catalonia separatists of blocking a budget that included many social spending measures.

"Progressive forces in this country are at a critical moment due to this neo-liberal and far-right wave that is impregnating advanced societies," Budget Minister Maria Jesus Montero warned the lower house. Conservatives accuse the socialist government of "high treason" for negotiating with Catalonia's separatist executive as Madrid tries to ease tensions with the northeastern region after a secession attempt in October 2017. The budget also contained an increase in investment in Catalonia.

But with pro-secession leaders on trial for their role in the 2017 attempt to break Catalonia from Spain, separatist lawmakers Sanchez depends on filed amendments to block the budget last week.

On Friday, negotiations between Madrid and the Catalan government broke down, angering separatists. The parliament approved their amendments yesterday with 191 votes in favour in the 350-member assembly, defeating the budget.

**Early election**

Sanchez' government would now in theory have to re-examine its budget and present a new, revised version. In the current climate, though, with Sanchez left with so little parliamentary support, analysts predict he will call early general elections. "Legally he is not obliged to do so," said Antonio Barroso, deputy research director at the Teneo analysis group. "But politically, the question is whether the government would be justified (in not calling polls)." Various opinion polls—the latest published yesterday in online daily eldiario.es—point to a right-wing majority in parliament post-elections formed by the conservative Popular Party (PP), centre-right Ciudadanos and far-right Vox party.

Even before the vote, the socialist government was accusing right-wing and separatist parties of opposing a social budget that contrasts with the austerity of Mariano Rajoy's previous conservative executive. "After seven years of social injustice, right-wing forces and the independence movement will vote against a social budget," Sanchez tweeted on Tuesday.

"Both want the same thing: that Catalonia be at war with itself and that Spain be at war with itself." —AFP



**MADRID:** Spanish minister for finance Maria Jesus Montero attends a debate on the government's 2019 budget during a parliament session in Madrid yesterday. —AFP

## UK inflation hits two-year low on falling energy costs

**LONDON:** British annual inflation hit a two-year low point in January, undershooting the Bank of England's 2.0 percent target on falling oil and other energy costs, official data showed yesterday.

The Consumer Prices Index 12-month rate hit 1.8 percent last month, down from 2.1 percent in

December, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) said in a statement. That marked the first time since January 2017 that the rate has fallen underneath the Bank of England's official 2.0-percent target level. Analysts had forecast a drop to 1.9 percent.

Inflation was pulled lower by a decline in electricity, gas and motor fuel prices between December and January. "The fall in inflation is due mainly to cheaper gas, electricity and petrol, partly offset by rising ferry ticket prices and air fares falling more slowly than this time last year," said ONS inflation head Mike Hardie.

"The Bank of England may be pleased to see inflation ease below... target in January, as this may give them breathing space in which to calibrate monetary policy in the run-up to and initial

stages of Brexit," said AJ Bell investment director Russ Mould. The Bank of England's main task is to use monetary policy, notably interest rates, as a tool to try and keep the UK inflation rate close to 2.0 percent.

**'Fog of Brexit'**

Britain is scheduled to quit the European Union on March 29, but there remains intense uncertainty over whether Prime Minister Theresa May can clinch a viable trade deal with Brussels.

The British central bank recently froze its main interest rate at 0.75 percent and slashed its forecast for UK growth this year to 1.2 percent from 1.7 percent, blaming "the fog of Brexit".

Gloomy official data Monday showed that the UK economy grew at its slowest pace in six years

in 2018 on Brexit uncertainty, as fears grew that Britain could crash out of the EU without a deal.

Gross domestic product growth last year slowed sharply to 1.4 percent, down from 1.8 percent in 2017. Hargreaves Lansdown economist Ben Brettell argued that a no-deal withdrawal could spark a tumbling pound.

A weaker British currency makes imported goods more expensive, and therefore would push up UK annual inflation. Ordinarily this would push a central bank to raise rates but Brettell believes the Bank of England would go the other way.

"Of course if we get a cliff-edge, no-deal Brexit, all bets are off—a drop in sterling would likely see a sharp rise in imported inflation, but I would expect the Bank to look through this and cut rates to support the economy," he said. —AFP

**zain**

Net Income

# 197

Million KD

23% Annual Growth

49 Million	1.32 Billion KD	519 Million KD	45 fils
+5%	+28%	+25%	+15%
Customers	Revenue	EBITDA	EPS

The Board proposed a cash dividend of 30 Fils per share. The proposal is subject to General Assembly and statutory approvals.

Full year 2018 results

zain.com **A Wonderful World**

## Business

# KIB acts as lead arranger in \$200m 2-year financing for Daewoo E&C

## Facility to support Daewoo E&C's current projects in Kuwait, GCC

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait International Bank (KIB) continues to be committed to developing and expanding its financing efforts on a local, regional and international level. Accordingly, the Bank has just participated, as a lead arranger, in the Islamic tranche of a \$200 million two-year syndicated facility for Daewoo Engineering & Construction (Daewoo E&C), along with a consortium of international and regional banks. This facility aims to support Daewoo E&C's current projects in Kuwait and the GCC region.

The signing ceremony took place recently in Dubai and was attended by the senior management of Daewoo E&C.

Commenting on the successful closure of this transaction, Mohamed Khadiri, Deputy General Manager of Wholesale Banking and Head of International Banking, said: "KIB's participation in this syndicated facility comes as part of the Bank's strategic vision to provide Islamic financing solutions to key customers that are participating in major development projects in Kuwait and the region."

Khadiri added: "This deal adds to KIB's impressive

roster of achievements and strong track record in providing leading products and services across Sharia compliant financing and corporate financial advisory. We will continue our efforts to pursue the Bank's strategic objectives in order to strengthen and confirm our position as a leading banking platform among local and regional banks in fulfilling the needs and requirements of our customers."

Established in 1973, Daewoo E&C is a well-recognized construction company and is considered one of the largest contracting companies internationally. Headquartered in Seoul, South Korea, the Company's portfolio includes construction of civil projects, railways, harbors, reclamation projects, environmental projects, and leisure facilities. The Company is cur-



Mohamed Khadiri



rently working on mega-projects in Kuwait, including Al-Zour New Refinery and Clean Fuels Project.

Additionally, Daewoo E&C is one of the major contractors for Duqm Refinery in Oman.

## IBM says AI debate loss is still a win

**WASHINGTON:** IBM conceded Tuesday its artificial intelligence-powered Project Debater lost a competition to a human debate champion but said the experience was an important milestone in efforts to get computers to master human language.

In the first live, public debate before a large, in-person and online audience, the declared winner was Harish Natarajan, who holds the record for most debate competition victories, IBM said in a blog post.

In the San Francisco debate on Monday, Project Debater and Natarajan were given 15 minutes to prepare for the debate on the merits of subsidizing preschools. The IBM program argued for subsidies, calling it an important tool for helping the poorest members of society; Natarajan spoke against the idea, saying the subsidy fails to address the root causes of poverty and is a "politically motivated giveaway" to middle-class families.

The winner of the event was determined by the debater's ability to change the minds of the audience. Before the debate, 79 percent of the audience agreed that preschools should be subsidized, while 13 percent disagreed. After the debate, 62 percent of respondents agreed that preschools should be subsidized, while 30 percent disagreed, meaning Natarajan was able to persuade more people to change their minds.

IBM Research director Dario Gil said the experience "is not about winning or losing" but about creating artificial intelligence "that can master the infinitely complex and rich world of human language."

The debate marked a new challenge for artificial intelligence for IBM, whose Watson computer previously defeated a grand chessmaster and won the television trivia game Jeopardy.

Ranit Aharanov, manager of the Project Debater team, said in a discussion after the debate that the goal is to help humans deal with complex decision.

"It's not a question of whether AI is going to be better than humans," she said, but to help people filter and find key bits of information in large quantities of text. "It can debate both sides, so it can very quickly help you understand both sides of the problem, so you have a wider view of the problem and can make a better decision." —AFP

## Warba Bank to conduct Al-Sunbula draw today

**KUWAIT:** Warba Bank, "the Best investment Bank" and "Best Corporate Bank" in Kuwait, will be organizing its weekly Sunbula draw number 7 today at 11 am in presence of a representative from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and the Bank officials.

Al-Sunbula both account and fixed deposits are the perfect choices for customers who wish to save money and achieve steady returns while at the same time have the opportunity to win cash prizes throughout the year. In line with the bank's mission to develop and differentiate its offerings, Warba Bank has enhanced its Sunbula campaign for 2019 with more cash and prizes reaching more than 1 Million Kuwaiti Dinars.

Warba Bank will continue its weekly draws for 5 winners of KD 1,000 each. What's new in 2019 are the "Mega Draws" which will be held every quarter to reveal five winners, the 1st winner will get KD 100,000! The four winners thereafter will each get the latest Land Cruiser VXR. Furthermore, the final Mega draw held in January 2020 will feature 2 more Land Cruiser VXRs!

As for the chances for winning, each customer is eligible to enter the draw against each KD 10 in the Sunbula Account. Nevertheless, Sunbula Fixed Deposit investors also get chances in the Sunbula draws along with high expected returns that reach up to 3.5 percent distributed either monthly or at maturity upon the customer's preference.

## KFH announces winners of prepaid Nojoom card campaign

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Finance House "KFH" announced the withdrawal winners of the prepaid Nojoom card campaign launched by the bank that was aimed to give customers the benefit of using various packages and services. The draw, which was held in the presence of the representative of the Ministry of Trade and Industry, had four winners: Khaled Nouri Ma'tash, Khaled Hamed Al-Raweh, Jawad Yaqoub Ashouk and Ali Mohamed El-Fudari all winning an iPhone Xs.

The campaign, which was held on December 2018, gave customers the opportunity to enter the draw when purchasing using their prepaid Nojoom card, where each purchase worth KD 50 inside Kuwait gives the purchaser one chance

to enter the draw and two opportunities to enter the draw when purchases are made outside of the country.

The prepaid Nojoom card offers many advantages when used, the customer obtains points that can be redeemed for numerous discounts at petrol stations and many of the most famous brands in Kuwait, as well as exclusive and distinctive offers from "Ooredoo" with the prepaid Nojoom card from KFH where the customer will be able to get free calling minutes.

The prepaid Nojoom card is designed to serve customers with their various needs and with an easy and secure way using a smart chip and password. When shopping online a 3d secure service is used, in addition, the customer will receive 3,330 free points as a gift from "KFH" when the card is issued. 4 Nojoom points is earned for each purchase worth IKD inside or outside of Kuwait. One of the most important features of this card is that it enables the customer to control his/her expenses easily, as the maximum amount that could be spent is the amount deposited on the card.



Customers can use the card online with ease, and the balance of the card account can be monitored through the KFH application on smartphones KFHonline. The "Nojoom card" provides the most distinctive offers and discounts

locally and internationally, confirming the keenness of KFH to always provide the best level of services and offers in cooperation with different institutions to achieve the highest levels of customer service.

## Ghoshn shakes up legal team and vows to prove his innocence

**TOKYO:** Former Nissan boss Carlos Ghosn yesterday shook up his top legal team as he vowed to prove his innocence and defend himself with vigor against charges of financial misconduct. In the latest twist to a saga that has gripped Japan and the business world since his stunning arrest in November, Ghosn confirmed in a statement from his detention centre that he had hired a new lead counsel.

He replaced former prosecutor Motonari Otsuru with hot-shot lawyer Junichiro Hironaka, who has a history of taking on high-profile cases and enjoys an enviable acquittal rate in a country where almost every trial results in a guilty verdict.

"I look forward to defending myself vigorously, and this represents the beginning of the process of not only establishing my innocence but also shedding light on the circumstances that led to my unjust detention," said Ghosn, 64.

Earlier Otsuru's firm issued a brief statement saying only that he and another lawyer had "submitted letters of resignation to the court as the defense lawyers for the case of Mr. Ghosn".

The surprise shake-up came on the eve of an expected first meeting between the Tokyo District Court, prosecutors, and defense lawyers to discuss the out-

lines of Ghosn's eventual trial.

Ghosn thanked Otsuru and his team for their "tireless and diligent work and courage during the interrogation phase of my incarceration" and hailed his former counsel as a "very capable and intelligent man and lawyer". The Franco-Lebanese-Brazilian tycoon has languished in a Tokyo detention center since November 19 on three charges of financial misconduct and has seen two bail requests refused, with the court judging him a flight risk.

In an interview with AFP and France's Les Echos last month, he slammed his ongoing detention, saying that the refusal to free him "would not be normal in any other democracy."

He faces charges that he underreported his income between 2010 and 2015 to the tune of five billion yen (\$46 million) and continued to do so for a further three years. Ghosn also stands accused of a complex scheme to try to pass off personal foreign exchange losses to Nissan and using company funds to reimburse a Saudi contact who stumped up collateral for him.

He told AFP in January that the allegations against him and his arrest were "a story of betrayal," insisting "there is not one yen that I have received that was not reported".

### 'Fighting the charges'

Speaking outside his office, Hironaka, 73, confirmed that he had been asked to join the legal team after consulting with the tycoon and his family. "I believe he (Ghosn) remains consistent about fighting (against the charges)," Hironaka said.

Hironaka is a veteran and celebrated defense lawyer and was involved in the



TOKYO: Junichiro Hironaka (center), new lawyer of former Nissan chief Carlos Ghosn, speaks with the media outside his office building in Tokyo yesterday. —AFP

successful defence in 2012 of influential politician Ichiro Ozawa, a shrewd election strategist accused of playing a role in misreporting political funds. There had been no public sign of a rift between Ghosn and his lead lawyers, though neither the executive nor the attorney have spoken much publicly since the arrest.

Otsuru gave a single press conference after Ghosn made a brief court appearance on January 8 to challenge his ongoing detention. The owlish defense lawyer cut a cautious figure at the press event, telling journalists that his client was unlikely to make bail before his case came to court, which he said could take six months.

He also pointedly declined to criticize Ghosn's detention conditions, despite some international concern

about the repeated extension of the auto executive's pre-trial custody.

Otsuru said he has been meeting Ghosn regularly for several hours at a time, describing his then-client as focused. "He's very calm and logical in his current situation," Otsuru said.

Although he has taken on some of Japan's most high-publicity cases, Otsuru is known for maintaining a low media profile and little is known about his personal life.

A former prosecutor, the bespectacled 63-year-old with floppy greying hair earned the soubriquet "the breaker" as he was so good at extracting confessions from suspects.

In a twist of fate, representing Ghosn's pitted him against prosecutor Hiroshi Morimoto, a former colleague. —AFP

## Japan's Toshiba cuts profit outlook again

**TOKYO:** Struggling Japanese engineering firm Toshiba lowered its profit forecasts yesterday with rising costs weighing on its energy operations. The fresh downgrade comes as the firm undergoes painful reforms to stay afloat after logging billions of dollars in losses from its disastrous acquisition of US nuclear firm Westinghouse.

Having sold its lucrative chip making business, Toshiba also saw sharply lower operating profit

over the past three quarters compared with the previous year, though proceeds from the sale boosted its net profit over the nine-month period. For the year to March, Toshiba said it now expects a net profit of 870 billion yen (\$7.86 billion), down from a November estimate of 920 billion yen. In May, the company issued its original annual net profit forecast at 1.07 trillion yen.

The drop was due in part to a so-called goodwill impairment associated with falling share prices of a subsidiary, but also higher costs at a domestic power transmission and distribution project, the company said. Toshiba also cut its annual operating profit to 20 billion yen, while slightly increasing its annual sales projection to 3.62 trillion yen.

The Tokyo-based company used to sell every-

thing from rice cookers to nuclear plants and has long been a household name.

But a series of scandals and business losses in recent years have forced the company to withdraw from many operations, such as appliances and personal computers that gave it brand recognition.

To stay afloat, the cash-strapped group sold its lucrative chip business for \$21 billion to K K Pangea, a special-purpose company controlled by a consortium led by US investor Bain Capital. Still, the company is scrambling to revive itself, having announced in November plans to slash 7,000 jobs, to scrap or consolidate some factories and reduce its subsidiaries, to liquidate a unit building a UK nuclear power plant, and to withdraw from a US-based liquid natural gas business. —AFP

What's On

# CITRA and Microsoft collaborate to host AI workshop in Kuwait

Reiterating its commitment to support government digital initiatives, the Communication & Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA), in association with Microsoft, yesterday announced its inaugural OpenHack event in Kuwait. The event is designed to supercharge skillsets of the country's software architects and developers to solve common industry challenges, and become Artificial Intelligence Specialists.

The three-day event is scheduled to be held in Sheraton Kuwait, Kuwait City from 11 - 13 February and will gather industry experts, software developers and individuals who are keen on up-skilling with the emerging technologies and empower them to fuel the Fourth Industrial Revolution. The event also aims to bring Microsoft customers and community developers to solve a series of problems using a predefined basket of technologies.

"The partnership with Microsoft further strengthens our continuous commitment to the country's vision 2035 of digitally transforming Kuwait into a leading regional, financial, commercial and cultural hub. Initiatives like this OpenHack are in line with our mission of creating a competitive regulatory environment aimed at the advancement of communication and information technology," says Eng Manal Khaled Al Mazyad, Director of Public Sector Governance, CITRA. "This effort supports our mission to empower government entities within Kuwait by using innovative and sophisticated technologies that make employees more secure, flexible and efficient, assisting them to further enhance skillsets and be future ready."

During the event, participants will work closely with teams, grappling with increasingly challenging scenarios while collaborating and networking with industry peers. They will also gain the opportunity to learn from machine-learning experts from around the world. "We



Charles Nahas, General Manager, Microsoft Kuwait

are proud to partner with CITRA and hold this event in Kuwait, as part of our global series of hackfests. Microsoft's efforts are in line to support the country's vision for providing intelligent solutions and build a tech-savvy future for all its people," says Charles Nahas, General Manager, Microsoft Kuwait.

"OpenHack is designed with an objective of up-skilling developers and encouraging them to learn through hands-on coding experience in turn to achieve more by adding greater value to their organizations' digital transformation journeys. The World Bank tells us that for each job created in the high-tech sector, approximately 4.3 jobs are created across all occupation and income groups. Hence, we must invest wisely and decisively in our developers, students and professionals, to empower them with tomorrow's skills, today."

The three-day OpenHack Machine Learning event in Kuwait will focus on solving problems with computer-vision solutions. Developers explored spheres of data



wrangling, cognitive services, artificial neural networks and custom machine learning, using the Microsoft Azure Machine Learning Workbench.

The agenda will have a series of Tech Talks with industry experts, and Architecture Design Sessions, where customers will be discussing their individual business challenges. Additionally, Microsoft will be hosting several networking events that will allow attendees to network with industry peers.

OpenHack continues Microsoft's deep commitment

to the economic and professional development of Kuwait and wider Gulf region. The event in Kuwait is a major component of an ongoing strategy to help with up-skilling national workforces. An estimated 80% of roles that the global workforce will fill in 2025, have yet to be created. Having seen technologies such as artificial intelligence to create the modern workplace, Microsoft has long encouraged the region's policymakers to promote STEM education and continuous learning programs as well.

## Crowne Plaza and Holiday Inn launch National & Liberation Day campaigns



An exciting month of celebrating the National and Liberation days awaits Al Thuraya City! Having launched its "Halabil Thuraya" Campaign marking the Hotels' exciting forthcoming promotions and festivities, transforming both of the Hotels into a haven of Kuwait's National shades as they rejoice the spectacular festivities of the State of Kuwait.

For the occasion, every guest could be a winner by spinning the wheel when visiting any of our 10 restaurant outlets, including Ayam Zaman which is now open for 24 hours! Along with the numerous Instagram competitions to win a luxurious day at Al Thuraya City and a whole lot more! Exclusive offers await the fitness fanatics from EDGE 24 hour fitness for couples, fam-

ilies and friends!

From the exotic to the metropolitan, Crowne Plaza Kuwait Al Thuraya City helps plan and execute any event in the setting you've dreamed of, in the exact way you've envisioned it. Our accommodating team members, modern design, and numerous planning tools, it meets your needs at any one of our many stunning venues.

## Saadiyat Island: Your gateway to culture and luxury

Thinking about a getaway to Abu Dhabi's Saadiyat Island? We've come up with five perfect things to do during your time on the island retreat. A mere one hour from Saudi Arabia, Oman and Bahrain respectively, Abu Dhabi is fast becoming one of the region's most sought-after destinations for that perfect break.

Opened in November, Jumeirah at Saadiyat Island is the newest addition to Abu Dhabi's line of top world-class hotels and resorts. Just 20 minutes from Abu Dhabi airport, Jumeirah at Saadiyat Island Resort provides the perfect staycation that combines culture and nature in the most luxurious of settings. The resort is island life at its best. It is Jumeirah Group's first luxury "eco-conscious" resort, where depending on the season, guests may catch a glimpse of Indo-pacific humpback and bottle nose dolphins, green or hawksbill turtles and dugongs.

Guests can choose to stay at one of the resort's 293 modern, sunlit rooms with panoramic suites offering floor-to-ceiling windows and private balconies overlooking the Arabian Gulf. Jumeirah at Saadiyat Resort also offers eight private high-class villas, with either two, three and four-bedrooms with private pools. Some of the villas are equipped with their own spa treatment room ensuring maximum privacy for an even more luxurious and unforgettable experience. The villas also feature

a space for domestic helpers, so guests have the opportunity to travel and enjoy their time in a family-friendly environment.

The resort has three outdoor infinity pools, a children's pool and a tennis court. The Bodyism Wellness Centre, the first in the UAE, is a state-of-the-art gym with a separate and dedicated ladies section. The spa is an oasis of calm tranquility with a variety of organic treatments centered on a grand Moroccan Hamman, which will enrich the body and mind with cleansing rituals that have been celebrated for centuries. Here are our top five things to do while you are enjoying your break on Saadiyat Island.

### Louvre Abu Dhabi

The world-renowned Louvre Abu Dhabi museum, located in Saadiyat Island is every art lovers dream. The galleries tell the story of humanity in 12 chapters. The concept of the museum is to reveal the connections and openness of cultures by focusing on shared themes. The magical structure, designed by Pritzker-prize winning architect Jean Nouvel, is a place where water and light are combined and shine together in harmony.

Adults and families can enjoy insightful tours and children-friendly exhibitions. Tickets can be purchased online or on site and will give you access to exhibitions, galleries, children's museum and public spaces underneath the dome.

### Manarat Al Saadiyat

Just ten minutes away from the resort, Manarat Al Saadiyat is the center for arts and culture in Abu Dhabi. It is a space for people to come together to experience and share creative artistic expression. With regular exhibitions, screenings, classes, special events, panel discussions, educational initiatives and workshops it is the ideal space for all kinds of cultural expression. There is also a range of delectable dining options to be enjoyed. To plan your cultural experience, visit the website.

### Tea

Everything tastes better by the sea - and Tea, at the heart of Jumeirah at Saadiyat Resort, offers a variety of gastronomic experiences to suit all guests' various palates. Whether it's a Levantine charcoal grilled Sunset BBQ with live music and delectable Arabic mezze or the Weekend Breakfast (Sobhiyye) which features Arabian breakfast favorites with touches of western influence. On Lamet Al 3ail families and friends can savor delicacies from a different region every month and create memories. Tea also offers an extensive shisha service.

### Outdoor activities

For those who want to spend time in the open air, the resort provides plenty of options for outdoor activities. Guests can enjoy the sea on kayaks, stand up paddle boards and the new Mirage Eclipse experience (a pedal board). Children under the age of 12 must be accompanied by an adult. Those wanting to remain on ground can head to the tennis courts or explore the 400-meter expanse of beach. The tennis court is open from 6am to 10pm and water sport activities are from 9am to sunset.

### Marine and Environment education

The resort, Jumeirah's first "ecofriendly," is single-use plastic free and encourages a sustainable mindset. Set as it is, in a protected area, the resort takes preservation of the natural environment very seriously. Dolphins, turtles, and oryx are just a few of the amazing species who call Saadiyat their home. To this end, complimentary educational talks, by the resort's Marine and Environmental Manager, Emily Armstrong, are given on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays at the Pool Bar. The talks explain the resort's commitment to sustainability and conservation and encourage guest to discover and participate in the amazing eco initiatives at play.

## Jaber Al-Ali holds workshop on values

By: Hassan Abdul Bari

Under auspices of the school director, Dr Abdullah Al-Ajmi, Jaber Al-Ali Secondary School for boys recently organized a workshop on the significance of values in overcoming daily routine stress, which was delivered by the school assistant director for educational affairs, Dr Mohammed Al-Harbi.

Speaking on the workshop, which was attended by various teachers from the school and other schools at Mubarak Al-Kabeer Educational Area, Al-Harbi stressed on the importance of reviving and activating some of the long forgotten values to help us overcome the stress we face on tending to daily errands nowadays.

Al-Harbi also gave several examples of certain values such as patriotism and cleanliness reminding participants



of the need to set good examples to be followed and imitated by their children and students. Notably, Dr Mohammed Abdullah Al-Harbi is an educational consultant at the UN's World Fund for Development & Planning (WFDP)'s office in Kuwait. He also holds a PHD in teaching students with special learning difficulties and their psychological health.



Health & Technology

# By 2080, Washington DC climate may feel like Deep South: Study

**PARIS:** In a single generation, climate patterns will shift hundreds of kilometers in the United States, according to a study tracking the northward drift of hotter climes brought on by climate change and global warming. In two generations, or sixty years, the US capital will become as muggy as Memphis or Jackson, Mississippi, if current trends continue unabated.

For a preview of Tampa, Florida's climate in 2080, think Guatemala, researchers said Tuesday in the peer-reviewed journal Nature Communications. Researchers mapped likely changes in 540 US cities — home to 250 million people — over the next 60 years under two greenhouse gas emissions scenarios. If planet-warming gases continue to pour into the atmosphere at present rates, they calculated, climates will shift on average 850 kilometers as the crow flies.

Urban dwellers in the United States today, in other words, would have to drive — mostly southward — nearly 1,000 kilometers to get a taste of what their home town will feel like in 2080. "Within the lifetime of children living today, the climate of many regions is projected to change from the familiar to conditions unlike those experienced in the same place by their parents, grandparents, or perhaps any generation for millennia," said lead author Matthew Fitzpatrick, an associate professor at the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science.

If humanity manages to curb carbon pollution enough to cap global warming at about 3C (5.4 degrees Fahrenheit), the shift would be less dramatic, but still measured in hundreds of kilometers. Fitzpatrick authored the report with Robert Dunn of the University of Denmark. Global warming is already a destructive reality, amplifying droughts, flooding, heat waves and superstorms, especially in poorer countries

most vulnerable to its ravages. But for many people in temperate North America and Europe — sheltered by climate-controlled environments — that reality has yet to sink in, surveys have shown.

**Climate reality bites**

The 2015 Paris climate treaty aims to hold the rise in global temperature to "well below" 2C, a goal that may be out of reach, say some scientists. Even under the more hopeful scenario, "climate in North American urban areas will feel substantially different than they do today," Fitzpatrick said. Broadly speaking, the same holds true for Europe, where some parts of the continent will become hot and drier while others will see far more rainfall and humidity.

In the United States, much of the eastern seaboard from Boston would shift toward subtropical climates, while parts of the west and southwest would become more desert-like. "Some people might interpret these changes as an upgrade in their city's climate and maybe that is a small positive," Fitzpatrick said. "However, it comes at the cost of a number of potentially severe secondary effects," he added. "These include increased food prices, water shortages, increased cooling demands, coastal flooding, extreme climate events, arrival of pest organisms, and more disease."

Asian tiger mosquitoes and the West Nile virus, for example, have already begun a northward march in both North America and Europe. Nor did the study take into account additional warming caused by the so-called "urban heat island effect," which can add several degrees to average temperatures, raising the risk of death from heat strokes. In 2003, there were more than 70,000 deaths across Europe due to a severe heatwave. — AFP



**That reality has yet to sink in**

## Australian court rejects coal on climate grounds

**SYDNEY:** An Australian court recently delivered a landmark ruling by rejecting plans to build a coal mine on the grounds it would worsen climate change. Chief Justice Brian Preston said a planned open cut coal mine in a scenic part of New South Wales state would be in "the wrong place at the wrong time". The ruling by the New South Wales Land and Environment Court was notable for citing not only local impacts of building the proposed Gloucester Resources mine, but also secondary "climate change impacts" of the eventual use of the coal.

"It matters not that this aggregate of the Project's GHG (greenhouse gas) emissions may represent a small fraction of the global total," the justice said. "Not every natural resource needs to be exploited." The case was unusual in referring to the 2015 Paris Agreement and United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and calling climate scientists to testify. Will Steffen, a not-

ed climatologist, told the court that Australia's average surface temperature had increased one degree centigrade over the last century.

Baker & McKenzie's global head of climate law, Martijn Wilder, said the decision reinforced the trend in legal judgments around the world that directly link fossil fuels and climate change. It also added to the growing perceived risk of coal investments, he told The Australian Financial Review. "In both Australia, and around the world, financiers have largely decided that, except in some exceptional circumstances, investments in coal are not viable and that such investments will now be stranded," he said.

Climate activists have described the case as a "seminal judgment" in Australian law and hope that it sets a legal precedent. Australia is one of the world's largest producers of coal and the world's largest exporter — fuelling powerplants in Japan, China, South Korea and India. "It's a judgment of enormous significance," said David Morris, a solicitor for Environmental Defenders Office, which represented local residents against the project. "It heralds the arrival of climate litigation in Australia, the first time climate change has featured as a ground for refusal of a fossil fuel project in this country and, as far as I'm aware, anywhere," he said. — AFP

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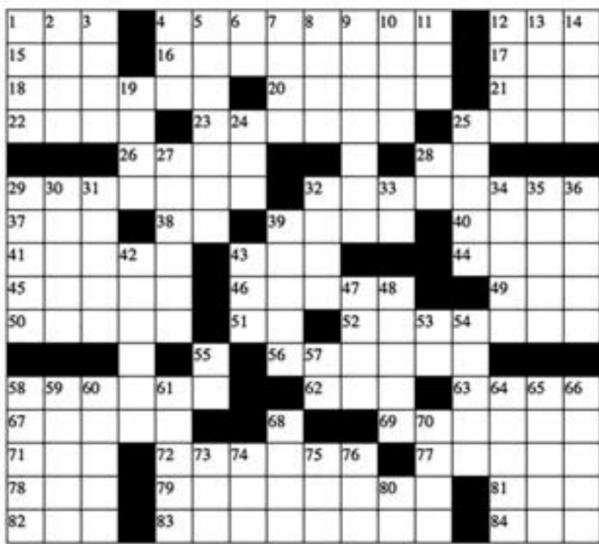
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ACROSS

1. 10 grams.
4. A language spoken by the Atakapa people of the Gulf coast of Louisiana and Texas.
12. (computer science) A computer that is running software that allows users to leave messages and access information of general interest.
15. How long something has existed.
16. Any of several related languages of the Celts in Ireland and Scotland.
17. A former agency (from 1946 to 1974) that was responsible for research into atomic energy and its peacetime uses in the United States.
18. An industrial region in the Ukraine.
20. Make fit for, or change to suit a new purpose.
21. The cry made by sheep.
22. American novelist (1909-1955).
23. A loose shirt or tunic.
26. (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.
29. A colorless flammable liquid obtained from petroleum or coal tar.
37. A benevolent aspect of Devi.
38. A white metallic element that burns with a brilliant light.
40. (archaic or Scottish) Faithful and true.
41. An indehiscent fruit derived from a single ovary having one or many seeds within a fleshy wall or pericarp.
44. Type genus of the Majidae.
45. Having the leading position or higher score in a contest.
46. (botany) Divided into two lobes.
49. Any of various dark heavy viscid substances obtained as a residue.
50. A spoon-shaped vessel with a long handle.
51. Being one hundred more than three hundred.
52. A person who lacks confidence, is irresolute and wishy-washy.
56. Naked freshwater or marine or parasitic protozoa that form temporary pseudopods for feeding and locomotion.
58. A percussion instrument consisting of a pair of hollow pieces of wood or bone (usually held between the thumb and fingers) that are made to click together (as by Spanish dancers) in rhythm with the dance.
62. (Irish) Mother of the ancient Irish gods.
63. The basic unit of money in Bangladesh.
67. Small tropical American tree bearing edible plumlike fruit.
69. Above the surround or above the normal position.
71. (prefix) Opposite or opposing or neutralizing.
72. Related to or derived from the people or culture of Spain.
77. Jordan's port.
78. Japanese ornamental tree with fragrant white or pink blossoms and small yellow fruits.
79. An island in the Indian Ocean off the east coast of Africa.
81. (British) Your grandmother.
82. An artificial language that is a revision and simplification of Esperanto.
83. A highly unstable radioactive element (the heaviest of the halogen series).
84. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.

DOWN

1. An informal term for a father.
2. Highly excited.
3. A self-replicating protein molecule that occupies a fixed place on a chromosome.
4. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
5. A region in central Italy.
6. A light strong gray lustrous corrosion-resistant metallic element used in strong light-weight alloys (as for airplane parts).
7. (Old Testament) In Judeo-Christian mythology.
8. The basic unit of money in Ghana.
9. Relating to or characteristic of the state or people of Alaska.
10. A tube with a small bowl at one end.
11. A legal document codifying the result of deliberations of a committee or society or legislative body.
12. A small cake leavened with yeast.
13. Any of various edible seeds of plants of the family Leguminosae.
14. Any of a number of fishes of the family Carangidae.
19. A man who is the lover of a girl or young woman.
24. A sweetened beverage of diluted fruit juice.
25. Overcome, as with emotions or perceptual stimuli.
27. A period of 10 years.
28. 16 ounces.
30. A member of the Siouan people formerly living in the Missouri river valley in NE Nebraska.
31. Closed with a lace.
32. (British slang) Cafe.
33. A yellow trivalent metallic element of the rare earth group.
34. A long noosed rope used to catch animals.
35. The seventh month of the Moslem calendar.
36. (biology) Having or resembling wings.
39. A member of a seafaring group of North American Indians who lived on the Pacific coast of British Columbia and southwestern Alaska.
42. A high-crowned black cap (usually made of felt or sheepskin) worn by men in Turkey and Iran and the Caucasus.
43. A mature blood cell that contains hemoglobin to carry oxygen to the bodily tissues.
47. (computer science) A graphic symbol (usually a simple picture) that denotes a program or a command or a data file or a concept in a graphical user interface.
48. Depressing in character or appearance.
53. A soft silvery metallic element.
54. A dyed fabric.
55. A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali earth group.
57. Informal terms for a mother.
59. (of complexion) Blemished by imperfections of the skin.
60. The relative magnitudes of two quantities (usually expressed as a quotient).
61. Eurasian plant cultivated for its seed and as a forage crop.
64. (Hindu) A manner of sitting (as in the practice of Yoga).
65. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
66. A city in southern Turkey on the Seyhan River.
68. An ancient Egyptian city on the west bank of the Nile opposite Cairo.
70. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
73. An associate degree in applied science.
74. Explosive consisting of a yellow crystalline compound that is a flammable toxic derivative of toluene.
75. A luminance unit equal to 1 candle per square meter measured perpendicular to the rays from the source.
76. A religious belief of African origin involving witchcraft and sorcery.
80. An associate degree in nursing.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You can feel the change coming. It makes you want to snuggle up under a blanket full of security or run home to mother for some old-time care. This isn't a bad thing coming. You're changing your emotional thoughts again. The process of change is a spiritual evolution and can bring better into your life. You don't need to cover up. Aries. Embrace your feelings and work through them. While you're worried about yourself, you find a need to care for others too. If you're not in a loving relationship get ready.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Change is happening and you're trying to straddle the fence on outside influences and your decisions. You're happy with the changes coming and you're trying to educate yourself for the transformation. That's intelligent of you and helps you get others ready for your change. Those close to you see your everyday strength, patience and unwillingness for change and don't know how to accept the new you. This may give you challenges at work and home. Staying busy, Taurus, will help you more than anything else at this particular time. Decisions will make you happier.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You're a little unsettled emotionally now because you're really not sure what you need and desire in your life anymore. You're ready to make changes for change sake. That's not always the best manner in which to proceed. Perhaps you might look into higher education on a subject that you'd like to make a career. You have the opportunity, Gemini, because of the work you've already put into your career. Perhaps your workplace will help fund some of college expenses. Think before you move.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You can't seem to sit still. An ever-increasing yearning to learn is making you look to scratch and itch that has been pestering you for some time. Your mind is traveling at the speed of light and you need to satisfy an educational need. Visit a school nearby for the opportunity you're seeking. Others notice the need to be on the go and quickly offer their assistance. Energy begets energy and you've got it to spare. Cancer. Take advantage of your day at work and at home. If possible, take a short trip for a fun time today or tonight. It'll fit right in with your attitude.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Today you're very adept at putting your emotions on the back burner. That's not to say there isn't some emotional times today but that you're not buying into them. If you don't notice yours then you can be sure that you'll not be appreciative of others emotions either. Suck it up, is your motto, Leo. Though you're emotionally stand-offish others gravitate towards you offering assistance on job projects. Today is a very different sort of day where you know you're changing habits but you're okay with it. Try to enjoy tonight by going to a favorite Italian restaurant for dinner.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Emotional change is taking over your life. You want to socialize and learn. Variety seems to satisfy and innate itch. At work your mind is quick and sharp. Others find you easy to speak with and come to you with more than work matters. Mental clarity helps you to take care of work issues that you and your coworkers have been unable to put behind you. At home a child might need more attention and you'll be glad you gave your time for this particular matter. Love is in the air and you're feeling it.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Work might see you in the limelight. You're highly respected for your ideas and putting those ideas into action. The way in which you approach life now is different and it's noticed by those you love. Your manner of speech is more direct but not sharp or putting people at a distance. Rather they want to be close and listen, to be part of your thoughts. At the same time, you have a sense of loneliness, Libra. Not even a lover can fill this void. Speaking with friends might help and if that friend happens to be the one you love, even better.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Today you want to get things done but you're still feeling the residual from the last few days. Will it be as bad, you think? It's not great but it is better. Communication is scratching a preexisting itch. Be careful with whom you're enjoying special talks. It could cause issues with your significant other. You're beginning to examine more on the emotional front and desire more in material items too. Habits are changing and you're grateful for the change but you better be careful. Change for change sake isn't always worth having.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

You seek attention from those for whom you care. Be careful. You're also seeking variety and you know what that means. Someone could get hurt this day before Valentine's. You're right in one sense though, taking chances can be rewarding today. Sagittarius at work and at home. People mean more to you now and you're always one to help others. Whew! Be careful. You're in a loving, home making mood for some of those around you while others may have the chance of losing you completely. This is because you're not getting the consideration you desire now.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You're feeling dissatisfied and fidgety. Nothing you do seems to scratch the emotional and practical itch your feeling now. Change is happening and though you wish for it, it's scary too. You want to take a step back, but you can't. The excitement is real, Capricorn, like building a healthy business. You're beginning to taste the finer things in life because you can see it coming. In one manner you're unsure but in another you know this is what you've been working to accomplish.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

You are in front of your coworkers today on issues with which you're dealing. Your far-reaching ideas keep everyone on the same page. This is because your communication skills are beyond your normal mental exchanges. You just know the answer when asked a question. You enjoy investigating your thoughts and the winds of change those thoughts bring. You're thinking about what is best for you in the middle of making your work life better. Aquarius. Do you really want to change jobs? Do you want to be a boss? All of these probing questions have you looking to your life's partner for agreement. Take your time to decide.



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 caretake someone who's unable to take care of themselves in some ways; you happily attend to this. You go the extra mile to help someone at work and this opens your eyes to the plight of someone else. A melancholy energy could infuse your environment; realizing that we live on a sometimes harsh planet is a downer until you take a look at the wonderful life you lead.

Wordsearch Puzzle

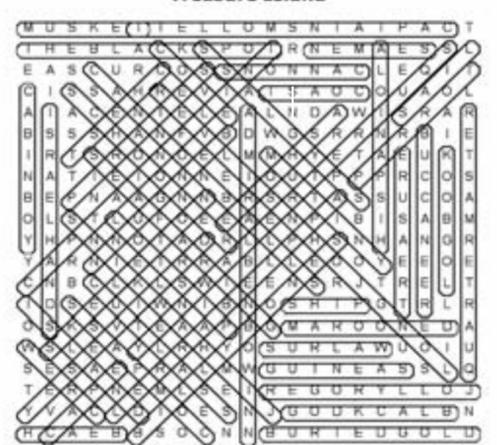
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Find and circle all of the Trees that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a secret message - a Greek Proverb.



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Treasure Island



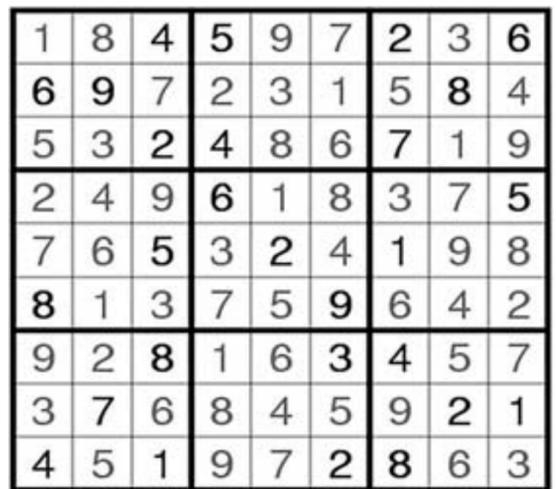
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| ADMIRAL  | BENBOW           | INW       | CAPE      | CAPTAIN     | FLINT        | ISLAND   | ISRAEL      | HANDS       | QUARTERMASTER |
| ASHORE   | BEACH            | CHEST     | COAST     | COMPASS     | COVE         | CREW     | CUTLASS     | DR. LIVELY  | SAIL          |
| BEN GUNN | BILLY BONES      | BLACK DOG | SUCCANEER | BURIED GOLD | CANNON BALLS | CANNONS  | JIM HAWKINS | JOLLY ROGER | SCHOONER      |
| LOGBOOK  | LONG JOHN SILVER | MARONED   | MUSKET    | MUTINY      | PARROT       | PIRATES  | PISTOL      | PISTOL      | SEAFARERS     |
| SEAMEN   | SHIP             | SKELETON  | SPY-GLASS | SQUIRE      | TREASURE     | TREASURE | WALRUS      |             |               |

The hidden message is: TREASURE ISLAND WAS WRITTEN BY ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



# Lifestyle

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2019



Flowers are seen at Potomac Floral Wholesale in Silver Spring, Maryland. — AFP

Forget chocolate, how about a cockroach for Valentine's?

Forget chocolate, flowers or a romantic dinner. A zoo in Texas is offering singles the chance to name a cockroach after their ex and see it fed to a meerkat live on camera on Valentine's Day. In a campaign dubbed "Quit Bugging Me!!!" the El Paso Zoo says the roach is a perfect Valentine's gift for those needing closure on a past relationship that didn't make the grade.

It said a cockroach would be assigned to each nominee and the bugs would be fed to meerkats in an event streamed on the zoo's website and Facebook page on Valentine's day. Zoo officials said Madagascar hissing cockroaches would likely be used for the feast. "They do actually hiss, they are a very large species of cockroach, definitely not the largest, but it is one that we actually do breed here at the zoo for feeding purposes," Sarah Murphy, an education specialist at the zoo, told the local ABC station. — AFP



In this file photo a keeper holds a hissing cockroach during a photo call for Whipsnade Zoo's annual stocktake in Dunstable, Bedfordshire, north of London. — AFP

## Cute and empowering Galentine's Day takes off in US

For some people, facing the onslaught of Valentine's Day flowers, candy and marketing can be overwhelming if you are single. For Riya Patel, it's a reason to celebrate love-platonic love—even by long distance. Welcome to the American phenomenon of Galentine's Day, feted on February 13th—a "holiday" gaining in popularity with each passing year, and also gaining in terms of its message of female empowerment. "I've organized this giant group FaceTime with all my closest girlfriends. All of us are going to get on the phone and celebrate each other," says Patel, a 22-year-old research analyst from the US capital.

"And then I'll just celebrate me. That's probably going to end up being some restorative yoga in my bedroom and then making something with bourbon in it." Galentine's Day was born in 2010 during an episode of the American sitcom "Parks & Recreation," when main character Leslie Knope (played by Amy Poehler) hosts a brunch on February 13 for her best gal pals. It was conceived as a defiant response to Valentine's Day—a statement that the traditional romantic love is not the only kind worth honoring.

"Women are just so pummeled throughout their upbringing with this idea of romantic love imagery, and what it means to be in love," said Olivia Dillingham, a brand consultant for women in New York. "That does create this sense of unworthiness and failure when you come around to Valentine's Day and you don't have someone to go to dinner with." Galentine's Day has grown from being a semi-joke to a semi-serious holiday—and it's generating big money.



A Galentine's Day tea setup is seen at the St Regis hotel in Washington, DC. — AFP photos

There is also a lot of pink, a lot of gold and a lot of glitter. Many businesses have started selling themed products—cards, wine glasses, candies, cookies. Big box stores have dedicated sections for the event. Bars and restaurants are organizing happy hours and parties. In Washington, whisky bar Jack Rose Dining Saloon is hosting a special cocktail hour. The luxury St Regis Hotel has planned an afternoon tea with an exclusive pop-up jewelry boutique. "We did it a little playful, with colorful girl colors," said Heather Dobson, the hotel's head pastry chef, displaying an array of small pastries decorated with candy hearts, chocolate lips and rose petals.

Clothing retailer Madewell is staging a promotional sale, encouraging shoppers to view the clothes purchased with a 20 percent discount as their new "BFFs"—best friends forever. A search on the hashtag "#galentinesday" on



Food is prepared for Galentine's Day tea at the St Regis hotel.

Instagram reveals thousands of photos of pink balloons or ladies' brunches. Dillingham, 24, hosted a Galentine's Day party last year: she and other female friends cast "love spells" on themselves, exchanged flowers and traded compliments. "Having a really strong solid support system and having support in yourself is so important," she said. "And it's just a good excuse to bring friends together."

### Time for reflection

Only 51 percent of Americans plan to celebrate Valentine's Day in 2019, according to the National Retail Federation—a decrease of more than 10 percentage points over the past decade. But Galentine's Day sales are predicted to bring in a 20 percent total revenue increase over the next three years, according to an estimate by NPD retail analyst Marshal Cohen. For Patel, Dillingham and others, the holiday goes beyond rebelling against Valentine's Day and partying to also include a time of personal reflection—more than just "ovaries before brovaries," as Leslie Knope would say.

"It started out as very shallow," Patel said. But now, "it feels bigger than just celebrating female friends. It's a day to reflect on people who support you in your life." Some businesses are working to embrace that deeper message. Arley Arrington, the owner of Arley Cakes in Richmond, Virginia, has made alternative "conversation" heart cookies since 2016 — instead of "I love you" and "Be mine," they say things like "Flawless" and "Be my equal."

Although she doesn't market them specifically for Galentine's Day, the 29-year-old baker says most of the orders come from women planning to give the goodies to their female friends. Her inspiration? The annual Beyoncé-themed Galentine's Day dinner she hosted with her friends in Charlottesville before she moved to Richmond. "People get excited when they're able to confront or think about those more challenging things in a cute format," Arrington said.

Sara Phillips, a 37-year-old Washington perfume-maker who is co-hosting a Galentine's Day workshop, says she is on board with the holiday's message—even if she had not heard of it before this year. "It's really all about women's empowerment and women helping each other out and encouragement," she said. Patel agrees: "I think that's the special part, celebrating how women are supporting each other." — AFP



Galentine's Day tea is served at the St Regis hotel.



Ursula de Bergevin, owner of Fleurs DC, looks through flowers with her daughter Chloe while preparing for a Galentine's Day event.



Galentine's Day cards are displayed at a Target store in Falls Church, Virginia.

## Lifestyle | Music &amp; Movies

## Bleep! Indian censors cut swear words from rap film

Cinemagoers might expect a few swear words in a movie about rapping but not in India, where censors have cut several profanities from a taboo-breaking blockbuster-while also toning down a screen kiss. India's Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) has ordered filmmakers to remove every mention of three expletives from "Gully Boy", a drama about an aspiring hip-hop star from a Mumbai slum. The body has a long history of cutting scenes and barring movies, including those deemed too racy or may cause religious offence, with filmmakers accusing censors of intolerance. "Gully Boy" stars Bollywood icons Ranveer Singh and Alia Bhatt and is about a young couple yearning to break out of their traditional Muslim families to realize their dreams.

The female-directed movie premiered to great acclaim at the Berlin film festival at the weekend and hits screens across India today. According to a filing on its

website, the CBFC granted "Gully Boy" a UA rating on the condition it replaced an English-language expletive and two Hindi slang terms "wherever (they) occurred". UA stands for an unrestricted adult rating, which means parental guidance is required for children under 12 years old. Only films with that rating reach a mass audience. The CBFC also told the filmmakers to reduce the length of a "passionate kissing scene" and replace it with a wider shot.

"We made some minor changes," Ritesh Sidhwani, the film's producer, told AFP, adding that the songs in the movie were "intact". Singh, 33, stars as Murad who is turning the squalor and tension of his home life into poetry until a popular local rapper convinces him to try hip-hop. Bhatt, 25, plays Safeena, who wears a traditional Muslim headscarf but resists her family's attempts to arrange her marriage and wants to become a surgeon.

The pair have loved each other since childhood but have to keep their relationship secret from their parents so they meet for illicit trysts.

The movie is inspired in part by Mumbai hip-hop stars Divine and Naezy and sees Singh doing his own rapping. In 2015 the CBFC reduced the length of two kissing scenes in James Bond movie "Spectre". That same year it blocked the release of "Fifty Shades of Grey" in India, despite being shown a toned-down version of the erotic movie. — AFP



Indian Bollywood actor Ranveer Singh (left) and British actress Alia Bhatt pose during a photocall for the film "Gully boy" presented in the special gala section at the 69th Berlinale film festival. — AFP

## Swinton overlooked daughter at first for starring film role

Tilda Swinton and a childhood friend prepared for months to make a film about a traumatic experience from their youth before realizing that the actress's daughter would be perfect for the starring role. Swinton told reporters Tuesday at the Berlin film festival that "The Souvenir" by director Joanna Hogg, featuring the first lead performance by 21-year-

## 'Improvising life'

Swinton noted that Hogg liked to work with lay actors and even shortly before shooting had not found the right person to play Julie. "I had given her the names of all Honor's friends, everybody I could think of," she said. "Finally it occurred to us both that there was somebody at the kitchen table who might be very well-suited." Hogg, who has known Honor since she was a baby, said she hadn't closely directed the two actresses on set. "We didn't really have to talk very much," she said.

"Tilda is an individual, Honor is an individual and they understood the characters they were playing. It was incredibly straightforward and very beautiful and very moving actually," Swinton Byrne, whose father is playwright and artist John Byrne, only had one previous screen role, as a child in the Italian language "I Am Love" starring her mother. Swinton said she managed to hold back from giving her daughter guidance on set.

"As far as giving Honor any advice at all about being a fully realised human being in front of a camera, she needed absolutely nothing and I wouldn't dare to presume," she said. Swinton Byrne insisted that apart from a planned sequel to "The Souvenir", reported to include Robert Pattinson in the cast, she had no plans to continue acting.

"But then I don't how life is going to go. Yes, I'm improvising life," she demurred. "This was really the most spectacular experience and I know it will always be so close to my heart for always and nothing will be ever quite as meaningful in quite the same way." Swinton Byrne said that for now, she planned to take a completely different tack in life than her creative parents. "I've applied for university in Edinburgh and I hope to study psychology and neuroscience," she said. "So that's my next ambition, my next project—so fingers crossed." "The Souvenir" is screening in the Panorama sidebar section of the Berlinale, where Swinton presented her first film, Derek Jarman's "Caravaggio", in 1986. — AFP



British actress Tilda Swinton (left) and her daughter actress Honor Swinton Byrne pose on the red carpet ahead of the screening for the film "The Souvenir" at the 69th Berlinale film festival. — AFP

old Honor Swinton Byrne, had been her most "intimate" project to date. "When I knew that (Hogg) was going to be making this particular story, it was of course incredibly moving. I was there with Joanna during the experiences that formed the basis of this film," said Swinton, 58, who has known Hogg since they were 10.

Swinton Byrne plays Julie, a young film student loosely based on Hogg who falls for Anthony, a charismatic older man who claims to work for the British foreign service during the Troubles in Northern Ireland. While Julie, the child of wealthy farmers, pursues her student films from a posh flat in London's Knightsbridge district, Anthony (Tom Burke of "The Musketeers") moves in with her. Even as Anthony feeds her creative spark, Julie soon realises he is hiding an explosive secret. Swinton and Swinton Byrne, who play mother and daughter, have received glowing reviews for the film, which was largely improvised based on a story outline by Hogg. "The Souvenir" picked up a top award at last month's Sundance film festival.

## Streaming, diversity drive 'epic' African stories: Ejiofor

British-Nigerian actor-director Chiwetel Ejiofor said the rise of streaming platforms and a growing appetite for new voices in movies have opened the door for "epic" African stories to reach a global audience. Ejiofor, who became a star with "Kinky Boots" before winning an Oscar nomination for "12 Years a Slave", presented his directorial debut at this week's Berlin film festival. "The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind", which will hit Netflix next month, is an adaptation of the international bestseller of the same name. It tells the true story of a 13-year-old whose invention saved his Malawian village from famine.

Ejiofor, who was born in London to a family from Nigeria, said the film had come together a watershed moment for new racial and gender perspectives in the entertainment industry that were next to impossible just a few years ago. "There's a strong appetite for these films and for a diversity of voices and for this idea that we're all kind of culturally enriched when we understand where different people are coming from," he told reporters. "Seeing stories... from one point of view is not very rewarding ultimately. I'm just looking forward to being a continuing part of that positive change."



(From left) Author William Kamkwamba, director and screenwriter Chiwetel Ejiofor, actress Aissa Maiga and actor Maxwell Simba pose for photographers during a photocall for the film "The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind" at the 69th Berlinale film festival. — AFP

## 'Incredibly big lives'

Ejiofor, 41, noted that Netflix had jumped into the Gulf left by major studios backing away from independent films in favour of global juggernauts. "That's been a really exciting change," he said. He said that trend had dovetailed with a realization that people in parts of the world long off Hollywood's map had "incredibly big lives". "These are epic tales, very rich stories that have all of the kind of the drama and dynamism that is part of the Western cinematic tradition," he said. The film is based on the book by William Kamkwamba.

As his village faced mass starvation in 2001 due to a drought combined with government corruption and mismanagement, he used the dynamo from a bicycle to build a windmill. The energy generated got a water pump working again and irrigated the parched fields. Ejiofor, who plays William's father, filmed the movie on location in Malawi, largely in the Chichewa language.

"The challenges were mainly I suppose logistical just because there hadn't been a film of this size in Malawi," he said, noting that he had had to ship film equipment via Johannesburg and Nairobi to get it to the village where he was shooting.

"The flip side of that was that the benefits of shooting in Malawi were so vast in terms of having this kind of authentic experience and the desire to really allow an audience to kind of slip down the rabbit hole and experience this place." "The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind" screened in the festival's Berlinale Special sidebar section.

It was one of a series of pictures spotlighting actors-turned-directors. Oscar winner Casey Affleck premiered "Light of My Life", a dystopian story of a father trying to protect his daughter in a world without women. And Jonah Hill presented "Mid90s", a semi-autobiographical coming-of-age tale set among skateboarders in Los Angeles. — AFP

## 21 Savage granted release on bond from immigration detention

Grammy-nominated rapper 21 Savage was granted release on bond from US immigration detention Tuesday, his lawyers said—nine days after his arrest sparked outrage among fellow music stars, fans and immigrant rights advocates alike. "Today, 21 Savage was granted a release on bond. He won his freedom," Charles Kuck, Dina LaPol and Alex Spiro, representing 21 Savage, said in a statement. Kuck confirmed the rapper will be released Wednesday.

21 Savage, whose real name is She'ya Bin Abraham-Joseph, was arrested February 3 in the southern city of Atlanta by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents who said he was British and had been living in the United States illegally since overstaying his visa from 2006. His legal team did not immediately clarify what comes next in the case of the 26-year-old rapper, whose chart-topping latest album "I Am > I Was" was released in December. Previously, they acknowledged that he was British, brought to the US aged seven, and lost his legal status in the US when he was a child "through no fault of his own."

They also said he has a pending application for a U visa—for victims of crimes who have faced mental or physical abuse in the US—that was filed "as a result of being the victim of a deadly shooting in 2013"—and that his three US citizen children make him eligible for deportation relief. On Tuesday, 21 Savage's lawyers also passed on a message to the young rapper's fans, saying that while he was not at Sunday's Grammys Awards—"he was there in spirit and is grateful for the support from around the world."



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

Rapper Post Malone performed hit track "Rockstar," which features 21 Savage, alone at the show in Los Angeles. The song won the pair two Grammy nominations.

A petition demanding 21 Savage's release was signed by more than 460,000 people—with Kendrick Lamar, Jay-Z and Democratic Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez among those backing the campaign for his freedom. — AFP

## Hip hop DJ pioneer Grandmaster Flash wins Polar Music Prize

Grandmaster Flash, one of the pioneers of hip hop and DJ music, yesterday shared Sweden's Polar Music Prize with German violinist Anne-Sophie Mutter and US charity Playing for Change Foundation. The winners will each receive one million Swedish kronor (95,700 euros, \$108,000) at a gala in Stockholm on June 11 in the presence of King Carl XVI Gustaf. Grandmaster Flash, whose real name is Joseph Saddler, is best known for his 1982 hit "The Message" about inner city violence, drugs, and poverty, and for developing DJ techniques such as scratching, backspinning and punch phrasing.



Grandmaster Flash

The 60-year-old is the first hip hop artist to win the award. "Grandmaster Flash is a scientist and a virtuoso who has demonstrated that turntables and mixing consoles can be musical instruments," the jury said. "His adventures at the turntables - 'the Adventures of the Wheels of Steel' - changed the course of popular music." Grandmaster Flash, who with his Furious Five group were the first hip hop act inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2007, said in a statement that winning the Polar Music Prize was "such an honor, because a lot of times in our culture, what we do as DJs gets overlooked".

The Playing for Change Foundation was honored for providing music and arts education to underprivileged children around the world. The jury hailed the global project with 15 music schools and programs around the world for having "impacted the lives of over 15,000 children and their surrounding communities." "The Playing for Change Foundation shows how music can be used to inspire, build bridges between people, create positive change, and conditions for peace." The jury also honored four-time Grammy Award winning violinist Anne-Sophie Mutter. "For more than 40 years the German violinist has thrilled audiences around the world with her virtuosity and astonishing clarity," it said. "With her Stradivarius under her chin, Anne-Sophie Mutter is not just one passionate and risk-taking musician—she is also a storyteller." She also runs two charities helping young musicians. The Polar Music Prize was established in 1989 by the late Stig Anderson, best known as the manager of Swedish pop superstars ABBA, and selects two or three laureates each year.

The prize's stated goal is to "break down musical boundaries by bringing together people from all the different worlds of music". Past laureates have included Metallica, the Afghan National Institute of Music, Sting, Bob Dylan, Bjork, Sonny Rollins and Ravi Shankar and Dizzy Gillespie.—AFP

## Italian anti-mafia author Saviano won't be 'intimidated' by Salvini

Italian anti-mafia author Roberto Saviano said Tuesday he would not allow himself to be "intimidated" by his country's far-right interior minister, who has threatened to revoke his police protection. Interior Minister Matteo Salvini stirred controversy last year by threatening to lift the police watch for Saviano—one of his most virulent critics—who has lived under armed guard since publishing his international bestseller "Gomorra" in 2006. Speaking at the Berlin film festival where the movie he wrote "Piranhas" premiered, Saviano said he would not be cowed.

"I am staying calm. I continue to do what I do. I will continue to tell what's happening. I will not let myself be intimidated by the threats made systematically by the Italian interior minister," he told reporters. "You have to understand what's happening right now in Italy. There are some very serious things happening." Saviano noted that his police protection, while essential, was a serious inconvenience to his life.

"Beyond the question of my personal security, the police escort is not a privilege—it's a nightmare to have to be escorted," he said. "There are dozens of journalists under protection in Italy and in Europe. Europe is no longer a safe place for those who tell what is happening." "La Paranza dei bambini" (Piranhas) by director Claudio Giovanni about the youth gangs of Naples was based on a book and subsequent screenplay by Saviano, Maurizio Braucci and Claudio Giovanni. It is one of 16 films in competition for the Berlinale festival's Golden Bear top prize, to be awarded by jury president Juliette Binoche on Saturday. — AFP



Italian author Roberto Saviano speaks during a press conference for the film "Piranhas" (La Paranza dei Bambini) at the 69th Berlinale film festival. — AFP



## South Africa: An extraordinary Blue Train tourism experience

### The Blue Train

Luxury takes on a new dimension with the Blue Train. You'll feel it the moment you step into the pre-departure lounges in Pretoria or Cape Town. A warm-hearted South African welcome begins a journey that is defined by personal attention and devotion to detail. The Blue Train Journeys, both scheduled and chartered, take guests through some of the most breathtaking countryside to be found anywhere in the world.

Train Safaris has been specializing in Luxury Train Travel for the past 23 years. We are sales agents for both the Blue Train and Rovos Rail. Our travel specialists will arrange your luxury rail tickets and will also be available to assist you with any travel services you might require in Southern Africa. Our experts will 'tailor make' vacation packages according to your needs and preferences.

### The Blue Train - Cape Town journey

The Blue Train route between Pretoria and Cape Town is a two night journey of 1600 kilometers (994 miles), through some of the most diverse and spectacular scenery offered by the African sub-continent, including an off-train excursion in Kimberley for a visit to the Big Hole and Diamond Mine Museum.

### The Blue Train - Hoedspruit journey (Kruger Park)

The Blue Train route between Pretoria and Hoedspruit is a unique experience. Running



only a couple of times per year you will traverse beautiful landscape and spectacular scenery on the way to the Kruger National Park. They will gladly arrange pre- and post-train safari experiences

### The Blue Train suites

The Blue Train offers two type of Suites, the Deluxe Suite and the Luxury Suite. Similar in size the Luxury Suite offers a bigger bathroom. By day, the elegant furnished Blue Train suites offer generous lounge chairs which afford unequalled views of Africa. As night falls the suites become sumptuous and subtly-lit bedrooms with a choice of either two single beds (twin) or a double bed, clothed in fine cotton linen and duvets. Considerable attention is paid to guests' needs. There is a writing desk next to the window, individually-controlled air-conditioning, telephone, safe and TV monitor with on board movie and music channels.

By day, the elegant furnished Blue Train suites offer generous lounge chairs which afford unequalled views of Africa. As night falls the suites become sumptuous and subtly-lit bedrooms with a choice of either two single beds (twin) or a double bed, clothed in fine cotton linen and duvets. Considerable attention is paid to guests' needs. There is a writing desk next to the window, individually-controlled air-conditioning, telephone, safe and TV monitor with on board movie and music channels. You can even tune into a conductor's-eye-view camera and watch the track ahead of the train. Professional Butlers are available for the duration of the journey to look after your needs. Room service is available at all hours. All suites have private bathrooms with marble floors and gold fittings. Plush white towels, soft cotton kimonos and an array of luxury bath oils and soaps are provided.

The beds fold out of the panel concealing the seats under it. Just ring your butler, should you require the bed to be made during the journey. All suites are fitted with WiFi.

### The Blue Train lounges

The Blue Train has two lounges: the main lounge and the Club lounge. The Club lounge has a more masculine ambience and is expected to find favor with those seeking a peaceful place for after-dinner cognacs, coffees or cigars. This area is the only section of the train designated for smokers. High tea is served each afternoon in the main lounge. All lounges are fitted with air-conditioning systems. On most departures the Blue Train has an Observation Car at the back of the train with large windows offering panoramic views of the passing landscape and the rail tracks.

### Cuisine and dining

All meals are freshly prepared on board the train by executive chefs. Carefully selected South African wines complement the gourmet cuisine served on The Blue Train. Savor wonderful food, freshly prepared in a state-of-the-art kitchen where gourmet chefs can cater for dietary requirements of today. The dining car caters for 42 guests per sitting. Discerning diners can have the pleasure of the best silver and crystal service where formal dinner attire adds to the grandeur.



A Palestinian veterinarian holds down the head of the lioness "Faestine" as she is being declawed.

## In the Gaza Strip pet a lion, declawed

A zoo in the war-battered Palestinian enclave of Gaza is promoting itself as offering the chance to play with a lion, who has been declawed but still has its teeth. The 14-month lioness, called Faestine, is supposed to be placid enough to meet visitors to the park in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip. "I'm trying to reduce the aggression of the lioness so it can be friendly with visitors," said Mohammed Jumaa, 53, the park's owner. It is the latest unconventional animal care practice in Gaza, where a few dilapidated zoos compete for business.

Fayez al-Haddad, the veterinarian who operated on Faestine two weeks ago, watched her behavior closely

Tuesday as she was briefly taken out of her cage to be near local residents, including children. "The claws were cut so that they would not grow fast and visitors and children could play with her," Haddad said.

There is no specialized animal hospital in Gaza so the operation was carried out at the zoo, which lacks the proper facilities. He denied that it was cruel to the animal. "We want to bring smiles and happiness to children, while increasing the number of visitors to the park, which suffers from high expenses." "(The lioness) does not lose its innate nature." But the Paw Project, an NGO which rehabilitates big cats, charges that declawing is inhumane and can maim the felines.

### 'For Facebook'

The cramped zoo in Rafah has five lions, including three cubs, along with a few birds and other animals. It was destroyed during an Israeli army bulldozing operation in Rafah in 2004, before Jumaa re-established it two years ago. A group of laughing children were watching from the other side of a low fence as Faestine was briefly shown out of her cage Tuesday for the first time since her operation. She interacted and played with zoo keepers, though for now guests were kept slightly apart as AFP watched.

At times the lioness looked stressed, trying to scratch its nonexistent claws on a tree. 12-year-old Anas Abdel Raheem insisted he wasn't scared as he leaned on the fence. "I am happy because I played with the lion and it did not bite me or tear my clothes," he told AFP. "My friends saw



Palestinian veterinarian Fayyaz Al-Haddad, holds the paw of the lioness "Faestine" after being declawed.

the pictures I posted on Facebook and WhatsApp." Haddad warned, however, that the claws grow back within six months. "Lions will not give up their offensive instincts."

Gaza is home to two million Palestinians but has been blockaded by Israel for more than a decade. There are a number of small zoos, each with poor conditions. Last month, a litter of lion cubs froze to death at one. In 2016, the last animals were evacuated from what had been dubbed 'the world's worst' zoo, also in southern Gaza. — AFP



Palestinian veterinarian Fayyaz Al-Haddad, reaches for the paw of the lioness "Faestine" as she is held by another man.



Palestinian veterinarian Fayyaz Al-Haddad, holds the paw of the lioness "Faestine" while inspecting her claws.



Palestinian children look through the bars of a cage at the declawed lioness "Faestine".



Palestinian zoo worker Mohamed Jumaa plays with the declawed lioness "Faestine" inside a cage at the Rafah Zoo in the southern Gaza Strip. — AFP photos



A Palestinian veterinarian holds down the head of the lioness "Faestine" as she is being declawed.

## My love is like...a paper rose? Filipinos look to save on Valentine's Day



A bouquet of origami roses to be sold ahead of Valentine's Day is pictured in Quezon City, Philippines. — Reuters photos

Two Philippine entrepreneurs have been using origami skills to woo cost-conscious lovers ahead of Valentine's Day, offering bouquets of roses, sunflowers and lilies made of paper at a fraction of the price of real flowers. Savers seeking a novel way to impress that special someone see the origami flowers as a statement of undying love, at half the cost of the real thing. "I see that it's really well made and that its craftsmanship is so complicated," said college student Byron Bueno, as he picked up a bouquet.

Half-a-dozen paper roses fetch 450 pesos (\$8.64) through online purchases, compared to about 800 pesos for fresh flowers at the main market in the Philippine capital, a price sellers expect to climb still higher on the big day. Ann Rodrigues, a doctor, and partner Alex Castro, a lawyer, have been flooded with orders since they decided to turn their hobby into a small business on Facebook. The couple spend three hours folding and arranging each bouquet, and have stopped taking orders for Valentine's Day because they can't meet the demand. "The thing about origami flowers is that it never wilts so once you give it to a person, they can keep it forever," said Castro. — Reuters



Filipino entrepreneurs Ann Rodrigues and Alex Castro make origami flowers to be sold ahead of Valentine's Day.



Filipino lawyer and entrepreneur Alex Castro holds bouquets of origami flowers to be delivered to clients.

## By the bootstraps: Handmade Zimbabwe shoes an unlikely global hit

In a tiny factory producing handmade boots and shoes in southwestern Zimbabwe, leather cutter Misheck Sibanda is on another hectic shift as he tries to keep up with soaring global demand. Orders are piling in and new workers are being recruited at the Courteney boot company—that seems to defy all the odds as Zimbabwe is battered by decades of economic misery. Founded in 1993, the firm has recently ramped up production to just 30 pairs a day, all of them made meticulously by 14 employees in a one-room workshop in the second city Bulawayo.

The city—a former industrial hub—has suffered the brunt of the country's collapse since 1980 that has left behind mass unemployment and a landscape of derelict warehouses and ghostly abandoned factories. But in one unmarked brick building, Sibanda uses his sturdy cutting machine to press shapes out of locally produced leather skins at the start of a process that turns out boots selling for between \$140 and \$500 a pair.

tional CITES conservation regulations, it also makes boots from ostrich, impala and even hippopotamus. "Wild, free-range leather does more to preserve the natural environment than cattle ranching," the company says. The same 15 basic designs have been unchanged for years, eschewing the fickle trends of fashion except for a few colorfully dyed women's boots.

Exporting mostly to the United States, Europe, Britain and neighboring South Africa, the boots are paid for in precious US dollars—the key to survival in Zimbabwe's economy as it lurches downwards. The country, hammered by hyperinflation 10 years ago, is again being roiled by a currency crisis, government mismanagement and fuel shortages. Many businesses have folded and investors have fled over the last 20 years, but the Courteney Boot company is rushing to keep up with orders.

Each shoe can take up to two weeks to make, and three extra staff were employed last year to boost output. "We asked our current long-serving staff to select the new ones," said manager Helen Emerick in the factory amid smells of leather, hot rubber, glue and machine oil. "They know exactly what skills are needed and how much hard work it takes. They want the company to grow and we want a happy team." Several employees come from local shoe-making families, including fathers, brothers and sons, with youngsters learning the trade at home using offcuts from the factory bins.

### Open during protests

When violent protests against Zimbabwe's economic woes erupted last month, almost all businesses closed down for a week. But the Courteney factory stayed open, working shorter days so that staff could get home safely. "We had a lot of orders to get done!" Emerick said. "The biggest challenge now is regular power cuts. We have to use our generator and make sure we have enough fuel. "We do it the old-fashioned way—there's no laser cutting here."

The company is named after Frederick Courteney Selous, the legendary explorer and hunter who died in 1917, and it is still owned by Gale Rice, widow of its founder John Rice. In Bulawayo's colonial-era city centre, Jay Giga, owner of a menswear store on Robert Mugabe Way, says he waits impatiently for each new batch of supplies. "A guy from South Africa came in yesterday and bought nine pairs for him and his friends," Giga said.

"I sell them as fast as I can get them in. We are always asking them to make more." Back on the production line, Sibanda says that he expects Zimbabwe's renewed troubles to test the company to the limit in the years ahead. "It is so difficult here," he said. "But we are going to survive because we are unique". — AFP

### Cult footwear

Prized by a small band of aficionados, Courteney boots have soles made from natural tree rubber—imported in blocks from Malaysia—and uppers made from the hides of Zimbabwe game such as buffalo, kudu, wildebeest and crocodile. Using only hides approved under the interna-



Pairs of shoes are seen on the production line of the Courteney boot company in Zimbabwe's second city Bulawayo. — AFP photos

"We sell internationally—to the first world, even though we are a third-world country. That alone makes me smile," Sibanda said, deftly handling the soft leather skins. "People are tired of manmade materials, they want natural products like ours." Sibanda and his colleagues are behind an unlikely business story based on a skilled workforce, traditional methods and decades-old stitching machines to produce classic outdoor boots and shoes.



Edward, an employee of the Courteney boot company, works on a shoe sole.



An employee of the Courteney boot company applies wax on shoes.



An employee of the Courteney boot company works on the production line.



An employee of the Courteney boot company works at the shoe factory.



Leather cutter Misheck Sibanda works at the Courteney boot company.



An employee of the Courteney boot company selects leather that will be used to make shoes.

## Instagram deletes gay Muslim comic strip after Indonesia outrage

Instagram yesterday shut down an account that published comic strips about the struggles of a gay Muslim in Indonesia after it sparked a backlash in the world's biggest Islamic nation. The move comes after Indonesia's communications ministry sent a letter to the social media giant warning that the "pornographic" content violated an electronic information law. The now-deleted account, which had about 6,000 followers, published a dozen posts depicting a gay Muslim man named Alpentuni who talked

about discrimination and his life in a conservative family. "My family is very religious. I have to pray five times a day, but I've got a secret," the character said in one strip that has since been deleted.

"I'm very pious in front of others, but in private I'm gay." Homosexuality is not illegal in Indonesia—except in Aceh province under the region's Islamic law—but a backlash against the vulnerable LGBT community is growing and same-sex relationships are widely frowned upon. The

comic strip sparked heated online debate with some conservatives branding it immoral. "Please remove this account and put whoever runs it in prison—this is indecent," one Instagram user wrote. "It's not only blaspheming Islam but it is also destroying morality."

Others said it was an honest portrait of gay life in the world's biggest Muslim majority country. "Gay Muslims are real. Gay Muslims being persecuted by people in their neighborhood and their conservative families is real," said

one Twitter user. In October, an Indonesian man was arrested for running a Facebook page that catered to the gay community. Also last year, Google pulled Blued, one of the world's largest gay dating apps, from the Indonesian version of its online store in response to government demands. — AFP

# Classifieds

Thursday, February 14, 2019

**Kuwait Times**  
 Now you can browse  
[www.kuwaittimes.net](http://www.kuwaittimes.net)  
 e-mail: info@kuwaittimes.net

**STATE OF KUWAIT**  
 DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION  
 METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



Tel: (+965) 161 Ext: 6819 - 6817  
 Fax: (+965) 24348714  
[www.met.gov.kw](http://www.met.gov.kw)



## Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

**BY DAY:** Fair with light to moderate north westerly wind to light variable wind, with speed of 08 - 28 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.

**BY NIGHT:** Cold with light variable wind to light to moderate south easterly wind, with speed of 06 - 26 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear with a chance for fog forming.

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings		
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 13/02/2019 0000 UTC		
KUWAIT CITY	20 °C	12 °C			
KUWAIT AIRPORT	18 °C	06 °C			
ABDALY	19 °C	07 °C			
BUBYAN	--- °C	--- °C			
JAHRA	21 °C	09 °C			
FAILAKA ISLAND	20 °C	09 °C			
SALMIYAH	18 °C	13 °C			
AHMADI	20 °C	12 °C			
NUWASIB	21 °C	09 °C			
WAFRA	21 °C	07 °C			
SALMY	22 °C	06 °C			

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Thursday	02/14	Fair	20 °C	09 °C	SE	08 - 32 km/h
Friday	02/15	Warm and Partly cloudy to cloudy with a chance for rising dust with a chance for rain that might	22 °C	12 °C	SE-NW	15 - 45 km/h
Saturday	02/16	Fair and Partly cloudy with a chance for rising dust over open areas with a chance for scattered	22 °C	14 °C	N-NW	15 - 40 km/h
Sunday	02/17	Fair	20 °C	14 °C	NW-VRB	12 - 35 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	05:09
Sunrise	06:29
Zuhr	12:02
Asr	15:12
Sunset	17:36
Isha	18:53

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	00 °C
MIN. Temp.	00 °C
MAX. RH	00 %
MIN. RH	00 %
MAX. Wind	N 00 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

## Hospitals

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

## Clinics

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

## SKS GROUP CO. W.L.L

### NOTICE TO OLD EMPLOYEES

SKS GROUP CO. W.L.L under new management hereby inform to all employees to collect their pending benefits with effect from 02 February 2019 on following selected days and timings:

- 1- Saturday - 4:00 PM – 8:00 PM
- 2- Monday - 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM
- 3- Wednesday - 6:00 PM – 9:00 PM

Employees willing to settle the issues shall call following

Tel: +965 90986011

## Airlines

Kuwait Airways	171
Jazeera Airways	177
Wataniya Airways	22 066 536
Turkish Airlines	1884918
American Airlines	22087425
	22087426
	22924455
Jet Airways	22414400
FlyDubai	22423888
Qatar Airways	22425747
KLM	22418064/5/6
Royal Jordanian	22425635
British Airways	22430224
Air France	22921555
Emirates	22438184
Air India	22424444
Sri Lanka Airlines	22421578
Egypt Air	22421516
Swiss Air	22426306
Saudia	22423073
Middle East Airlines	22422493
Lufthansa	22421044
PIA	2242977/8
Bangladesh Airlines	



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

## DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Thursday 14/2/2019					Departure Flights on Thursday 14/2/2019				
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time		Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	
JZR	254	Amman	00:05	KAC 774	Riyadh	14:00			
JAI	572	Mumbai	00:15	KAC 792	Madinah	14:05			
THY	766	ISL	00:30	IRA 667	Esfahan	14:10			
KAC	504	Beirut	00:45	KNE 231	Riyadh	14:10			
JZR	734	Cairo	00:50	JZR 602	Baku	14:10			
KAC	102	London	00:50	SVA 500	Jeddah	14:15			
THY	772	Istanbul	00:50	FDB 059	Dubai	14:20			
SAI	441	Lahore	00:50	FDB 8065	Dubai	14:25			
PGT	858	Istanbul	01:00	GFA 221	Bahrain	14:40			
DLH	625	Dammam	01:25	KAC 618	Doha	14:40			
RJA	642	Amman	01:35	KAC 412	Bangkok	15:00			
UAE	853	Dubai	01:45	KNE 529	Jeddah	15:05			
THY	764	Istanbul	01:50	KAC 788	Jeddah	15:10			
IGO	1757	Kochi	01:55	ETD 303	Abu Dhabi	15:15			
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	JZR 222	Riyadh	15:30			
JZR	722	Alexandria	02:15	KAC 562	Amman	15:35			
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30	OMA 645	Muscat	15:35			
KLM	446	Bahrain	02:30	UAE 857	Dubai	15:45			
QTR	1086	Doha	02:40	JZR 732	Cairo	15:50			
OMA	643	Muscat	02:55	SAW 705	Damascus	16:00			
KKK	1268	Istanbul	03:05	KAC 118	New York	16:05			
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:05	ABY 127	Sharjah	16:05			
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	JZR 212	Jeddah	16:25			
QTR	1076	Doha	04:00	KAC 502	Beirut	16:30			
LMU	510	Cairo	04:00	KAC 542	Cairo	16:30			
IGO	1751	Chennai	04:10	QTR 1072	Doha	16:35			
KAC	418	Manila	04:25	FDB 051	Dubai	16:40			
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:30	FEG 341	Sohag	16:55			
JZR	406	Kochi	04:45	JZR 114	Doha	17:10			
FDB	069	Dubai	05:00	SVA 510	Riyadh	17:15			
KAC	382	Delhi	05:05	GFA 215	Bahrain	17:30			
THY	770	Istanbul	05:10	JZR 214	Jeddah	17:45			
KAC	1544	Cairo	05:10	JZR 104	Bahrain	17:45			
JZR	404	Hyderabad	05:10	UAE 875	Dubai	18:00			
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:20	FDB 063	Dubai	18:15			
JZR	112	Doha	05:25	JZR 124	Dubai	18:20			
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:40	QTR 1080	Doha	18:30			
KAC	344	Chennai	05:50	MSR 620	Cairo	18:30			
JZR	402	Mumbai	06:05	RJA 640	Amman	19:00			
KAC	362	Colombo	06:10	ABY 123	Sharjah	19:25			
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:10	RBG 555	Alexandria	19:25			
KAC	302	Mumbai	06:25	KAC 156	Istanbul	19:30			
KAC	678	Dubai	06:55	KAC 616	Bahrain	19:30			
BAW	157	London	07:05	GFA 217	Bahrain	19:30			
JZR	708	Luxor	07:15	KAC 217	Cairo	19:30			
KAC	206	Islamabad	07:35	NIA 161	Cairo	19:30			
KAC	354	Bengaluru	07:35	KAC 662	Abu Dhabi	19:35			
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	KAC 776	Riyadh	19:50			
KAC	384	Delhi	08:00	FDB 057	Dubai	19:50			
QTR	8511	Kochi	08:00	JZR 126	Dubai	19:55			
KAC	358	Doha	08:05	KNE 381	Taif	20:00			
KAC	304	Mumbai	08:20	OMA 620	Doha	20:15			
UAE	855	Dubai	08:35	KAC 647	Muscat	20:20			
MSC	411	Asyut	09:00	KAC 674	Dubai	20:35			
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	09:05	QTR 1088	Doha	20:35			
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:05	DLH 624	Frankfurt	20:45			
QTR	1070	Doha	09:30	KAC 174	Munich	21:15			
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	ETD 307	Abu Dhabi	21:20			
SVA	512	Riyadh	10:00	ALK 229	Colombo	21:20			
SYR	341	Damascus	10:00	MEA 402	Beirut	21:20			
JZR	410	Delhi	10:00	KAC 164	MXP	21:25			
SAW	703	Damascus	10:30	KAC 168	Paris	21:30			
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	UAE 859	Dubai	21:35			
IRA	675	Lar	10:50	RBG 551	Alexandria	21:40			
JZR	116	Doha	11:10	KAC 676	Dubai	21:45			
JZR	122	Dubai	11:10	GFA 219	Bahrain	21:45			
QTR	1074	Doha	11:35	KLM 445	Amsterdam	21:50			
JZR	216	Jeddah	11:45	KAC 564	Amman	21:55			
MEA	404	Beirut	11:55	JAI 574	Mumbai	22:00			
KAC	614	Bahrain	12:25	MSC 405	Sohag	22:00			
JZR	252	Amman	12:30	QTR 1082	Doha	22:05			
JZR	714	Sohag	12:35	ETD 309	Abu Dhabi	22:15			
UAE	871	Dubai	12:50	AIC 981	Chennai/Ahmedabad	22:25			
KAC	742	Dammam	12:50	KAC 622	Doha	22:30			
ABY	121	Sharjah	12:55	RBG 213	Sohag	22:30			
MSR	610	Cairo	13:10	KAC 786	Jeddah	22:45			
AXB	393	Kozhikode	13:15	KAC 692	Muscat	22:55			
KNE	531	Jeddah	13:20	BBC 043	Dhaka	23:00			
QTR	1078	Doha	13:35	MSC 501	Alexandria	23:05			
IAW	157B	Al Najaf	13:55	GEC 8456	Frankfurt	23:10			
				JZR 128	Dubai	23:15			
				FDB 071	Dubai	23:45			

# Hot potato: Turkey selling cheap veggies before polls

**ISTANBUL:** Grocery shoppers in Turkey looking for a bargain were able to buy vegetables at unbeatable prices this week from an unexpected source: The local government. Turkish authorities have started setting up their own vegetable stands in a bid to force markets to lower food prices as the country struggles with persistently high inflation. But while shoppers have flocked to the stands, the country's opposition has accused the government of attempting to curry favor ahead of local elections next month by feeding into popular anger over rising food prices.

Local officials in Istanbul, surrounded by sacks of potatoes and onions, sold vegetables to customers who had queued for hours after the city's metropolitan municipality set up the first stands on Monday. More than 50 stalls will be up and running next week, selling vegetables two to three times cheaper than supermarkets, the Istanbul municipality said. A kilogram of tomatoes costs three Turkish lira (57 US cents) at the government stands, while a kilo of potatoes or onions costs two lira. Sales are capped at three kilos per person per vegetable.

When housewife Betül Sonmez heard about the initiative, she rushed to the big tent put up by the municipality in the district of Besiktas on the European side of Istanbul. The 50-year-old left with bags full of potatoes, onions and tomatoes which cost her a total of 20 lira. "I would have paid around 50 liras for this in a supermarket," she said. "How can we get by at that price?"

The initiative in Istanbul, as well as in the capital Ankara where 15 stands will be set up, is part of the government's effort to curb inflation, which has reached record levels in the past few months. The food sector has been hit particularly hard, with prices increasing by 6.43 percent in January compared with the previous month - after skyrocketing by 30.97 percent last year - according to recently released official figures.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has declared war on what he has called "food price terrorism", accusing retailers of selling products at unreasonable prices. And he does not plan to stop at vegetables. "From cleaning products to whatever else they have on supermarket shelves, we will start to sell them," he promised during a rally for local elections to be held on March 31.

Many Turks, like Erdogan and pro-government media, accuse retailers of pushing prices up because of greed. "Now they are going to be stuck with the vegetables which will rot in their hands," retiree Hasan said



**ANKARA:** People queue to buy vegetables at a tent set up by the metropolitan municipality in the Cankaya district yesterday.— AFP

as he queued for the stand in Besiktas.

But the stands have also been the subject of sharp criticism. Turkey's main opposition parties say Erdogan is scapegoating retailers for his own inability to control inflation, and forcing municipalities to sell vegetables at a loss, using public money to cover the losses. "Why are they doing it now? Because there will be elections soon," said Besiktas resident Kiyemettü Erdumlu in front of the municipality's stall.

Seracettin Suyu, who runs a market stall in Istanbul's Sisli district, said the purpose of the push was "to accuse

us, to make us enemies... it's not ethical, it's a disgrace". The 42-year-old trader said the high prices were due to bad weather conditions in southern Turkey in recent weeks, as well as increased costs of production. "Lower these costs, such as fuel, and then we can lower our prices," he said. But for now, Suyu is not worried and continues to sell his tomatoes for eight lira a kilo. "There is one month until the elections. After that, they will move on to something else."

With 300 tons of vegetables sold in Istanbul on Monday, according to the municipality, the stands are a

success - and seem to have already had an impact on supermarkets. Some of the major supermarket chains operating in Turkey, such as Migros and Carrefour, have dropped the prices of some vegetables to bring them in line with those of the municipality's stands, the Hürriyet newspaper reported yesterday. The paper said the chains were also setting a cap of three kilos per product. In a Migros store in Nisantasi, a posh Istanbul neighborhood, a kilo of tomatoes has been sold for three lira since Tuesday. "Tayyip's tomatoes have arrived here!" one customer said, to laughter in the shop. — AFP

## Twitter gaffes piling up for Indian ministers

**NEW DELHI:** Two Indian ministers were left red-faced yesterday after their attempts to glorify Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government on Twitter backfired spectacularly. Critics have accused Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) of running a relentless propaganda campaign on social media to increase its base of supporters. Media reports have suggested the

party employs a "backroom army of trolls" to attack its rivals and run smear campaigns.

Yesterday, Railway Minister Piyush Goyal shared a video purportedly showing India's first semi high-speed train zipping past at lightning speed, in order to trumpet Modi's pet "Make in India" initiative. But it turned out to be a digitally altered video with the speed of the train enhanced by two times, prompting a backlash from Twitter users. "Massive respect for Piyush Goyal. He just made the video 2X times faster and called it semi-high speed train when he could have made it 6X times faster and called it super high speed train," wrote one user. Goyal has yet not commented on the video, which can still be seen on his timeline.

India's junior minister for finance and shipping, Pon

Radhakrishnan also found himself at the receiving end after inadvertently criticizing his own government in multiple tweets. The minister retweeted posts with the hashtag #ModiForNewIndia without reviewing the content. "#Modi4NewIndia Working for the middle class is low on the agenda of Modi govt," read one of his tweets. "Modi govt started the process of online tracking of applications for environmental approvals, bringing down approval time from 600 days to 1,800 days," read another. Hundreds of other accounts loyal to Modi and the BJP retweeted Radhakrishnan's posts verbatim. Some of the tweets have since been deleted.

Pratik Sinha, co-founder of fact-checking website Alt-News, yesterday said he had edited a shared Google document that exposed how the BJP's social

media army churned out propaganda on a daily basis and was picked by government loyalists. "How do you get a union minister to tweet what you want? Well, you go and edit the trending document made by BJP IT cell, and then you control what they tweet," wrote Sinha.

Indian cyber experts have warned of a bitter social media war between the ruling BJP and the main opposition Congress party headed by Rahul Gandhi ahead of a general election due by May. India's right-wing groups recently accused Twitter of a "left-wing bias", saying the network was suspending accounts supportive of the BJP. On Monday, a 31-member panel headed by a BJP lawmaker, summoned Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey to appear before it on Feb 25. — AFP

## Assembly panel says expats...

Continued from Page 1

Deputy Speaker MP Issa Al-Kandari meanwhile submitted a draft law suggesting a replacement for

article 16 of the Assembly's charter, which was declared unconstitutional and scrapped by the constitutional court in December. Under the new amendment, the Assembly must declare without voting a parliamentary seat vacant when a lawmaker receives a final jail term for serious crimes. Under the previous article, the Assembly had the right to vote on whether to keep the membership even after a lawmaker received a final jail term.

gas, and hospitality.

Dividend Gate Capital (Bahrain): Dividend Gate Capital (DGC) a private equity investment company established in Bahrain, targeting investment opportunities in different sectors in the region.

Saqer Al-Maousherji (Kuwait): Investing in his personal capacity, Saqer Al-Maousherji is the Chairman of the Al-Maousherji Group. The group operates across various sectors, including food and beverage, paper and packaging, printing, real estate investment and management, and publishing. It owns and operates a chain of franchised McDonald's restaurants.

COFE App Founder and CEO Ali Al-Ebrahim said: "We are a group of coffee enthusiasts who - in the age of Tesla, Uber, and Airbnb - got frustrated with old-world ways of ordering coffee. So we set out to streamline the coffee ordering process and bring to our mobiles phones and everyone else's as well, aiming to bring the coffee culture and technology together in one unified platform. Today, we have a fast-growing state-of-the-art app that enables customers to order their favorite coffee from their favorite coffeehouse, and an app that has the potential to transform and grow our vendor's revenue streams. Needless to say, it's been a very exciting year for us at COFE App, and as we make this announcement today, and welcome our new investors on board, we are more focused than ever on growing our customer base both in Kuwait and abroad."

COFE App enables customers to order and pay for their coffee, and choose from multiple delivery options, including fast delivery to their office or home, counter pickup, and car pickup service. The entire selection and purchasing process takes place in the app, which offers comprehensive menus and drink customization options.

The coffee category is one of the world's fastest growing beverage categories worldwide, with over \$600 million invested in coffee-related startups globally for the first seven months of 2018 - almost four times the investments of 2017 according to data from CB Insights, who are expecting the figure to hit \$1 billion by yearend. The sector has also witnessed a series of a high profile, multi-billion dollar merger and acquisition activity in 2018. High profile examples include Coca Cola Co's \$5.1 billion acquisition of Costa Coffee and JAB's \$2 billion acquisition of Pret-a-Manger.

## El Chapo heads to prison where...

Continued from Page 1

south of Denver, is nicknamed "Alcatraz of the Rockies" after the prison in San Francisco Bay that held gangster Al Capone in the 1930s and other notorious criminals. ADX Florence inmates are held in specially designed "control units" that function as prisons within prisons. "It's like a self-contained area within a self-contained area within a self-contained area," Levine said.

The prisoners are confined to single-person cells for 22 or more hours a day, depriving them of virtually all contact with the outside world. ADX Florence's most infamous inmates include Ramzi Yousef, mastermind of the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center in New

York; convicted Boston Marathon bomber Dzhokhar Tsarnaev and Unabomber Ted Kaczynski, according to the BOP website.

Special restrictions are designed to ensure some inmates have no means of exerting influence or threats beyond prison walls, which is useful for US authorities to control those with sway over militant groups or criminal enterprises. Not all of the facility's prisoners are famous for their crimes. Some were transferred there because they attacked guards or inmates at other facilities, Levine said.

In fact, about 90 percent of the more than 400 inmates are there because of discipline issues, according to a report released last October by the District of Columbia Corrections Information Council. Inside their cell, the most highly guarded inmates have a television with content designed to provide them with education, psychological help and religious services, the report said. Each cell has a narrow window, 107 cm tall and angled toward the sky, and inmates cannot see each other from inside their units, it said. — Reuters

## COFE App secures \$3.2m...

Continued from Page 1

Nizar Al-Nusif Sons Holding (Kuwait): A strategic investment company, Nizar Al-Nusif Sons Holding is based in Kuwait. Headed by Mohammed Al-Nusif, who is the current CEO of Qualitynet, Kuwait's leading internet, data communication and smart solutions brand. Mohammed also serves on the board of National Investments Co., Kuwait Sporting Club and is a member of Young Arab Leaders.

Arab Investment Company KSCC (Kuwait): AIC was established in Kuwait in 2006 with a capital of KD 15 million, is one of the leading investment companies in Kuwait. AIC is a full-fledged investment company, regulated by the Capital Markets Authority as well as the Central Bank of Kuwait, and specializes in corporate finance and wealth management services, as an independent, knowledge-based and result-oriented finance and investment company. AIC operates as sole investor, investment partner, wealth manager, as well as corporate finance service provider, and is widely known for their integrated approach which fuses the market realities with proven and state-of-the-art strategies, leading to optimum performance.

Towell International Holding (Oman): Investing as a group is Towell International Holding. The Towell name has been around for 150 years. Today, they are a fifth generation family business, making them one of the oldest family businesses in the region. Towell International Holding is in multiple industries including FMCG, manufacturing, electronics, and telecommunications to name a few.

Takamol Capital BSC (Bahrain): Takamol Capital is an independent private investment and multi-family business advisory firm that also operates as a holding structure for the founding family's investments. Established in 2010, Takamol's strong roots and links into the Middle East, Europe and Asia and its strategic global relationships allow the firm to cover multiple sectors including industrials, automotive, real estate, technology, healthcare, oil and

## US fails to halt Iran bid to free...

Continued from Page 1

before Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution severed relations between the countries. The United States announced in October that it was pulling out of the Treaty of Amity after the ICJ in a separate case ordered Washington to lift nuclear-related sanctions on humanitarian goods for Iran. The ICJ is the top court of the United Nations and was set up after World War II to resolve disputes between member states. Its rulings are binding and cannot be appealed, but it has no means of enforcing them.

Tensions between Tehran and Washington are already high around the 40th anniversary of the Iranian revolution and a Middle East meeting in Warsaw starting Wednesday where the United States aims to pile pressure on Iran. Relations have been strained ever since US President Donald Trump's decision last year to pull out of a "terrible" international nuclear deal with Iran and reimpose sanctions. The 2015 nuclear deal had unblocked billions of dollars in

other Iranian funds.

Iran first lodged the lawsuit in June 2016, accusing Washington of breaking the decades-old amity treaty dating from the time of the Shah, who was deposed in the revolution. Judge Yusuf noted that at the last hearing on Iran's funds in October, the United States had argued "that Iran's 'unclean hands' preclude the court from proceeding with this case". But he added that "even if it were shown that (Iran's) conduct was not beyond reproach, this would not be sufficient" on its own to throw out the case. He also said the fact that the US had now pulled out of the amity treaty with Iran "has no effect on the jurisdiction of the court" and that it now needed to hold detailed hearings.

US officials including US National Security Advisor John Bolton have previously called the ICJ's legitimacy into account, and were incensed by October's ruling by the court that Washington must drop sanctions on humanitarian goods. In Poland this week, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo will use a two-day conference of foreign ministers to try to rally the world behind increasing pressure on Iran and supporting Israel, although turnout could be thin. The Trump administration has also found itself at odds with its European allies over the nuclear deal, with EU powers launching a mechanism to bypass sanctions. — AFP

Sports

# Nishikori rallies to overcome tough Rotterdam Open opener

## Milos Raonic, Denis Shapovalov score first-round double for Canada

**ROTTERDAM:** Top seed Kei Nishikori was tested by a stubborn opponent before finally putting away Pierre-Hugues Herbert 3-6, 6-1, 6-4 on Tuesday at the Rotterdam Open. The Japanese world number seven needed an hour and a quarter to get on track against a player who had reached the Montpellier final barely 48 hours earlier against Jo-Wilfried Tsonga.

Second seed Karen Khachanov, winner of the Paris Masters title last November, fell in a shock to Dutch wildcard Tallon Griekspoor, who recovered for a 3-6, 6-3, 6-2 upset of the Russian.

The defeat leaves Khachanov winless here in three attempts. Victory marked the second Rotterdam upset for the 211th-ranked local, who put out Stan Wawrinka a year ago in his hometown for his first career ATP Tour-level win. Nishikori finally earned his first break well into the evening against Herbert, taking a 3-1 lead in the second set after dropping the first. That opened the floodgates, with Asia's top player quickly finding his recovery mode to run out the tight first-round victory after two hours and 10 minutes, saving break points as he served out the win.

Nishikori could not have asked for a more difficult Rotterdam debut as he faced the 36th-ranked Frenchman. "It wasn't easy, as he was playing good tennis and serving well," Nishikori said. "I had a little bit of trouble with my return game and couldn't convert the important points."

"I just tried to play steady, as I wasn't playing bad. I tried to stay aggressive." Victory sent Nishikori to 9-1 this season after starting 2019 with a Brisbane title and an Australian Open quarter-final appearance.

He was forced to quit his match in Melbourne against

Novak Djokovic in the second set due to a knee problem, cured by rest over the past two weeks in Florida. Nishikori next faces Ernests Gulbis, who beat Marius Copil 6-2, 6-4 in a battle of qualifying lucky losers. "He's not easy, especially indoors where he uses his great serve and aggressive play really well. "I just need to stay focused and get used to the conditions a little bit more," Nishikori said.

Milos Raonic and Denis Shapovalov scored a first-round double for Canada, with both powering ahead in straight sets. Raonic, the fourth seed, fought past German Philipp Kohlschreiber 7-6 (10/8), 7-5 on the back of 21 aces. Shapovalov, seeded 10th, defeated Croatian Franko Skugor 7-5, 6-3. Raonic had to work to get past a 2016 semi-finalist at the Ahoy stadium. The Canadian set up a second-round meeting with Wawrinka, whom he beat in an Australian Open marathon last month.

"It will be a tough match, especially after we went four tiebreakers over four hours in Melbourne," Raonic said. "It will be important for me to be disciplined and continue to play well."

"I might need to change a few things from the last match. Hopefully I can execute well." Raonic has beaten Wawrinka - a former Rotterdam winner - in their last three meetings. The Swiss is putting the final polish on his game as he completes a return from two knee operations in August 2017. Shapovalov dominated Croatian qualifier Skugor in their first-time meeting as both made Rotterdam debuts. Gael Monfils earned an upset of Belgian eighth seed David Goffin 7-6 (7/5), 7-5, while former champion Tomas Berdych beat Frenchman Gilles Simon 7-6 (10/8), 6-4. — AFP



ROTTERDAM: Japan's Kei Nishikori plays a backhand return to France's Pierre-Hugues Herbert during their men's singles match on day two of the ABN AMRO World Tennis Tournament in Rotterdam on Tuesday.—AFP

## Third Kuwait Martyrs mini goal tournament

By Abdellatif Sharaa

**KUWAIT:** Under the patronage of HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the humanitarian leader, represented by Amiri Diwan Undersecretary, Director of Martyr's office Fatima Al-Amir, crowned Mulla Hassan Al-Kandari School champion of the Third Kuwait Martyrs Mini Goal Tournament, after defeating Al-Najat School team in penalty kicks as regulation ended in a draw.

Director General of Physical Education at the Education Ministry Waleed Al-Salameen, Directors of Education Zones, Dr Khaleefa Behbehani, former footballer Saad Al-Houti and media personalities were in attendance.

Fatima Al-Amir honored the winning team, education ministry physical education leaders and coordinator general Hassan Al-Khawaja for their efforts to ensure



the tournament success.

Waleed Ayyesh thanked HH the Amir for patronizing the tournament, and thanked the martyr's office as well as all committees and wished the tournament will continue as it became a symbol for Kuwait martyrs, adding

that it achieved its goals.

Hassan Al-Matrouk from Hassan Mulla Al-Kandari won the outstanding trophy, meanwhile footballer Saad Al-Houti and others lauded the tournament and wished it continues.

## Super tired Pliskova fifth star to pull out of Qatar Open

**DOHA:** Karolina Pliskova yesterday became the fifth player all from the world's top 20 to withdraw from an injury-ravaged Qatar Open. The world number five joins Caroline Wozniacki, Ashleigh Barty and Caroline Garcia as a player who has pulled out since the tournament started, as well as newly-crowned Australian Open champion Naomi Osaka, who withdrew days before the start.

"From the first day I was not feeling great and not ready," the Czech star and former world number one told reporters. "I have never felt actually this way. It's normal that you are tired, of course, when you are travelling and playing a lot of matches."

"But I just feel somehow my body is not ready, I had a temperature for a few days. "I don't have any neck pain or something, but I just feel overall like super tired, and my muscles are just hurting from the morning without even doing anything."

"So I'm just not able to compete 100 per cent today." Pliskova, the number two seed in Qatar, was due to play her first match of the tournament yesterday, against Belgium's Elise Mertens. Unusually, her place in the tournament has been taken by her twin sister, Kristyna.

Karolina played in a gruelling three-hour Fed Cup tie against Romania's Simona Halep, who is also in Doha, at the weekend. Pliskova said "it would be better" if Fed Cup matches were played on Friday and Saturday rather than over the weekend. Asked if she thought players should think more about fans and tournament organisers before withdrawing, Pliskova said: "I don't know what else you want to do. "If the players are sick, what can they do? She added: "If it's not possible, it's not possible." —AFP

## Hamilton hungry for more as new Mercedes makes track debut

**LONDON:** Formula One champions Mercedes ran their new car for the first time at Silverstone yesterday with title holder Lewis Hamilton saying he felt 2019 could turn out even better than last season.

With some other teams racing against time to get their new cars built and ready for the start of pre-season testing in Spain on Monday, Mercedes made sure they were on track in every respect.

Hamilton's Finnish team mate Valtteri Bottas performed the initial shakedown laps as part of a 100 kilometre filming day, with five-times world champion Hamilton due to be in the car during the afternoon.

"I completely switched off from racing for a while, trying to focus and re-centre myself and training hard for the new season. 2018 was a great year, but I feel like 2019 can be even better," Hamilton said.

"I want to achieve more, I want to continue to keep pushing, I feel energised and I'm ready to attack."

The Briton won 11 races last year on his way to becoming only the third driver to win five titles and with a career tally of 73 wins is now only 18 off Michael Schumacher's all-time record of 91.

Hamilton has also won 51 of the 100 grands prix in the V6 turbo era that started in 2014 and four of the last five championships.

"The buzz really starts at the beginning of the year when you see the car coming together. And then you get to the shakedown and you get into the car-it just never gets old," he added.

Mercedes have also won the last five constructors' championships but team boss Toto Wolff warned that rule changes could shake things up. "We're taking nothing for granted and there's absolutely no feeling of entitlement to be at the front," he said.—Reuters



## 640 runners partake in first race of 2019 edition of BeInspired Series

**KUWAIT:** The 2019 edition of the BeInspired Series launched with 'BeInspired 2019 Road Run' on February 2nd, 2019. Taking place at Al Murouj Phase 3, the successful first race of the series was a 7.2KM road race, that saw 640 runners, from 40 countries, test their physical and mental endurance. Sponsored by Gulf Bank, the race attracted runners from around the world, including the United States to the Republic of Korea.

Organised in partnership with long-standing Gulf Bank partner's Pro-Vision Sports Management, the race kicked off at 7:30 am, with spectators settling at the new location of Al Murouj Phase 3. The numerous restaurants and cafes provided spectators with fantastic views of the runners as they crossed the finish line, creating an electric atmosphere of support and excitement. Ghada Hussein, CEO, Inspire Sahara Health Club, added: "The first event of the series was phenomenal, and we would like to thank Gulf Bank for their continued support, which is integral to our organisation of the BeInspired Series. Congratulations to all our runners and thank you to those who came out in support. We began the series in an effort to spread awareness of the importance of a healthy lifestyle and to inspire Kuwait to take a step in the right direction, and we hope to continue to spread that message and see you all at our next event!" Commenting on the race, Ahmad Al Amir,

Assistant General Manager for External Communications, Gulf Bank, said: "Congratulations to the winners and to everyone who took part in the first event of the 2019 BeInspired Series. On behalf of the Bank, I would also like to thank everyone who came out to support today's runners. The Bank is committed to supporting the health and wellness of the country, and the BeInspired is one of the many initiatives we support in demonstration of that commitment. This year's Road Run launched the series with a resounding success, bringing the community together. We look forward to continuing our sponsorship of the increasingly popular series and hope to see you all at the next event which will take place in March 2019."

The next event in the series, is the BeInspired Mud Run, set to take place on Saturday 23rd, March 2019. Held at Murouj Phase 3, participants have the choice of either a 5km mud run, or a 5km obstacle. Registration is now open for the muddiest and sandiest run in Kuwait, sign up now.

The BeInspired Series was launched in 2016, created by Inspire Pure Fitness, a truly unique fitness experience, and has seen over 500 runners take place in previous editions. Inspire offers a multitude of outdoor activities, including a triathlon club, swimming, tennis rock climbing, and a tennis club for all ages. Open in



Ahmad Al Amir

two locations, Inspire Gym is spreading awareness of the true definition of a healthy.

Promoting health and fitness is a key pillar of Gulf Bank's corporate social responsibility strategy.

Banking, treasury, and financial services through its large network of 58 branches and more than 200 ATMs in Kuwait.

## Sports

# England thrash Windies to claim consolation victory

## England end disappointing Test series

### SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at the conclusion of the third and final Test between the West Indies and England at the Darren Sammy Stadium in St Lucia yesterday:

<b>England 1st innings - 277</b>	
<b>West Indies 1st innings - 154</b>	
<b>England 2nd innings (overnight 325-4)</b>	
R. Burns c Joseph b Paul	10
K. Jennings b Joseph	23
J. Denly c Dowrich b Gabriel	69
J. Root c Hetmyer b Gabriel	122
J. Buttler b Roach	56
B. Stokes not out	48
Extras (b-13, lb-9, nb-3, w-8)	33
Total (105.2 overs, 5 wkts declared)	361
Fall of wickets: 1-19 (Burns), 2-73 (Jennings), 3-147 (Denly), 4-254 (Buttler), 5-361 (Root)	
Did not bat: J. Bairstow, M. Ali, M. Wood, S. Broad, J. Anderson	
Bowling: K. Roach 18-6-45-1- (1nb, 2w), S. Gabriel 23.2-1-95-2 (2nb, 1w), K. Paul 5-1-11-1, A. Joseph 16-2-72-1, R. Chase 31-1-92-0, K. Brathwaite 12-2-24-0.	

<b>West Indies 2nd innings</b>	
K. Brathwaite c Stokes b Anderson	8
J. Campbell c Ali b Anderson	0
S. Hope c Broad b Wood	14
D. Bravo c Root b Anderson	0
R. Chase not out	102
S. Hetmyer run out	19
S. Dowrich c Stokes b Ali	19
K. Roach c c Wood b Ali	29
A. Joseph c Anderson b Ali	34
S. Gabriel c Bairstow b Stokes	3
K. Paul c and b Stokes	12
Extras (b-1, lb-5, nb-2, w-4)	12
Total (69.5 overs, all out)	252
Fall of wickets: 1-5 (Campbell), 2-10 (Brathwaite), 3-10 (Bravo), 4-31 (Hope), 5-76 (Hetmyer), 6-110 (Dowrich), 7-156 (Roach), 8-212 (Joseph), 9-236 (Gabriel), 10-252 (Paul)	
Bowling: J. Anderson 11-2-27-3, S. Broad 14-6-22-0, B. Stokes 8.5-2-30-2 (2nb, 1w), M. Wood 12-1-52-1 (3w), M. Ali 21-1-99-3, J. Denly 3-0-16-0.	

**Result:** England won by 232 runs

**GROS ISLET:** England ended a disappointing Test series with the consolation of a comprehensive victory over the West Indies on the fourth day of the third and final Test in St Lucia on Tuesday. Thrashed in the first two matches of the series to surrender the Wisden Trophy after ten years in English possession, the tourists gained a measure of consolation in completing a 232-run victory with a day to spare.

Set an improbable target of 485 after Joe Root declared his side's second innings at 361 for five following his dismissal for 122, the home team were eventually dismissed for 252 deep into the final session when Ben Stokes had Keemo Paul caught and bowled.

Paul, hobbled by a leg injury which prevented him from bowling throughout most of the England second innings, only came out to bat as last man to allow Roston Chase to complete a deserved fifth Test century. Chase was on 97 when Shannon Gabriel was ninth out, but the young all-rounder hung around long enough for the tall right-hander to reach three figures, cutting Joe Denly to the backward-



### Set an improbable target of 485 after Root declared

point boundary to achieve the landmark. He finished unbeaten on 102 off 191 balls with 12 fours and one six embellishing his innings.

James Anderson, who blew away the West Indies top order with three wickets before lunch, had no more success with the ball but his devastating early impact ensured that it was only a matter of when, not if England would have completed a massive victory on the fourth day.

Moeen Ali also claimed three wickets while Mark Wood, the tearaway fast bowler who took five wickets in the first innings, snared the important scalp of Shai Hope as the West Indies slumped to 35 for four before lunch.

His six wickets and impact on the game earned him the 'man of the match' award. "I watched Gabriel all season knocking us down and thought I had to get some back for us," he said of his raw pace. "I'm not thinking as far ahead



**GROS ISLET:** West Indies players pose with the Wisden trophy at the end of day 4 of the 3rd and final Test between West Indies and England at Darren Sammy Cricket Ground, Gros Islet, Saint Lucia, on Tuesday.— AFP

as the Ashes. We've got a great squad and there's plenty more cricket to go."

West Indies' only period of relative comfort at the crease came in the afternoon session when Chase and Shimron Hetmyer put on 45 runs for the fifth wicket. They undid all their good work however when, on the stroke of the mid-session drinks break, Hetmyer was run out for 19 coming back for a third run as Denly's throw from the cover boundary to wicketkeeper Jonny Bairstow found the left-hander short of his ground.

Anderson triggered the West Indies slide with just the third delivery of the innings when John Campbell, facing his first ball, sliced a booming drive to Ali at gully. Campbell's opening partner, Kraigg Brathwaite, offered little resistance himself when he prodded indecisively at a full-length delivery and Stokes held the catch at second slip. Worse was the follow for the West Indies when Bravo, troubled by a finger injury which kept him off the field for

the entire England second innings, followed a delivery from Anderson for Root to complete a comfortable catch at first slip.

England clearly had a swift declaration on their minds at the start of the day's play with Root and Stokes resuming at 325 for four. They belted 36 runs at a run-a-minute until the skipper miscued a low full-toss from Gabriel and Hetmyer held the catch diving forward at midwicket to prompt the declaration.

Kemar Roach finished with one wicket in the innings, lifting his tally to a series-leading 18. His exploits earlier in the series, especially the five-wicket haul on the second day of the first Test in Barbados when England were routed for 77, earned him the 'man of the series' accolade.

"All the hard work has paid off," he said in reflecting on his performances over the three Tests. "I am very proud of this team and I want us to work even harder and get better following this series win." — AFP

## Fernando puts S Lanka on top in first Test

**DURBAN:** Seamer Vishwa Fernando bagged four wickets as Sri Lanka took the honours on day one of the first Test against South Africa by reducing their hosts to 235 all out at Kingsmead yesterday.

The tourists were 49 for one in reply, trailing by 186 runs on a lively wicket that appeared to get easier to bat on. Captain Dimuth Karunaratne (28 not out) and the attacking Oshada Fernando (17 not out) will resume on the second morning, hoping to lay the platform for a sizeable first innings lead.

Sri Lanka opener Lahiru Thirimanne was their only wicket to fall, batting for close to half an hour before he was caught by wicketkeeper Quinton de Kock for a duck off seamer Dale Steyn.

It was the perfect start to the tour for the Sri Lankans, who endured two heavy Test defeats on their recent trip to

Australia and have not won a game in any format since October. South Africa's innings was rescued to a degree by a fighting 80 from De Kock before he was the last man out, having at least taken his side past the 200 mark.

"We need to get off to a good start tomorrow and try and find a way to strike early," De Kock told reporters. "They (Sri Lanka) have shown some good intent within their batsmen and will look to score quickly. We will have to figure out how we go about getting wickets."

De Kock said they were not surprised by the quality of the visitors' bowling attack on a helpful wicket. "Sri Lanka have always had a good pace attack, they have skill and their lines and lengths were tight as always. Here, a bit more movement off the wicket really assists them." After winning the toss and electing to bowl, Sri Lanka had South Africa three wickets down with 17 runs on the board before Faf du Plessis (35) and Temba Bavuma (47) put on 72 for the fourth wicket to calm home nerves.

But the tourists continued to chip away at the wickets column despite a positive run-rate from the hosts. Fernando (4-62) was impressive with the new ball as he had both openers Dean Elgar (0) and Aiden



**DURBAN:** Sri Lankan batsman Dimuth Karunaratne (L) is watched by South African wicketkeeper Quinton de Kock as he plays a shot during the first day of the first Test cricket match between South Africa and Sri Lanka at The Kingsmead Stadium in Durban yesterday.—AFP

Markram (11) back in the changing rooms early. Bavuma showed good application before he was out in unfortunate circumstances, a straight drive from De Kock deflecting off the boot of bowler Fernando and onto the stumps with the batsman out

of his crease. Keshav Maharaj (29) put on 47 with South African keeper De Kock but was caught by Niroshan Dikwella off Fernando just before tea, with South Africa adding a potentially crucial 57 before being bowled out. — Reuters

## Couples, Stricker and Johnson to assist Woods at Presidents Cup

**NEW YORK:** United States captain Tiger Woods has appointed Fred Couples, Zach Johnson and Steve Stricker as three of his captain's assistants for this year's Presidents Cup, the PGA Tour announced on Tuesday.

Woods still has the option to name one final assistant for the Dec. 12-15 event at Royal Melbourne in Australia, where the biennial competition pits a 12-man team from the United States against a lineup of international players from outside Europe.

Couples is a four-times Presidents Cup participant who has also led the U.S. team as captain on three consecutive occasions (2009, 2011, 2013) and has served as a captain's assistant in the last two editions of the event.

"Freddie and I go way back in the Presidents Cup," Woods said in a statement. "And we're basically coming full circle at Royal Melbourne. He and I teamed up in one of our matches in '98. I was a captain's pick in '11 and now we get to return there as two leaders of this team."

"We're going to have some fun, but we're there to win." Stricker, who captained the victorious 2017 US team at Liberty National where Woods served as one of his assistants, will be making his second stint as a captain's assistant.

A five-times Presidents Cup competitor (1996, 2007, 2009, 2011, 2013), Stricker boasts a 14-10 record and finished with a 2-2 record the last time the Presidents Cup was played at Royal Melbourne in 2011.

"I can't say enough about the opportunity to serve as an assistant for Tiger's first captaincy," said Stricker. "Tiger was such a valuable member of our team in 2017 and I'm humbled that he sees me as an asset to the 2019 team. I look forward to helping him in any way he may need with his captaincy just like he helped me in 2017."

For Johnson, it will mark his first stint as a captain's assistant after four appearances as a player, including in 2007, 2009 and 2013 when he was a team mate of Woods. Johnson, a 12-times PGA Tour winner, delivered his most impressive Presidents Cup performance in 2015 with a 3-0-1 record, which included two victorious fourball matches with partner Phil Mickelson and a singles win over Jason Day.

"Having competed with Tiger in the Presidents Cup in the past, I've always admired the pride he takes in these team events," said Johnson. "I'm thrilled he's chosen to trust me with this important role, and I look forward to doing my part to help the team succeed." — Reuters

## Ton-up Guptill hits form as Black Caps outclass Bangladesh

**NAPIER:** Martin Guptill returned to form with an unbeaten century as New Zealand powered to an eight-wicket win over Bangladesh in the first one-day international in Napier yesterday.

Bangladesh set New Zealand a modest run chase of 233 after suffering an early collapse and the Black Caps overhauled it in 44.3 overs, finishing at 233 for two. It is Bangladesh's fifth tour to New Zealand and they are yet to win a match in any format, with their next chance coming in the second ODI in Christchurch on Saturday.

Bangladesh captain Mashrafe Mortaza said his team were adjusting to New Zealand conditions and still hoped of a breakthrough victory. "We bowled well but we were struggling batting. We just lost too many wickets early," he said.

Guptill and Henry Nicholls pressed their case to open the batting at the World Cup as New Zealand made light work of the target. Guptill, returning from injury, put a poor run of scores behind him with a commanding 117 not out.

He had been averaging less than 10 since his last international innings of note, a big-hitting 138 against Sri Lanka in early January. Guptill's effort against Bangladesh was more controlled, with the batsman under no pressure and content to pick off loose deliveries. His 15th ODI century came off 103 balls and included six fours and three sixes. "Martin was brilliant, a fantastic hundred, and the contributions (from teammates) around that were really good as well," Black

### SCOREBOARD

Final scoreboard in the first one-day international between New Zealand and Bangladesh in Napier yesterday:

<b>Bangladesh</b>		Grandhomme 5-0-19-0, Ferguson 10-1-44-2 (w10), Santner 8-0-45-3 (w1), Neesham 7-0-26-0 (w4).
T. Iqbal c Latham b Boult	5	
L. Das b Henry	1	
S. Sarkar c and b Henry	30	<b>New Zealand</b>
M. Rahim b Boult	5	M. Guptill not out
M. Mithun b Ferguson	62	H. Nicholls b Hasan
Mahmudullah c Taylor b Ferguson	13	K. Williamson lbw Mahmudullah
S. Rahman st Latham b Santner	13	R. Taylor not out
M. Hasan c Neesham b Santner	26	Extras (lb3, w4)
M. Saifuddin c Guptill b Santner	41	Total (for 2 wickets, 44.3 overs)
M. Mortaza not out	9	233
M. Rahman b Boult	0	Fall of wickets: 1-103 (Nicholls), 2-137 (Williamson).
Extras (lb5, w16, nb1, pen 5)	27	Bowling: Mortaza 8.3-0-33-0 (w1), Saifuddin 7-0-43-0 (w2), M. Rahman 8-0-36-0, Hasan 8-1-42-1, S. Rahman 7-0-41-0, Mahmudullah 5-0-27-1, Sarkar 1-0-8-0 (w1).
Total (all out, 48.5 overs)	232	<b>Result:</b> New Zealand win by eight wickets
Fall of wickets: 1-5 (Iqbal), 2-19 (Das), 3-42 (Rahim), 4-42 (Sarkar), 5-71 (Mahmudullah), 6-94 (S. Rahman), 7-131 (Hasan), 8-215 (Saifuddin), 2-229 (Mithun), 10-232 (M. Rahman)		Man of the match: Martin Guptill
Bowling: Henry 9-1-48-2, Boult 9.5-0-40-3 (w1, nb1), De		Series: New Zealand lead the three-match series 1-0

Caps skipper Kane Williamson said.

Nicholls looked comfortable in just his third outing since being promoted up the order, scoring 53 before a tame dismissal when the ball hit his pad and rolled onto the stumps. Veteran batsman Ross Taylor also contributed an unbeaten 45.

Mohammad Mithun was the pick of Bangladesh's hitters, grinding out a hard-fought 62 after coming to the crease with Bangladesh reeling at 42 for four after a decision to bat first backfired. Mohammad Saifuddin provided support with a gritty 41 as Bangladesh were bowled out for 232 with seven balls of their allotted 50 overs remaining.

Spinner Mitchell Santner and paceman Trent Boult

took three wickets apiece for New Zealand. The Black Caps struck early when Tamim Iqbal departed for five in the second over and Liton Das soon followed, leaving Bangladesh at 19 for two.

A rattled Mushfiqur Rahim was struck on the helmet by a Boult bouncer and was out for five just a few balls later. Defiant Soumya Sarkar smashed 30 off 22 balls before he was caught and bowled by Matt Henry.

Sabbir Rahman summed up Bangladesh's batting woes when he was stumped trying to sweep Santner to the boundary. Rahman's foot slipped as he crouched for the shot and he tumbled to the ground just outside his crease as wicketkeeper Tom Latham whipped off the bails. — AFP

Sports

# Tuchel comes out a winner as PSG shine without Neymar, Cavani

## PSG have a comfortable advantage heading into second leg

**MANCHESTER:** Paris Saint-Germain could have feared the worst going into their Champions League trip to Manchester United without both Neymar and Edinson Cavani, but coach Thomas Tuchel deserves plaudits for finding the right formula as they came away with a commanding victory.

Second-half goals from Presnel Kimpembe and the devastating Kylian Mbappe secured a 2-0 away win and PSG now have a comfortable advantage heading into the second leg of their last-16 tie in three weeks.

Winless on their previous three trips to England, this time PSG outclassed Premier League opposition despite the absences of the world's most expensive player as well as the club's all-time top scorer.

Appointed with a brief to take PSG further in Europe than they have been before under their Qatari owners, Tuchel might have felt he had been cursed by an injury jinx with right-back Thomas Meunier also sidelined.

But instead, full of energy on the touchline and with some evidently strong words

to his players at half-time, he saw his side send out a clear message. "We are a team with Neymar and Cavani, two international class players, but we are a team without them as well," said German star Julian Draxler. Central to PSG's victory was the performance of Mbappe. The 20-year-old usually showcases his lightning pace out wide but here he followed Tuchel's

instructions and adapted to a central attacking role without Cavani.

"He told me it would be different to what I usually do, that I might touch the ball a lot less often, that I couldn't drop too deep, because I was the only player who could get in behind," said Mbappe.

"I listened to him, even if it was a bit difficult because it was new and I am still learning in this position." Back at Old Trafford where he endured a nightmare single season in 2014/15, Angel di Maria returned to haunt his old side, setting up both goals.

A flexible line-up featuring a 35-year-old Daniel Alves on the right wing was held together in central midfield by Marquinhos, the Brazilian outstanding as he stepped up from defence, and Marco Verratti.

That meant the absence of Adrien Rabiot, frozen out over his refusal to sign a new contract, was not felt. "Those two were superb together, incredible, but we can't play the whole season with just those two in midfield," pointed out Tuchel. It would be dangerous

for PSG to get carried away, just two years after they destroyed Barcelona 4-0 at the same stage, only to lose the return leg 6-1 away. This time should be different, however—the second leg will be at home, and this Manchester United are not Barcelona.

Neymar and Cavani are both expected to again be missing for the return on March 6, but PSG have shown



**MANCHESTER:** Paris Saint-Germain's French forward Kylian Mbappe (C) heads the ball during the first leg of the UEFA Champions League round of 16 football match between Manchester United and Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) at Old Trafford in Manchester, north-west England on Tuesday. — AFP

they can cope without them. "People need to stop being afraid. Of course Neymar is hugely important and Cavani is fundamental to us, but football is played on the pitch and we showed that," Mbappe said after the game. The pressure on Tuchel was considerable, with his predecessor Unai Emery paying the price for defeats at the same stage to Barcelona and Real Madrid in the last two seasons. But the German has

shown a tactical flexibility along with a strength of personality and it got the best out of his team on Tuesday, leaving the quarter-finals within sight. "To win at Old Trafford, against a team who had won 10 out of 11 and were unbeaten under (Ole Gunnar) Solskjaer, deserves a mention among the best away results for a French side" in Europe, wrote veteran commentator Vincent Duluc in sports daily L'Equipe. — AFP



### Devastating Mbappe secures a 2-0 away win



## Serbia tops air pistol and rifle medal list

By Abdellatif Sharaa

**KUWAIT:** HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah Eighth International Shooting Grand Prix will come to a conclusion with the men and women skeet even. The final round will be preceded by the second stage of qualification by shooting at 50 targets. The tournament are being held at Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Olympic Shooting Complex, which already witnessed strong competition, in the events in which 420 shooters representing 42 countries participated.

Serbia is guaranteed to remain on top of the air pistol and rifle medal list, as the best of its shooters participated, while Kuwait seeks to guarantee first place which it occupies so far in the clay target. President of Arab and Kuwait Shooting Federations Chairman of the Board of Kuwait Shooting Sport Club Eng Duaij Al-Otaibi said efforts of Kuwait shooters in HH the Amir 8th

International Grand Prix is a continuation of their outstanding results in the major international competition. Al-Otaibi said Kuwait shooters head the trap shooting medals as they won two gold and a bronze in front of a strong team from Italy who managed a silver and a bronze, as he pointed to shooters who are able to add more in the skeet event today. He said this championship is a preparation for the world cup to be held in El-Ein, UAE next April and the world championship that will take place in Korea next May and both are important as they qualify for Tokyo Olympics 2020.

President of Iraq's Shooting Federation Zahid Nouri lauded competitions, adding his country is keen on participating every year due to its enthusiastic atmosphere and strong competition, with the best shooters of the world participating. Nouri said he was happy that Iraq participates in the clay target events for the first time, as



they were participating in the air pistol and rifle events only.

He said Iraq's shooters participate to gain experience, and a training camp was held before the start of the Grand Prix.

## Sala's body to be returned to Argentina

**BUENOS AIRES:** Argentine footballer Emiliano Sala's body is to be returned to Argentina on Friday, the mayor of his hometown of Progresso, Julio Muller, told AFP Tuesday. Sala's body was recovered from plane wreckage in the English Channel last week. He was flying to his new team, English Premier League side Cardiff City, from his old French club Nantes when his plane went missing over the Channel on January 21.

Muller said Sala's body would arrive in the late afternoon and be taken to the gymnasium next to his youth club's headquarters, where a vigil was scheduled. He said Sala's "mother, sister and brother have already arrived in Progresso." British authorities formally identified Sala's body last week, after which his family said they could "now begin to mourn our son and our brother." Sala, who was 28, died of "head and trunk injuries," an inquest in England heard on Monday.

He was travelling in a light aircraft that disappeared near the British island of Guernsey. The wreckage was found on the seabed but 59-year-old pilot David Ibbotson remains missing. Sala's former team gave him a rousing send off on Sunday, playing a French league match in a special all black kit for the occasion, with each player wearing the Argentine's name on the back of their jersey rather than their own. —AFP

## Lightning hammer sliding Flames

**TAMPA BAY:** Nikita Kucherov, the NHL's top point-producer, collected one goal and three assists to lead the host Tampa Bay Lightning to a 6-3 win over the Calgary Flames on Tuesday night. Brayden Point collected one goal and two assists, and goalie Andrei Vasilevskiy made 19 saves for the NHL-leading Lightning, who have won three straight games and are riding a 5-0-2 run. Kucherov ran his point total to 84. Sean Monahan scored twice and Mark Giordano had a goal for Calgary. Elias Lindholm was credited with three assists while Johnny Gaudreau collected two helpers. David Rittich stopped 21 shots for the Flames, who have lost three straight games and four of five outings (1-3-1) to drop out of the top spot in the Western Conference.

### Bruins 6, Blackhawks 3

Brad Marchand had a goal and three assists, David Krejci added two goals and an assist, and Boston ripped visiting Chicago, which had its seven-game win streak snapped. Jake DeBrusk and Danton Heinen each added a goal and two assists for the Bruins, Peter Cehlarik had a goal, and Patrice Bergeron contributed two assists. Boston increased its point streak to eight games (5-0-3) and completed a regular-season sweep of the Blackhawks. Alex DeBrincat, Duncan Keith and Erik Gustafsson scored for Chicago, but goaltender Collin Delia gave up six goals on 37 shots. Bruins goaltender Tuukka Rask made 23 saves.

### Flyers 5, Wild 4

James van Riemsdyk scored twice, including the go-ahead

goal on a power play with 4:29 left in the third period, and Philadelphia rallied for a victory in Saint Paul, Minn. Van Riemsdyk, who had a hat trick during a 7-4 win over Minnesota last month, helped the Flyers bounce back after their 9-0-1 run ended with a 4-1 home loss to the Pittsburgh Penguins on Monday. Desperate to move into playoff position in the Eastern Conference, Philadelphia trailed 3-1 after one period but evened the score heading to the second intermission. Jared Spurgeon (goal, two assists) gave the Wild a 4-3 lead early in the final period before Claude Giroux tied the game and van Riemsdyk won it.

### Coyotes 5, Golden Knights 2

Nick Cousins and Richard Panik each had a goal and an assist, and Darcy Kuemper made 41 saves to lead Arizona to a win in Las Vegas. Alex Galchenyuk, Josh Archibald and Jordan Oesterle also scored goals for Arizona, which moved within four points of the Wild for the second Western Conference wild-card spot with its second straight win. Derek Stepan added a pair of assists. Nate Schmidt and Brandon Pirri scored for Vegas, which tied its franchise record with its fourth straight home loss. Marc-Andre Fleury finished with 21 saves for the Golden Knights, who have won just four times in their past 12 games.

### Blue Jackets 3, Capitals 0

Anthony Duclair, Nick Foligno and Artemi Panarin each scored once as Columbus defeated visiting Washington. The Blue Jackets won with their defense against the Capitals, who looked tired at times, playing their second game in two nights while starting a six-game road trip. Columbus held a 32-20 edge in shots, and goalie Sergei Bobrovsky made all 20 stops. The Blue Jackets allowed only four shots in the first period and three more in the second, holding a 24-7 edge in shots through two before the Capitals got some more pressure in the third period. — Reuters

Live		Matches on TV
		(Local Timings)
<b>UEFA EUROPA LEAGUE</b>		
SK Rapid Wien v Internazionale Milano	20:55	beIN SPORTS HD 1
SK Slavia Prague v KRC Genk	20:55	beIN SPORTS HD 8
FK Krasnodar v Bayer 04 Leverkusen	20:55	beIN SPORTS HD 5
Stade Rennais v Real Betis	20:55	beIN SPORTS HD 3
Olympiacos CFP v Dynamo Kyiv	20:55	beIN SPORTS HD 7
SS Lazio v Sevilla FC	20:55	beIN SPORTS HD 4
FK Bate Borisov v Arsenal FC	20:55	beIN SPORTS HD 2
Galatasaray SK v SL Benfica	20:55	beIN SPORTS HD 6
FC Viktoria Plzen v GNK Dinamo Zagreb	23:00	beIN SPORTS HD 7
Club Brugge KV v Red Bull Salzburg	23:00	beIN SPORTS HD 6
FC Zurich v SSC Napoli	23:00	beIN SPORTS HD 4
Malmö FF v Chelsea FC	23:00	beIN SPORTS HD 1
Shakhtar Donetsk v Eintracht Frankfurt	23:00	beIN SPORTS HD 5
Celtic v Valencia C.F	23:00	beIN SPORTS HD 3
Sporting CP v Villarreal CF	23:00	beIN SPORTS HD 2

## Ramsey must rise to challenge after hitting Juventus jackpot

**LONDON:** Aaron Ramsey has joined European football's monied elite after agreeing a lucrative move to Juventus, but doubts remain about the Arsenal midfielder's ability to justify his jaw-dropping salary.

Reports in Britain claim Ramsey's four-year deal will pay him a basic salary of £400,000 per week (\$515,000) once he officially joins Juventus in the close-season. While some in the Italian media have questioned whether the contract is really that high, there can be no doubt the Wales star is now among the best paid players in the world.

The staggering salary was available to Ramsey because his Arsenal deal was due to expire at the end of this season, making him eligible to sign a pre-contract with any overseas team after January 1 under the terms of the 'Bosman ruling' that provides the guidelines for free agent transfers.

The 28-year-old is a quality player but few would rank him alongside soon-to-be Juventus team-mate Cristiano Ronaldo, Lionel Messi and Neymar, all global icons whose pay packets are now joined by Ramsey as among the biggest in the sport.

Juventus's willingness to splash the cash on Ramsey has surprised many but, because the Italian club didn't need to give Arsenal a transfer fee, they see the deal as good business. Juventus sporting director Fabio Paratici told Gazzetta dello Sport that Ramsey can finally unlock his full potential in Turin.

"Ramsey is a player who in my opinion has never found his position, because he has never played in a three (in midfield), which is his role, capable as he is of running from deep," he said. Ramsey has provided six assists in the Premier League this season—more than any Juventus midfielder—and John Toshack, who gave Ramsey his Wales debut, believes his former player is versatile enough to cope in Serie A. —AFP

**25** Nishikori rallies to overcome tough Rotterdam Open opener

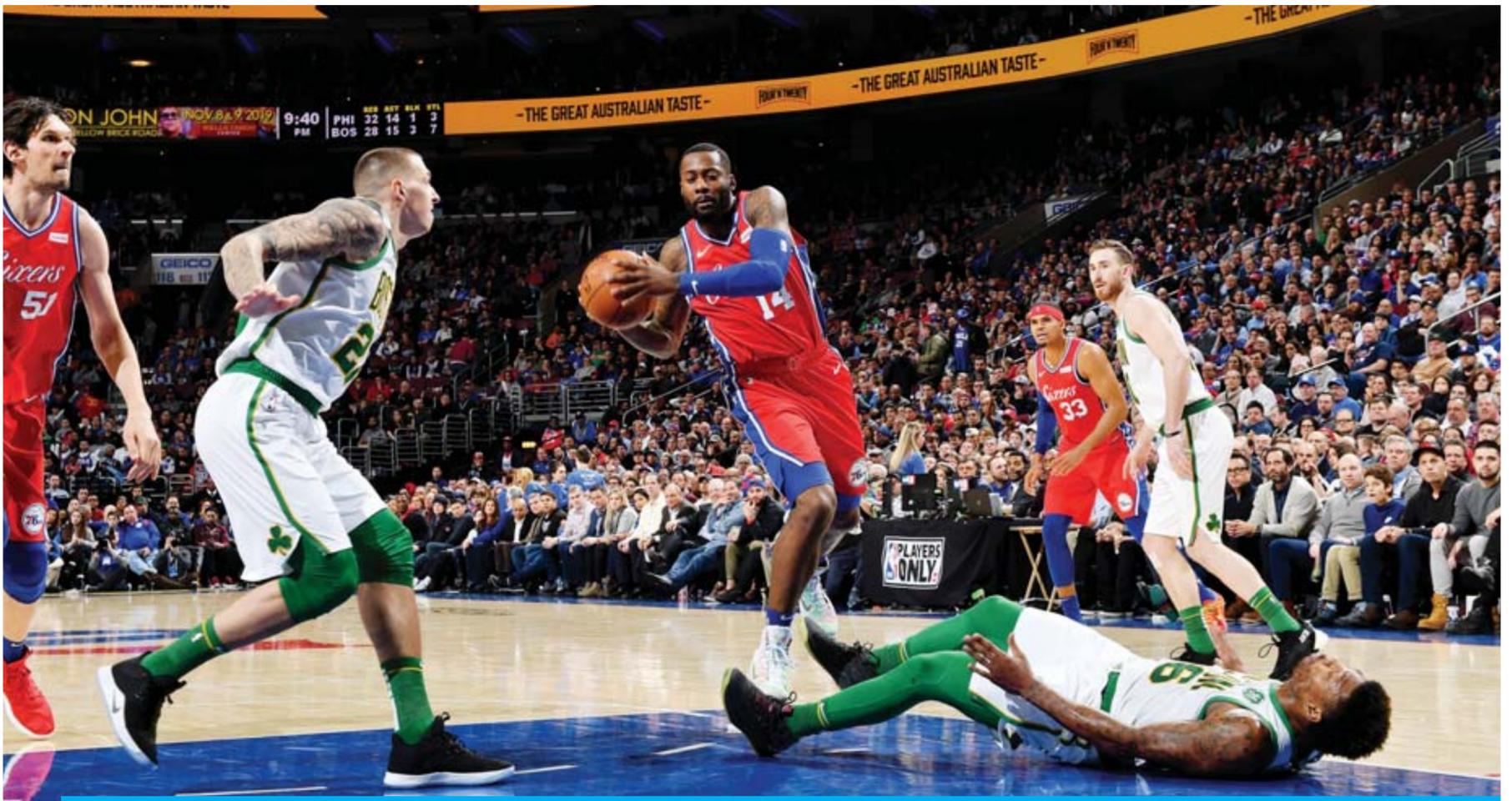
**26** England thrash Windies to claim consolation victory

**27** Tuchel comes out a winner as PSG shine without Neymar, Cavani



## Celts edge Sixers in thriller

Lakers stumble as Warriors roll on



PHILADELPHIA: Jonathon Simmons #14 of the Philadelphia 76ers handles the ball against the Boston Celtics on Tuesday at the Wells Fargo Center in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. — AFP

**PHILADELPHIA:** Gordon Hayward scored 26 points off the bench to lead the visiting Boston Celtics past the Philadelphia 76ers 112-109 on Tuesday in a game full of playoff atmosphere. Al Horford scored 23 points while Jayson Tatum added 20 points and 10 rebounds as the Celtics snapped a two-game losing streak. All-Star guard Kyrie Irving sat out with an injured knee. Joel Embiid had 23 points and 14 rebounds for his league-leading 47th double-double, and Jimmy Butler added 22 points and nine rebounds. Ben Simmons and JJ Redick scored 16 points each. Marcus Smart threw down a vicious dunk with 23.9 seconds left for a 108-104 Boston advantage, attacking Embiid—who had five fouls at the time. With the 76ers trailing by three with 1.8 seconds left, Butler was unable to release a potential 3-pointer in time. Embiid cursed the referees before ending his postgame press conference with reporters.

### WARRIORS 115, JAZZ 108

Klay Thompson and Stephen Curry bombed in a pair of 3-pointers apiece in a late flurry that allowed Golden State to overtake Utah at Oakland, Calif. The win was the Warriors' 16th in their past 17 games and gave them a 2-1 edge over the Jazz in a season series that saw the teams split games in Salt Lake City. Utah lost for just the fourth time in its past 16 games. Kevin Durant (28 points), Curry (24) and Thompson (22) paced the Warriors. Donovan Mitchell had 25 points for the Jazz.

### SPURS 108, GRIZZLIES 107

LaMarcus Aldridge had 22 points and 11 rebounds, and Patty Mills scored a season-best 22 points as San Antonio halted a season-worst, four-game losing

streak with a win at Memphis. Davis Bertans added 17 points and Rudy Gay recorded 15 points, 12 rebounds and a season-high eight assists as the Spurs improved to 1-4 on their eight-game Rodeo Road Trip. DeMar DeRozan scored 12 points, and Marco Belinelli added 11. Avery Bradley scored a season-best 33 points for Memphis in his second game since being acquired from the Los Angeles Clippers. Jonas Valanciunas added 23 points on 9-for-11 shooting and collected 10 rebounds in his Grizzlies debut.

### MAGIC 118, PELICANS 88

Nikola Vucevic had 25 points and 17 rebounds as Orlando continued to roll in a rout at New Orleans. Vucevic led four Magic players with at least 20 points as Orlando won its fourth straight game and sixth in its past seven. Evan Fournier scored 22, and Jonathan

Isaac and Aaron Gordon scored 20 each. New Orleans' Anthony Davis, playing his third game since the trade deadline passed and he returned from a finger injury, scored three points on 1-for-9 shooting and grabbed six rebounds in 24 minutes.

### HAWKS 117, LAKERS 113

John Collins and Trae Young each scored 22 points and helped Atlanta end its three-game losing streak with a victory over visiting Los Angeles. The Hawks won despite a triple-double from Lakers forward LeBron James, who had 28 points, 11 rebounds and 16 assists. It was his fifth triple-double of the season. Atlanta ended a five-game losing streak to the Lakers and defeated Los Angeles for the first time since March 4, 2016. The victory also ended the Hawks' five-game home losing streak. — Reuters



Mauro Icardi

## Icardi stripped of Inter Milan captaincy

**MILAN:** Mauro Icardi has been stripped of the Inter Milan captaincy in favour of goalkeeper Samir Handanovic, the Italian club announced yesterday. The switch comes as Icardi, 25, has yet to sign a new contract amid protracted negotiations between the club and his wife Wanda Nara, who also acts as his agent.

"The new captain of the team is Samir Handanovic," the Serie A outfit tweeted. Inter are third in Serie A, 20 points behind champions Juventus, and five points ahead of city rivals AC Milan in fourth. Luciano Spalletti's side returned to winning ways last weekend against Parma having taken just one point from their three previous Serie A games.

Spalletti had after the game demanded a swift conclusion to the contract negotiations. The Chinese-owned club crashed out of the Champions League and travel to Rapid Vienna for their Europe League round of 32, first-leg game today. Icardi joined Inter in 2013 from Sampdoria, while Handanovic, 34, arrived in 2012 from Udinese. —AFP

## Joshua to fight 'Big Baby' Miller in NY on June 1

**LONDON:** Undefeated heavyweight world champion Anthony Joshua will fight American challenger Jarrell 'Big Baby' Miller in New York on June 1 in his first title bout outside Britain. Joshua had been due to defend his WBA, IBF, WBO and IBO heavyweight belts at London's Wembley Stadium on April 13 against an unnamed opponent, but that had been looking unlikely for some time.

"I'm going to be travelling over to New York on June 1, I'm going to be defending my heavyweight titles at MSG (Madison Square Garden) against Jarrell Miller," the 29-year-old announced on YouTube yesterday.

He blamed 'boxing politics' for getting in the way of a unification bout with American WBC champion Deontay Wilder on April 13. "So we had to branch out and look for other options and Jarrell Miller came up," said Joshua, who has a professional record of 22

wins, which includes 21 knockouts.

"It will be an exciting fight, I will leave nothing to chance, and plan on dismantling Miller in style to make my mark," added the Briton, who said he would be doing a lot of his training in New York but was in shape already. Miller is also unbeaten, with a record of 24 fights, 23 wins and a draw. Joshua beat Wladimir Klitschko at Wembley in April 2017 and then fought Carlos Takam and Joseph Parker at the Principality Stadium in Wales before returning to Wembley to beat Alexander Povetkin last September.

Before that the 2012 Olympic super-heavyweight champion had fought in venues around Britain including Manchester and at London's O2 Arena. "Wembley is so close to my heart, it's a great spot, a great location, I've fought in small halls and arenas and it's been humbling and a blessing to fight in the stadiums. But now it's time for a change," he said. Miller, 30, said Joshua was making a 'huge mistake' and would lose his titles. "He wants to announce himself on the American stage, but all he's doing is delivering me those belts by hand. It's dog eat dog in the ring and this dog has got a bigger bite. He'll be leaving New York empty-handed," he told Sky Sports. —Reuters



Jarrell Miller (left) with Anthony Joshua.