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# Indebted Kuwaitis call on Amir to cancel their loans

## Debtors gather in Irada Square to highlight their plight

### Kuwait against normalization of ties with Israel

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah on Friday affirmed that the stance of Kuwait is clearly and firmly opposed to normalization of relations with Israel. "Kuwait will be the last country to normalize relations with Israel," he said, noting "anybody would be mistaken if they imagine that the group picture taken at the Warsaw conference signals a change in Kuwait's firm stand on this issue".

"Kuwait took part in the Warsaw peace and security conference under a joint invitation from the United States and Poland, with which Kuwait has close relations and has allied itself in some issues. Besides, the issues on the agenda of the conference had to do with the future of security and peace in the Middle East, of which we are a part," Jarallah said in response to speculations on social media.

"It would be illogical that these topics, including the Palestine question and the developments of the Middle East peace process, are discussed in our absence.

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By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: Around 400 people gathered in Irada Square opposite the National Assembly yesterday to call upon HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to cancel their loans. The gathering was organized by attorney Yousef Al-Gharabally through his account on Twitter. He said the gathering was held to deliver a message to the Amir to cancel the loans of over 400,000 Kuwaitis. In a previous statement, Executive Director of the supervision sector at the Central Bank Waleed Al-Awadhi, had said there are 429,000 Kuwaiti debtors, who represent 90 percent of the workforce under the age of 50.

Gharabally mentioned different articles of the Kuwait constitution that set the rights of every citizen. "Under article 23 of the constitution, the government has failed to control violations by banks. Both the Central Bank and ministry of commerce have neglected their supervision duties. Also, article 25 speaks about crises and disasters, based on which the late Amir Sheikh Jaber canceled all loans after the Iraqi invasion. Our present situation is considered a crisis, as there are over 400,000 debtors," he noted. "Kuwaiti families are suffering greatly from the loans. The debtors want to send a message neither to the parliament nor the Cabinet, but to HH the Amir to save Kuwaiti families, saying 'you are the Amir of Humanity'," Gharabally added.

Some Kuwaitis are living in poor conditions, according to the attendees. "I only receive KD 260 out of my salary every month - the bank deducts KD 300 for the

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KUWAIT: People sign a banner urging HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to cancel their loans during a gathering in Irada Square opposite the National Assembly yesterday. — Photo by Fouad Al-Shalkh (See Page 3)

### India mourns soldiers amid calls for revenge

NEW DELHI: Thousands of mourners across India attended funerals yesterday for some of the 41 soldiers killed in a suicide bombing in Indian-administered Kashmir as a round-the-clock curfew remained in force in part of the restive region. The paramilitary troops were killed on Thursday as explosives packed in a van ripped through a convoy transporting 2,500 soldiers in the disputed Himalayan region, the deadliest attack in a three-decade-old armed conflict.

TV stations showed coffins wrapped in Indian flags being carried by thousands of people across their hometowns, such as Gaya in the east and Unnao in the

north, after the bodies were flown to New Delhi late Friday where Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid a wreath. India has accused Pakistan of harboring the militants behind the attack, which has sparked nationwide outrage and some public calls for war against the nuclear-armed archrival to avenge the killings.

Kashmir has been split between India and Pakistan since independence from Britain in 1947, with both countries, which have fought three wars, claiming it in its entirety.

Two buses of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) in the 78-vehicle convoy were targeted by the bomber on a key highway in the Pulwama district, just outside the main city of Srinagar. The Pakistan-based Islamist group Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) claimed responsibility, and the vehicle was driven by a known local militant named Aadil Ahmad, alias Waqas Commando. The powerful blast reduced one of the buses to a heap of mangled debris. Pictures showed bodies and body parts strewn all over the highway.

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JABALPUR, India: Mourners gather to attend the funeral of Indian Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) trooper Ashwini Kumar Kacchi yesterday. — AFP

### Trump border wall 'emergency' faces tough legal hurdles



NEW YORK: People affiliated with the protest group Rise and Resist block the street in front of Trump International Hotel on Friday. — AFP

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump's declaration of an emergency Friday to build a border wall immediately drew legal challenges that could easily escalate into a landmark test of the balance of power between the White House and Congress. Legal experts said it was "unprecedented" for a president to use his emergency powers to overcome Congress's refusal to fund his wishes, in this case a barrier on the US-Mexican border to keep out illegal immigrants. They also questioned Trump's categorization of the immigration issue as a national emergency and his tapping military funds for a non-military project.

Hours after the announcement, the Trump administration faced an investigation by the House Judiciary committee and lawsuits from

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### Iranians cry for revenge at guards' funeral

ISFAHAN: Tens of thousands of Iranians called for "revenge" yesterday at the funeral of 27 Revolutionary Guards killed in a suicide attack perpetrated by militants that Tehran accuses Pakistan of supporting. "The government of Pakistan must pay the price of harboring these terrorist groups and this price will undoubtedly be very high," said Major General Mohammad Ali Jafari, referring to jihadist outfit Jaish al-Adl ("Army of Justice"). "The Islamic Republic of Iran will no longer observe the previous reservations and will directly act to

counter such acts," Jafari told mourners gathered at the city of Isfahan's Bozorgmehr Square.

The comments by Jafari, commander of Iran's elite Revolutionary Guards, came a day ahead of a planned two-day visit to Pakistan by Mohammed bin Salman, the crown prince of Iran's regional archrival Saudi Arabia. Jafari blamed Pakistan's army and Inter-Services Intelligence agency, saying that "sheltering and silence" amounts to supporting the perpetrators. As he left the podium, people shouted "Commander of Sepah (Farsi for Revolutionary Guards) - Revenge! Revenge!".

The Wednesday bombing targeted a busload of Revolutionary Guards in the volatile southeastern province of Sistan-Baluchistan, which straddles the border with Pakistan.

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ISFAHAN, Iran: Mourners gather around the coffins of slain Revolutionary Guards during their funeral yesterday. — AFP

### India's fastest new train hits cattle hurdle

NEW DELHI: India's first semi-high speed train broke down yesterday after colliding with a cow on the tracks, a day after Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the new passenger service. The Vande Bharat Express, touted as India's fastest train and built under the Modi government's flagship "Make in India" program, made its first journey

Friday from New Delhi to the Hindu holy city of Varanasi. But on its return to the capital the next day a collision with a cow disrupted electricity supply to four carriages and damaged the brake system, according to Indian Railways.

"The train later experienced technical issues and was stranded on the way to Delhi," Indian Railways spokeswoman Smita Vats Sharma told AFP. The train reached the capital "safely" ahead of its first commercial journey on Sunday, she added. Cattle obstructions on roads and rail tracks are common in India, particularly in Uttar Pradesh state where yesterday's collision happened.

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NEW DELHI: In this photo taken on Friday, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi flags off India's first semi-high speed express train Vande Bharat Express at New Delhi Railway Station. — AFP

## Local

# Kuwait presents statement on search for missing citizens in Iraq

## Security Council applauds efforts to resolve outstanding issues

**NEW YORK:** Kuwait presented a presidential statement on the search for missing Kuwaitis and third-country nationals, including Kuwait's stolen properties in Iraq during the UN Security Council's (UNSC) session. The statement was presented by Kuwait's permanent mission to the UN late Friday. The statement referred to the UNSC's previous resolutions and presidential statements addressing the issues of missing Kuwaitis and third-country nationals and the return of Kuwaiti property, including the national archives, and takes note of the reports of the Secretary General pursuant to paragraph 4 of resolution 2107 (2013).

The Security Council applauded the ongoing efforts by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) in the implementation of resolution 2107 (2013). It also expressed its full support for the Special Representative and Head of UNAMI Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert and Deputy Special Representative for Political Affairs for UNAMI Alice Walpole in their efforts to resolve outstanding issues related to the matter. In the statement, UNSC also welcomed the strong bilateral relations between Iraq and Kuwait and hailed the government of Kuwait's continued support for Iraq in its

efforts to achieve stability. Moreover, it welcomed Iraq's efforts to fulfill all remaining obligations in accordance with relevant Security Council resolutions.

Meanwhile, the UNSC welcomed the ongoing coop-



### Return of stolen property addressed

eration between Iraq and Kuwait in the search of missing Kuwaitis and third-country nationals, and the positive efforts by the Iraqi Ministry of Defense on this important humanitarian endeavor. It called on Iraq to continue with these efforts in the same constructive vein and to ensure

that all appropriate institutional, financial and technical support is made available to facilitate future activities. It also encouraged the international community to provide the necessary advanced and innovative technical equipment to Iraqi authorities to assist in identifying burial locations in accordance with best practices.

The UNSC expressed its strong support for the perseverance of the members of the tripartite mechanism and its Chair, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), in their effort to locate the remains of the missing persons. The council noted the latest meeting of the Technical Subcommittee of the Tripartite Mechanism on December 11, 2018 and the Tripartite Commission on December 13, 2018, and welcomed in this regard the additional information provided to the ICRC by France, the UK, Northern Ireland and the US that might help to identify potential burial locations.

Moreover, the UNSC noted with regret that there remains 369 cases of missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals still unresolved and that no human remains have been exhumed since 2004. It also hailed steps taken by Iraq to resolve its issues with Kuwait, mentioning the handing over of a consignment of Kuwaiti property



Security Council  
United Nations

by Iraqi President Barham Saleh, during his recent visit to Kuwait on November 11, 2018 to meet His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. — KUNA

## Italian Senate supports Kuwaiti Schengen exemption

**ROME:** Italy's Senate reiterated its support for granting Kuwaitis Schengen visa-free access during a meeting with visiting Kuwaiti lawmakers on Friday. The talks, held at Palazzo Madama, grouped Vito Petrocelli, the Senate foreign affairs committee president, and several National Assembly MPs led by Shuaib Al-Muwaizri. Both the Senate and parliament will do 'all in their power' to pass the exemption, which will have 'positive results,' Petrocelli told the visitors. Achieving this has become easy, he added, as the technical requirements for the move have been met.

Some 26 European countries identify as being within the Schengen Area - a common and

unified visa policy for international travelers. Kuwaiti MP Osama Al-Shaheen praised the 'positive reaction' he sensed on the issue, amid two days of meetings with Italian lawmakers, including the Chamber of Deputies a day prior. "We anticipate (the exemption's) announcement in the earliest time possible," he said, reiterating Kuwait's fulfillment of the conditions.

At the conclusion of the talks, Petrocelli was handed an invitation, addressed to President of the Senate Maria Elisabetta Alberti Casellati, to visit Kuwait and meet National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem. The deeply-rooted bilateral relations which date back to 1964 was also tackled during the talks, Shaheen said, expressing satisfaction about the meeting outcome. He added that they had shed lights on the Kuwait's role in promoting world peace and security and supporting needy people across the world.

Meanwhile, President of the Italian Chamber of Deputies' Foreign and European Affairs Committee Marta Grande welcomed the Kuwaiti lawmakers and described Kuwait as a close and

trusted ally. She also highlighted the effective cooperation between the two countries within the Global Coalition to Defeat IS and the NATO's Istanbul Cooperation Initiative. Grande renewed appreciation to Kuwait for the one million euros donation to furnish a hospital in Italian central town of Norcia following the 2016 devastating quake.

Muwaizri appreciated Italy's 'historic, solid and influential' position during the 1990-91 Iraqi invasion and occupation of Kuwait. He hoped the meeting with the society chairman would have positive impacts on bilateral relations and cooperation.

Kuwait Charge d'Affaires Sami Al-Zamanan termed the meeting as important, and said the friendship society has a major role in cementing popular relationship. Chairman of the Italian-Kuwaiti Friendship Society Pierandrea Vanni said the society was established in the first weeks of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait with the aim of supporting Kuwait's just cause, freedom and independence.

The society's members represent different spectra have always seek to promote ties between Italian and Kuwaiti people. — KUNA

## Security chief holds meetings under Munich conference umbrella

**BERLIN:** Kuwait's National Security Bureau Chief Sheikh Thamer Ali Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah has held a chain of meetings with counterparts and ministers taking part in the three-day Munich Security Conference. Kuwaiti Ambassador to Germany Najib Abdulrahman Al-Badr, accompanying the security chief during the event, said in a statement to the press that Sheikh Thamer exchanged views with Arab and foreign officials on regional and international affairs. These consultations have also addressed cooperation aimed at facing "security challenges," said Ambassador Badr, speaking during the second day of the congress.

Sheikh Thamer, during the talks



MUNICH: Kuwait's National Security Bureau Chief Sheikh Thamer Ali Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah (left) and Kuwaiti Ambassador to Germany Najib Abdulrahman Al-Badr. — KUNA

with the Arab and foreign officials, affirmed that Kuwait would pursue efforts to beef up stability in the Gulf region. Moreover, he touched on efforts for combating terrorism and ramifications resulting from conflicts and strife in the Middle East, particularly with respect of the legitimate Palestinian cause. The 55th version of Munich Security Conference (MSC) kick-started on Friday, with a high-level Kuwaiti security delegation, headed by Sheikh Thamer. The conferees are discussing an array of

security and military issues and subjects that are mainly pertinent to energy security, global business, cyber security and international conflicts, chiefly in Middle East. Roughly, 35 heads of state and government, 80 foreign and defense ministers, and some 600 security policy experts are in attendance at the Munich Security Conference (MSC) this year. Conference chief Wolfgang Ischinger has called it the 'largest and most important MSC' since its founding more than 50 years ago.



ROME: Visiting Kuwaiti lawmakers pose for a group picture with their Italian counterparts. — KUNA

## Embassy in Paris celebrates National Days

**PARIS:** The Kuwaiti Embassy in Paris held a reception ceremony in the famous Parisian landmark 'National Opera House' on the occasion of Kuwait's celebrations of the 58th National Day and the 28th anniversary of liberation. More than 1,100 people attended the grand ceremony on Thursday, including representatives of the French government and army, members of the Senate and the French National Assembly, the embassy said in a statement yesterday. The Ambassador of Kuwait to France Sami Al-Suleiman received the guests at the Opera's main hall. Kuwaiti student officer's band played Kuwait and French anthems, referring to the friendly relations between the two countries.

Ambassador Suleiman delivered a speech in French, where he expressed congratulations to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on this occasion.

He praised the distinguished ties between Kuwait and France, pointing to the interest of His Highness the Amir to develop relations between the two friendly countries at all levels. The Ambassador stressed Kuwait's appreciation of the great role played by France in joining an unprecedented international alliance to support the Kuwaiti right during the crisis of the Iraqi invasion and France's continued commitment to the security of Kuwait and the region.

Senior officials of the Elysee Palace and the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defense and several institutions attended the ceremony. The participants discussed the cooperation relations between Kuwait and France, including the Kuwaiti economic activities, which would encourage French investors to invest in Kuwait. — KUNA



PARIS: A group photo of the Kuwait Embassy's staff taken on the sidelines of the ceremony. — KUNA

## Warsaw conference important for Middle East security: GCC

**WARSAW:** GCC Ministers on Friday stressed importance of the international conference in the Polish capital Warsaw to discuss the future of peace and security in the Middle East with the participation of representatives from about 70 countries. Saudi Minister for Foreign Affairs Adel Al-Jubeir said that Warsaw Conference is particularly important as it brings together more than 70 countries in one place to consider the challenges facing the Middle East. "The conference focused on the challenges facing the countries of the region, most notably the Palestinian issue, terrorism, Syria and Yemen," Jubeir said at the end of the conference. He revealed a consensus during the conference on "the need for Iran to stop its interference and aggressive policy in the region."

Bahraini Foreign Minister Sheikh Khaled bin Ahmad Al-Khalifa described in a similar statement the conference as a positive and important event. He stressed that the conference is setting a new stage and is the culmination

of previous meetings on the region, for example, the Madrid Peace Conference in the early 90s. "The region faces today other challenges, most important of which is the Iranian challenge, which affects not only safety of countries in the region, but also threatens and destabilizes societies, which requires a global position and new mechanisms to deal with Iran," he added.

He pointed out that there is coordination with the Gulf countries on ways to confront crises and challenges that threaten security of the region. "We focused on explaining the dimensions of the Iranian challenge that targets us daily, along with the other challenges that are known and their dimensions are specific, but the Iranian challenges are being renewed every day, and this is something we have explained to our allies and friends," he said.

Meanwhile, Omani foreign minister Yousef bin Alawi stressed the importance of the Warsaw Conference in terms of strengthening partnership with the countries of the world and taking care of the problems of the Middle East, which has been for many years without reaching a final solution. "We have had intensive consultations during the Warsaw Conference for two days and we have seen valuable ideas on the question of identifying areas of danger. We also discussed how to deal with these various issues and intensify research and study in the future," he added. — KUNA



WARSAW: Saudi Minister for Foreign Affairs Adel Al-Jubeir (center right) and Bahraini Foreign Minister Sheikh Khaled bin Ahmad Al-Khalifa (center left). — KUNA

## Lawmakers discuss labor employment from Sri Lanka

**KUWAIT:** A group of visiting Kuwaiti lawmakers led by Adel Al-Damkhi discussed admitting qualified skilled labor, particularly in healthcare, with Sri Lanka's Minister of Foreign Employment Harin Fernando on Thursday. Fernando, also minister of telecommunications, digital

infrastructure and sports was told that the jobs are on offer due to the emergence of large Kuwaiti projects in this particular sector. MP Abdullah Al-Enezi said. Both sides saw eye to eye on arranging the transfer through government contracts or Al-Durra Domestic Help Recruitment Company, thus nullifying the need for commission or outside companies, he added. Amid separate talks with Sri Lanka's Parliament Secretary-General Dhammika Dasanayake, the lawmakers were briefed on the country's democratic and parliamentary practice. This follows Colombo's application of amendments, which give the legislative body greater and broader powers. The lawmakers also discussed bilateral relations, the sharing of know-how and coordination on mutual affairs. — KUNA

Local



KUWAIT: Hundreds of people gathered at the Irada Square in front of the National Assembly yesterday to call upon His Highness the Amir to cancel their loans. — Photos by Joseph Shagra

## Charity continues 'preserving food' campaign

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Kuwait Food Bank (KFB) continues its voluntary campaign 'Preserve it so that it lasts', organized in collaboration with various NGOs. A statement issued by the bank said that the campaign aims at preserving food and stopping or reducing wastage to protect the environment and public health. KFB added that the campaign involves boosting public awareness to spread the culture of preserving food and recycling it by collecting leftovers and feeding it to birds and animals and serv-

ing extra food to the needy, which are all means of expressing gratitude for the blessings we have. In addition, KFB explained that the campaign's name was set to make everyone positively take part in providing needy families with food, beverages and clothes, regardless of their religion, race or gender. KFB general manager Salem Al-Hamar extended the bank's congratulations on the occasion of the national anniversaries to the political leadership and the Kuwaiti people, and explained that the campaign aims at promoting the culture of only purchasing what we actually need and consume to avoid discarding extra food, which should be prepared and served to the needy. "The campaign also calls for having special containers for extra food in schools and houses," he added, reminding that 45 percent of the total waste in Kuwait is of food origin.

## Road works force water cuts between Salwa, Funaitees

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: Residents of areas between Salwa and Funaitees have been experiencing water shortages for the past two days. Some residential houses or buildings with only a few apartments and little consumption of water may have not noticed it, as water supply was cut for several hours, returned, then stopped again. Buildings with greater water usage were affected, as the water reserves in tanks were not enough for

the entire day for all the tenants.

According to the emergency line of the Ministry of Electricity and Water, water cuts began on Wednesday in Funaitees, and later extended to Salwa. "The Ministry of Public Works asked our ministry to cut the water as they are working on road constructions, and it's difficult for them to complete their work without stopping the supply of water from the pipes underneath," the emergency hotline operator told Kuwait Times yesterday. He said that the center has received thousands of calls from various areas. "The route of the construction works is long and passes through many areas. It has caused inconvenience to many people, but they have to be patient. Water should be back by midnight," he said, adding further water cuts are not expected. He also advised buildings with a large number of tenants to buy water from tankers.

local spotlight

## Violence against women

By Muna Al-Fuzai

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The phenomenon of domestic violence is not new to our societies, but it has become widespread. It has attracted the attention of psychologists and social activists in order to raise awareness about it, because of the negative effects on families and victims. This violence is not necessarily in the form of physical assault - it could be a verbal attack against the wife or children.

I was wondering where these women go. Some go to the police station, but their cases are resolved 'amicably' and the woman is sent back to the house of the violator. Naturally, these women face a problem, because they are subjected to more violence as a result of their reporting to the police. With further research, I discovered that many women are ignorant of their rights. Therefore, the establishment of a shelter for abused women to protect them and raise their awareness of their legal rights is very important.

It is regrettable that the perpetrators of this crime often find justifications for carrying it out. This problem has various factors and multiple causes, and talking about the causes and treatment is part of the solution. I believe domestic violence is offensive to all and must be addressed openly and clearly in a firm manner.

In the absence of many institutions that seek to preserve the dignity of abused women, a licensed volunteer group called Eithar Kuwait has appeared, which aims to combat violence against women in Kuwait. In 2017, the Fener Center was inaugurated by the minister of social affairs. It is affiliated to the supreme council for family affairs and specializes in communicating with victims of domestic violence.

But I do not know if the mission of this place has been accomplished. Studies have revealed that approximately 41 percent of married women suffer from marital violence, and the fear factor prevents them from reporting their husbands to police, in addition to customs and traditions. We are in 2019, where the world seeks to make women partners of men in all leadership positions, and violence against women is a step backwards in any society. I searched for the real number of abused women in Kuwait and discovered that this figure is not publicized. I think the reason is fear by the victim in reporting the person who has abused her.

Nov 25 is the day approved by the UN General Assembly to call for an end to violence against women. This day was not announced by the United Nations in vain, but to increase awareness of suffering of women and develop legal and therapeutic solutions, both medically and psychologically. But this day passed in Kuwait without any mention, except in Al-Qabas newspaper, which published a report with frightening figures of cases of violence against women, where the proportion of abused women was 53 percent. I understand that maybe the victims conceal their suffering and do not report it over fears of scandal or social anger against them. I wonder why this silence and indifference in dealing with a humanitarian issue, as if it is a normal thing. It is regrettable that domestic violence in macho societies is seen as acceptable, so it is necessary to activate the family protection law and recognize that domestic violence is a crime against women. We must raise our voices to protect these women.

Statistics from the United Nations show that violence affects 70 percent of women worldwide, but figures are not clear in Kuwait due to social barriers. I know that there is fear in Gulf societies to address this issue, and some consider a shelter as a step to subvert society by encouraging women to rebel. But women are like men - their human rights must not be harmed and silence is a crime against humanity. I hope the Human Rights Council and all women's rights activists publish new statistics on the subject and conduct more awareness campaigns for women.

### News in brief

#### Labor transfer service online

KUWAIT: Director of the Public Authority for Manpower Ahmad Al-Moussa said that in a bid to facilitate services provided to businessmen, companies' labor transfer service will be available on the authority's website starting from today. — By Meshaal Al-Enezi

#### 15 candidates apply

KUWAIT: Fifteen candidates submitted their applications for parliamentary by-elections yesterday, the 10th and final day of candidacy for the vote slated for March 16. Election affairs commission received applications of 15 candidates. They are running for two seats in the second and the third constituencies. The total number of the candidates reached 61, including five women. Yesterday, five candidates submitted applications to run for the second constituency and 10 others for the third constituency. — KUNA

#### Kuwait's religious expertise

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia is seeking to share expertise with Kuwaiti Islamic agencies, primarily Zakat House, said a Kuwaiti diplomat yesterday. The desire was reflected by the Malaysian side during a forum of ambassadors of Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) member states, Kuwaiti Ambassador to Malaysia Saad Al-Asousi said. He quoted the Malaysian side as speaking highly of Kuwait's religious experience, and requesting to capitalize on it. — KUNA

#### Kuwait denounces deadly attack

KUWAIT: Kuwait on Friday condemned an explosion that targeted a military convoy in Indian part of Kashmir, leaving scores of personnel dead or wounded. A source at the Kuwaiti Foreign Ministry rejected in a statement all forms of violence and terrorism, affirming the country's stand on India's side in facing such a criminal act. The source expressed condolences to families of the victims and wished the wounded quick recovery. Up to 40 personnel were killed in Thursday's bombing attack. — KUNA

## Four hurt in Jahra restaurant explosion

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Four people were injured in an explosion reported in a Jahra restaurant. The four were treated onsite by paramedics, while firefighters put out the flames. An investigation was opened to reveal the



KUWAIT: Damage seen inside the Jahra restaurant following the explosion.



Damaged vehicles seen following a fire reported in Khaitan.

cause of the explosion.

Meanwhile, six vehicles caught fire Friday morning in Khaitan. The fire started in one vehicle and spread to the others. Firemen from Farwaniya fire station responded led by Lt Colonel Khalid Kanaan. The fire was put out and no injuries were reported.

Separately, Wafra and Nuwaiseeb fire stations dealt with a blaze reported in labor residence in Wafra. The fire was in a chalet that belongs to a co-operative society. The flames were contained and extinguished, and no injuries were reported. In the meantime, fire broke out in an abandoned building within Jahra sports club, prompting Jahra fire station to respond with a team led by Lt Col Hisham Al-Bannai.



Flames seen inside a labor residence in Wafra.



A firefighter battles a blaze in a building within Jahra sports club.

## Local

## Photo of the Day



**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's flag is raised during a camel race held recently south of the country. Flags of Kuwait can be seen all over the country as celebrations gain momentum for the National and Liberation days on February 25 and 26 respectively. — Photo by Joseph Shagra

# Kuwait keen on bridging generation gap, integrate disabled people in society

## Kuwait participates in 57th Session of Commission for Social Development

**NEW YORK:** Kuwait affirmed its keenness to seriously work on bridging the generation gap and integrating disabled people in the society. As part of its commitment to the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, Kuwait is keen to activate the role of family in encouraging youngsters to connect with elders, a Kuwaiti official noted. This can be done through organizing voluntary programs, boosting social interaction between state and non-state institutions, establishing protocols, and adopting cooperation policies in accordance with the country's strategic plan, said Dr Amani Al-Tabtabaee.

Tabtabaee, director of the elderly care department at the social affairs ministry, made her remarks while addressing participants of the 57th Session of the Commission for Social Development (CSocD57) at UN Headquarters in New York. The Kuwaiti Constitution emphasizes all people are equal in human dignity, public rights, and duties before the law, and there shall be made no differentiation among them because of race, origin, language, or religion, she said.

Tabtabaee also mentioned the Kuwaiti woman make up

50 percent of workforce in the country, and that Kuwait is currently one of the top-five Arab countries in gender equality, and one of the top-ten Arab states in UN's Gender Inequality Index. She also highlighted the country's laws on disability, elderly, child, minors, retirement, and other affairs, reiterating Kuwait's keenness to provide opportunities to all these categories and integrate them in the society.

Furthermore, Kuwait seeks to build healthy and friendly cities that are suitable for older, disabled, and young people, she said, noting her country has implemented inclusive social protection programs for families. These programs tend

to improve the living and financial conditions of individuals who face social and economic crisis, Tabtabaee said, noting they also include schemes to back and enhance skills such as the case of the 'Own Effort' project, which aims to support low-income women entrepreneurs. Moreover, Kuwait is one of the countries that is institutionally equipped with strategies and facilities designed to limit and reduce the effects of natural disasters, she said, adding no human or financial losses have been reported during the 2012-2016 period.

Kuwait's participation in CSocD57 aims to support its



**NEW YORK:** Director of the elderly care department at the social affairs ministry Dr Amani Al-Tabtabaee attends the 57th Session of the Commission for Social Development (CSocD57) at UN Headquarters in New York. — KUNA

agendas that address inequalities, and counter challenges to social inclusion through fiscal, wage, and social protection policies, said Tabtabaee. CSocD57 tackles a number of issues such as empowerment of people

affected by natural and human-made disasters to reduce inequality, in addition to addressing the differential impact on persons with disabilities, older persons, and youth, she added. — KUNA

## 12 ovary tumor removals conducted at Adan Hospital

**KUWAIT:** Gynecologists at Adan Hospital in Kuwait have successfully carried out 12 delicate and complicated procedures by endoscopy for the removal of ovarian and uterine tumors. A team of doctors from the hospital performed the surgical procedures during a workshop, under the supervision of a visiting consultant surgeon from India, head of gynecology Abeer Al-Thaydi said. The operations involved the application of laparoscopy, which involves small abdominal incisions leading to reduced pain, bleeding and recovery time. — KUNA



**KUWAIT:** Head of gynecology at Adan Hospital Abeer Al-Thaydi (right) and the visiting consultant surgeon from India. — KUNA

## CEF, AFESD host 'Good Governance, Transparency' symposium

**KUWAIT:** The IMF Middle East Center for Economics and Finance (CEF) in Kuwait, jointly with the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD), recently held a high-level symposium on 'Good Governance and Transparency in the Arab World.' The event was hosted at the AFESD's Headquarters. The panel discussion was chaired and moderated by Dr Yousef Al-Ebraheem, Economic Advisor at Al-Diwan Al-Amiri. It included Dr Louis Marc Ducharme, Chief Statistician and Data Officer, and Director of the IMF's Statistics Department, as the keynote speaker; Dr Salam Fayyad, Distinguished Scholar and Lecturer at Princeton University and former Prime Minister of Palestine; and Dr Ziad Bahaa-Eldin, Founder and Managing Partner at Thebes Consultancy and former Deputy Prime Minister of Egypt.

Dr Ebraheem indicated that the symposium aimed at stimulating an open debate on the evolving economic challenges faced by policymakers in Kuwait and the wider Arab community. He discussed the importance of good economic governance and transparen-

cy for evidence-based policy making and overviewed key policies that are needed in the Arab world for closer economic cooperation, and highlighted the steps required to strengthen public sector institutions especially in conflict-affected countries.

Dr Ducharme's keynote address focused on the importance of transparent, high quality, and timely data for good governance. He highlighted the crucial nature of data quality for effective policy making, he outlined how the IMF and country authorities can work together to improve quality and availability of economic data and thereby strengthen economic governance in the region. Dr Ducharme concluded by highlighting the pressing nature of this endeavor, at a time when technological change can help statisticians and policy-makers reap substantial benefits from increased transparency.

Dr Ducharme highlighted the central role of economic data and statistics as a public good, whose quality has enormous bearing on many aspects of social life. The role as effective public good requires that statistics can be trusted by everyone as facts. Agreeing on statistical evidence is an essential first step to initiate any proper policy discussion. Creating trust in statistics is somewhat simple but it takes commitment and requires transparency, broad availability of data to the public, a robust governing framework, and time to establish track record. Dr Ducharme noted that the IMF's capacity development work and dialogue with the authorities has supported notable improvement in statistical quality in the region, with real time beneficial impact on policy making.

## Hereditary diseases center treated 12,000 families

**KUWAIT:** Health Ministry doctors appreciated the distinguished and effective level of the seventh international conference of

hereditary diseases, which was held in Kuwait recently. The doctors added that the number of beneficiaries from the hereditary diseases center reached 12,000 families, 80 percent of whom are Kuwaitis. Furthermore, they indicated that the center was founded in 1979 and presents preventive, treatment and rehab services for thousands of cases, pointing out its 'major role in serving thousands of citizens and expatriates.' Several private sector companies participated in the conference, reflecting their belief in joining in spreading awareness in the society.



Local

# Zain 'Best Mobile Operator,' 'Best Internet Service Provider' in Kuwait during 2018

Service Hero recognizes Zain for seventh time, second consecutive year

**KUWAIT:** For the seventh time and second consecutive year, Zain - the leading digital service provider in Kuwait - was ranked first in the 'Best Mobile Operator' and 'Best Internet Service Provider' categories in Kuwait for the year 2018 by Service Hero, the Arab World's only 100 percent consumer powered customer satisfaction index. The awards ceremony was held in Symphony Style Hotel with the attendance of private sector leaders from across various fields.

Zain ranked first in the telecommunications sector within two categories for achieving the highest customer satisfaction scores by providing the best quality service standards in the Kuwaiti market. The awards came after an in-depth evaluation by Service Hero's independent advisory council, which recognized Zain's leadership in offering the best innovative digital services, as well as its relentless pursuit of excellence and innovation with the aim of achieving superior digital lifestyle transformation for its customer base, considered the biggest in Kuwait.

Zain received the 'Best Mobile Operator' and 'Best Internet Service Provider' awards for achieving high rates of customer satisfaction. The recognition from

Service Hero for the seventh time and second consecutive year demonstrates Zain's commitment in providing its customers with the highest levels of service, further reinforcing its efforts in maintaining the values of its brand. The company is motivated to continue its pledge in providing innovative services to meet the needs of its customers as well as to facilitate their personal, professional, and business needs.

Service Hero has appointed an Independent Advisory Council comprised of academic institutions as well as leading business professionals. As a neutral panel of experts, the Council's function is to supervise the assessment and ensure fair and empirical results that adhere to all procedures and norms.

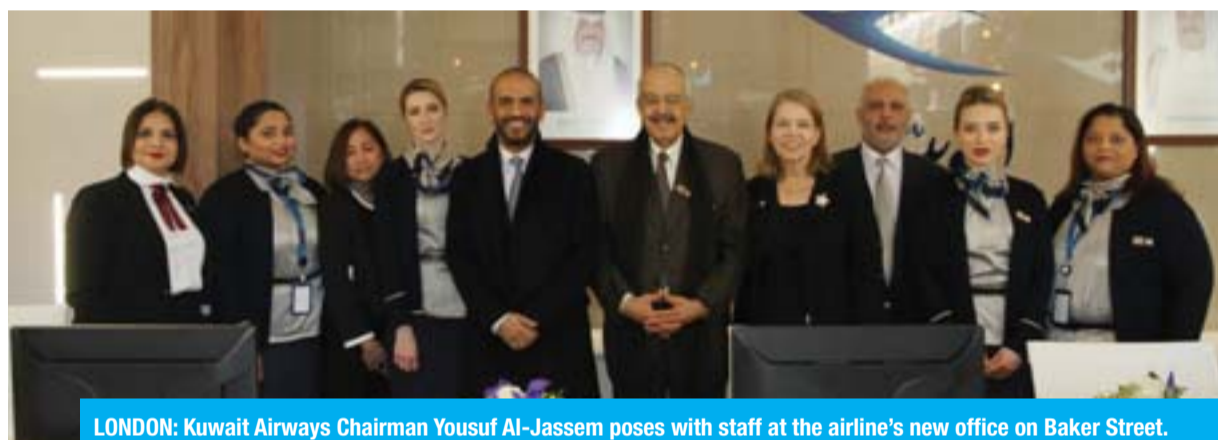
Service Hero was established by a team of professionals keen on identifying companies that are service leaders in their market. This team is backed by an advisory council that is academic and independent, which assures results that are impartial, objective and accurately reflect people's preference. Service Hero's main goal is to measure the satisfaction level in the market by real consumers in order to help and empower companies to improve their service levels.



**Highest customer satisfaction scores**



**KUWAIT:** Waleed Al-Khashti receives Zain's awards during the ceremony.



**LONDON:** Kuwait Airways Chairman Yousuf Al-Jassem poses with staff at the airline's new office on Baker Street.

## Kuwait Airways to launch flights to new destinations in June

**LONDON:** Kuwait Airways Chairman Yousuf Al-Jassem said on Friday the company is in the process of operating summer flights to a number of European and Asian cities starting next June. The first of these destinations will be the Chinese city of Guangzhou and will be followed by a daily flight to Sabiha airport in Turkey, Jassem said after the opening ceremony of the company's office on Baker Street. He added that the company is also in the process of operating a direct flight to the Moroccan city of Casablanca and French city of Nice through Paris and to Larnaca through Beirut, as well as to the Bosnian capital of Sarajevo, the Azerbaijani capital of Baku and the Georgian capital of Tbilisi. He said that the company is waiting for the completion of its air fleet, which will start in June with the reception of a number of new aircraft respectively until 2026, the final period to complete the Kuwaiti fleet, which will be 38 aircraft.

Jassem revealed that Kuwait Airways is currently studying the possibility of opening a direct route between Kuwait and the British city



**Kuwait Airways Chairman Yousuf Al-Jassem (center) inaugurates the new office.**

of Manchester in order to make it easy for Kuwaiti students studying at various British institutes and universities in the north of the United Kingdom. In response to a question whether Kuwait Airways would offer special rates to Kuwaiti students studying in the UK, he said "all our students in Britain or other countries will receive appropriate discounts." On the return of the Kuwait Airways

office to re-operate from the center of the British capital, Jassem expressed his pleasure to reopen the office once again, adding that "returning again is part of the company's main objectives in meeting the needs of passengers." He said the British capital is one of the main destinations and the company is keen to provide all possible services to its customers. — KUNA



## Commercial Bank shares celebrations' joy with cleaners

**KUWAIT:** As part of its social and humanitarian activities towards all society segments, the Commercial Bank of Kuwait distributed gifts and mementos to laborers at their work sites during a recent activity. This gesture from the bank came within the activities of its 'Hawwen

Alihom' Campaign designated to continuously assist and support this segment and share with them the joy of happy occasions. In this context, the bank's Deputy General Manager - Corporate Communications Division, Amani Al-Waraa said "on the occasion of our celebration of the National and Liberation days, we decided to join cleaners who make our streets clean and beautiful with our joy." She said that cleaners carry the burden of removing rubbish at all times, and especially during celebrations, adding that the bank realizes the importance of cleaners' role in protecting the environment, and therefore strives to provide them with care. Waraa thanked all followers of the campaign on social media and valued their 'likes' and appreciation of the campaign.

### A Leading company in Kuwait has exciting career opportunities for the following positions

Job	Required Qualification	Required Conditions
Garage second supervisor	Technical diploma or experience not less than (7) years	Two years diploma post secondary – Auto Mechanics+ experience from 3 to 5 years (Auto service agencies)
Heavy equipment mechanic	Two years diploma post secondary or experience (5) years	Industrial diploma major of hydraulic (ITI) + experience from 3 to 5 years (Auto service agencies)
Mechanic	Industrial technical secondary Experience in work field	Industrial diploma major of Auto mechanics (ITI) + experience from 3 to 5 years (Auto service agencies)
Electrician	Industrial technical secondary Experience in work field	Industrial diploma major of Auto Electrical (ITI) + experience from 3 to 5 years (Auto service agencies)
Cooling Technician	Industrial technical secondary Experience in work field	Industrial diploma major of Auto cooling (ITI) + experience from 3 to 5 years (Auto service agencies)
Tires repair technician	Industrial technical secondary Experience in work field	Industrial diploma major of Auto (ITI) + experience from 3 to 5 years (Auto service agencies)
Auto Painter	Industrial technical secondary Experience in work field	Industrial diploma major of Auto (ITI) + experience from 3 to 5 years (Auto service agencies)
Lather /Fitter	Industrial technical secondary Experience in work field	Industrial diploma major of Auto (ITI) + experience from 3 to 5 years (Auto service agencies)
Denter	Industrial technical secondary Experience in work field	Industrial diploma major of Auto (ITI) + experience from 3 to 5 years (Auto service agencies)
Welder	Industrial technical secondary Experience in work field	Industrial diploma major of Auto (ITI) + experience from 3 to 5 years (Auto service agencies)
Upholsterer	Industrial technical secondary Experience in work field	Industrial diploma major of Auto (ITI) + experience from 3 to 5 years (Auto service agencies)
Electronics technician	Industrial technical secondary Experience in work field	Industrial diploma major of Auto (ITI) + experience from 3 to 5 years (Auto service agencies)
Maintenance Technician	Industrial technical secondary Experience in work field	Industrial diploma major of Auto (ITI) + experience from 3 to 5 years (Auto service agencies)
Marine Mechanic	Diploma (or equivalent certificate) Study of diesel engines or marine machinery	Minimum 5 years' experience as mechanic on board ships. English language mandatory (Knowledge of Arabic, an added advantage)
Marine Electrician	Diploma (or equivalent certificate) Study of diesel engines or marine machinery	Minimum 5 years' experience in AC and DC electric circuits including motors, alternators and distributing panels. English language mandatory (knowledge of Arabic, an added advantage)
Electronic Technician	Diploma (or equivalent certificate) in electronics	Minimum 5 years' experience in Electronic and control systems. English language mandatory (knowledge of Arabic, an added advantage)
Marine Engineer	Bachelor of Science in Marine Engineering (with evaluation good or more), 2 years valid second or third engineer endorsement certificate	Preferred age between 30 to 45 years English mandatory with good grade in writing, read and speak
Workshop Supervisor	Minimum 5 years' experience as mechanic supervisor	English language necessary for conversation and writing reports.
Seaman	STCW convention certificates, valid more than one year	Minimum 5 years' experience
Head Of Sailor	STCW convention certificates, valid more than one year	Minimum 5 year's experience as Seaman and 2 years as Sailor
Shipmaster	STCW convention certificates, valid more than 2 years Should have valid GMDSS and Passenger certificate.	Minimum 5 years experience as Officer Speak English well
Ship Captain	STCW convention certificates, valid more than 2 years	Minimum 5 years' experience as Officer Should have valid GMDSS and Passenger certificate Speak English well

Applicants will be subject to tests and interviews and will be given priority as follows:  
 1- The highest General grade of the qualification 2- The oldest in obtaining the qualification  
 3- The oldest 4- The married person shall be given priority over the single  
**The Interested Applicants must submit their applications during the morning period from 8 am to 1 pm at the company's premises located at: Al-Mirgab - Kuwait City - Abdul Aziz Al Saqr Street, Tel: 22328469 - 22328105, Within (15) days from the date of publication of the Ad accompanied by the following:**  
 • A copy of the Education certificate and marks transcript with the Equivalency of certificates issued from abroad by the Ministry of Higher Education  
 • Copy of birth certificate • Copy of experience certificate • Copy of passport  
 • Copy of civil ID • Personal photo • Copy of Nationality



Delhi policeman holds up mirror to bike law-breakers

## Snap decision to delay election disappoints voters in Nigeria

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A fighter with the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) holds his weapon during an operation to expel Islamic State group (IS) jihadists from the Baghouz area in the eastern Syrian province of Deir Ezzor. —AFP

# End days for caliphate as IS trapped

In a very short time, we will officially announce the end of IS's existence

**BAGHOUZ:** Jihadist fighters defending the last dreg of the Islamic State group's "caliphate" yesterday were holed up in half a square kilometer in a village of eastern Syria. US President Donald Trump said the fall of the IS proto-state would be announced yesterday, but a top Syrian commander said his forces had slowed down their advance to protect civilians. The jihadists declared a "caliphate" in large parts of Syria and neighboring Iraq in 2014, but have since lost all of it but the tiny patch in eastern Syria near the border with Iraq.

"IS is besieged in a neighborhood that is estimated to be 700 meters long and 700 meters wide" in the village of Baghouz, said Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) commander Jia Furat. "Baghouz is within our firing range but we are moving cautiously considering there are civilians still trapped there as human shields," said Furat, the overall commander for the operation. "In a very short time, not longer than a few days, we will officially announce the end of IS's existence," he told reporters at the Al-Omar oil field turned SDF base.

Thousands of people have flooded out of Baghouz over the past week — mostly women and children related to IS fighters, but also suspected jihadists. But an SDF spokesman said there were "still civilians inside in large numbers". "We weren't expecting this number, otherwise we wouldn't have

resumed the campaign four days ago. This is why it's been delayed," SDF spokesman Adnan Afrin said. Trump at around 1600 GMT on Friday said announcements over "the eradication of the caliphate" would be made "over the next 24 hours".

### 'Lapses' in timetable

Yesterday, US-led coalition spokesman Colonel Sean Ryan acknowledged that the timeline had slipped because of the presence of civilians inside. "There has been lapses as we continue to see hundreds of civilians still attempting to flee to safety," he said. "The area of Baghouz has many tunnels, which slows operations," he added.

He said fighters of the Kurdish-led SDF were working to remove improvised explosive devices from the area, while keeping a lookout for possible IS suicide bombers. Human Rights Watch called on commanders not to try to accelerate the offensive to suit Trump's timetable. "The tempo of battle must not be dictated by political imperatives — it must first of all protect civilians and possible hostages," HRW's

director of counterterrorism, Nadim Houry said.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said IS fighters were surrendering in large numbers to the advancing SDF fighters. The SDF have been closing in on holdout jihadists since September. The speck of terrain in Baghouz is all that's left of their self-proclaimed "caliphate" that in 2014 spanned an area the size of the United Kingdom and administered millions of people. Successive offensives in Iraq and Syria have shattered the proto-state, which has since late 2017 been confined to the Euphrates Valley.

### 'Hunt down' IS remnants

Trump's promise of a victory declaration came after he shocked allies and senior figures in his own administration with a December announcement that he had ordered a full troop withdrawal from Syria because IS had been "beaten". That plan, which prompted the resignation of then defense secretary Jim Mattis, is set to be accelerated following a declaration of victory. Beyond Baghouz, IS still has thousands of fighters and sleeper cells scattered

across several countries.

In Syria, it retains a presence in the vast Badia desert, and has recently claimed deadly attacks in SDF-held territory. The US Department of Defense has warned that without sustained counterterrorism pressure, IS could resurge within months. US Vice President Mike Pence vowed yesterday at a security conference in the German city of Munich that the United States would "hunt down" IS remnants even after a military pullout.

"The United States will continue to work with all our allies to hunt down the remnants of ISIS wherever and whenever they rear their ugly heads," Pence said, using an alternative acronym for IS, but providing no further details. A US withdrawal risks leaving Syria's Kurds exposed to a long threatened attack by neighboring Turkey, who views Kurdish fighters as "terrorists".

To prevent this, they have scrambled to seek a new ally in the Damascus government after spending most of Syria's civil war working towards self-rule. Eight years into a war that has killed more than 360,000 people, President Bashar Al-Assad's government controls nearly two-thirds of the country. German Chancellor Angela Merkel warned in Munich that a US pullout risks allowing regime allies Russia and Iran to boost their role in Syria. —AFP

“ Hundreds of civilians still attempting to flee ”

## 'Suspects' in 'Empire' actor assault case freed: Police

**CHICAGO:** Two men identified as "potential suspects" in the alleged attack on "Empire" TV actor Jussie Smollett have been released without charge, police in the US city of Chicago said late Friday. Smollett, 36, who is black and openly gay, reported to police on January 29 that two men beat him while he walked downtown in the third-largest American city.

He alleged they yelled racial and homophobic slurs, poured bleach on him and tied a rope around his neck, prompting police to initially describe the case as a possible hate crime. Earlier on Friday police spokesman Anthony Guglielmi said detectives had "probable cause" that two men arrested may have been involved in an alleged offense. But late the same day, Tom Ahern, the police Deputy Director of News Affairs and Communications, said on Twitter that "the individuals questioned by police in the #Empire case have now been released without charging and detectives have additional investigative work to complete."

He said the step followed "new evidence as a result of today's interrogations." Police initially announced the arrest of the



US actor Jussie Smollett

two men after US media reported that investigators were probing the possibility that the attack was staged. Guglielmi, however, told AFP "there is no evidence" to say it was a hoax. Multiple US media outlets reported the two men are brothers who were arrested at Chicago's O'Hare airport upon return from a trip to Nigeria. At least one of the men reportedly worked on "Empire," a series about the fortunes of an ailing hip-hop mogul and his family battling over control of a multi-million dollar music company. Smollett has expressed anger over rumors and speculation reported in the media doubting his account. Initial reports of the attack shocked the entertainment industry and brought waves of support from advocacy groups. —AFP

## India, Pakistan in UN court for 'spy' case

**THE HAGUE:** India will ask the UN's top court tomorrow to order Pakistan to take an alleged Indian spy off death row, in a case that could stoke fresh tensions after a deadly attack in Kashmir. Kulbhushan Sudhir Jadhav was arrested in the restive southwestern Pakistani province of Baluchistan in March 2016 on charges of espionage and sentenced to death by a military court. The International Court of Justice urgently ordered Pakistan in 2017 to stay the execution of Jadhav, pending hearings on the broader Indian case that take place this week in The Hague.

The rare foray into the international courts for the nuclear-armed rivals could be another flashpoint after Thursday's suicide bombing in Indian-administered Kashmir that killed 41 troops. New Delhi's lawyers will present their arguments on Monday to the court, which was set up after World War II to resolve international disputes, followed by Pakistan's on Tuesday. Jadhav, a former Indian navy

officer, was accused of working for the Indian intelligence services in the province bordering Afghanistan, where Islamabad has long accused India of backing separatist rebels. After a closed trial he was sentenced to death by a Pakistani military court on April 10, 2017, on charges of "espionage, sabotage and terrorism". India insists Jadhav was not a spy, and that he was kidnapped in Pakistan. New Delhi in court documents is asking that the ICJ order Islamabad to annul the sentence. It accused Islamabad of violating the Vienna Convention by failing to provide him with consular access, as well as breaking human rights law. If Pakistan is unable to quash Jadhav's death sentence, Islamabad should be found in violation of international law and treaties, and be told to "release the convicted Indian national forthwith", India said.

### 'Release the convicted Indian'

India accused Pakistan in 2017 of harassing Jadhav's family during a visit, saying their meeting was held in an "atmosphere of coercion". Islamabad reacted coolly to the ICJ's urgent order to stay Jadhav's execution at the time, saying it "has not changed the status of commander Jadhav's case in any manner". The ICJ's decision will likely come months after this week's

hearings. The death row spy case comes as the troubled ties between India and Pakistan risked taking a dangerous new turn following the bombing near Srinagar. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi warned that Pakistan would pay a "heavy price" after local media reported that the Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammed Islamist group claimed responsibility.

At least 41 paramilitary troops were killed as explosives packed in a van ripped through a convoy bringing 2,500 troopers back from leave not far from the main city Srinagar. Kashmir has been split between India and Pakistan since independence from Britain in 1947 with both nuclear-armed countries, which have fought three wars, claiming it as their own. India and Pakistan also routinely accuse each other of sending spies into their countries, and it is not uncommon for either nation to expel diplomats accused of espionage, particularly at times of high tension.

Death sentences however have been rarely issued in recent years. The last time India and Pakistan took a dispute to the ICJ was in 1999 when Islamabad protested at the downing of a Pakistani navy plane that killed 16 people. The tribunal decided that it was not competent to rule in the dispute and closed the case. —AFP

## International

# Sacked US man guns down five co-workers, wounds five police

‘Information that we have indicates that he was being terminated today’

**CHICAGO:** A US man being fired from his job shot dead five co-workers at a factory on the outskirts of Chicago and wounded five police officers before being gunned down himself, in the country's latest mass shooting. The gunfire took place at 1:24 pm (1924 GMT) at the Henry Pratt Company in Aurora, Illinois, a suburb 40 miles west of Chicago, the country's third-largest city.

Police named the suspect as Gary Martin, 45, of Aurora. He was a 15-year employee of the company and “information that we have indicates that he was being terminated today,” said Aurora Police Chief Kristen Ziman. The shooting came the day after Nancy Pelosi, the powerful speaker of the House of Representatives, said gun violence is a “national emergency” far more real than the one President Donald Trump ultimately declared Friday to build his wall at the Mexican border.

Police Chief Ziman did not have further details about why Martin was being fired, whether the killing was pre-meditated, or whether the victims were involved in his dismissal. “Five employees were located deceased inside the building,” and preliminary reports indicated they were killed before police arrived, Ziman told reporters. One other employee was wounded but his life was not in danger, she said. Responding to multiple calls about a shooting at the company, which supplies water valves and employs about 200 people, officers were immediately confronted by Martin. He shot and wounded two of them with a Smith & Wesson handgun, the chief said.

As other officers arrived they entered the building, about half the size of a football field, to hunt for the retreating gunman and rescue people. Three more officers were shot but none of the five appeared to be in a critical

condition, Ziman said. After about 90 minutes, officers inside the “vast, vast building” located the gunman who opened fire again and was killed by returning fire from police, she said. Witnesses told local media the shooter was a disgruntled employee. They said they locked themselves in nearby buildings as he began firing.

‘America is with you’

Aerial TV footage showed dozens of police cars, ambulances and fire trucks at the scene as officers with shields entered the complex. John Probst, who was in the building when the shooting began but was able to escape, told the local ABC TV affiliate he recognized the gunman as a co-worker. “What I saw was the guy running down the aisles with a pistol with a laser on it,” he said. “We were just scared.”

Nancy Caal, an employee of a nearby repair workshop, told the Daily Herald newspaper she and three others had heard numerous emergency sirens, and so “went and shut the front gate and locked all of the doors.” In a tweet, President Trump praised the “great job by law enforcement in Aurora, Illinois” and sent “heartfelt condolences to all of the victims and their families. America is with you!”

The shooting came a day after the first anniversary of the Valentine's Day shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, where a former pupil killed 14 students and three staff, re-igniting a push for gun control. In the year since, nearly 1,200 children still lost their lives to firearms and there have been other mass shootings including the October murder of 11 Jews at a Pittsburgh synagogue. In January a gunman killed five people at a bank in Sebring, Florida.



AURORA: Police secure the area following a shooting at the Henry Pratt Company. — AFP

Illinois Governor JB Pritzker, a Democrat, said Friday's tragedy was part of an epidemic of gun violence. “Tomorrow, the families of the victims will be less than whole. They join a group that should not exist, and yet continues to grow,” Pritzker said. A coalition of gun control advocacy groups also condemned the murderous attack, saying it was the 198th mass shooting in the last 10 years. “This is a horrifying reminder of how hard we have to work to prevent gun violence,” Holly Blastic, with Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America, said in a statement.

Definitions of “mass shooting” vary, but a Washington Post database has recorded 162 cases in which four or more people were killed since 1966. Many of the deadliest shootings have occurred in the last few years, the database shows. In a presidential message Thursday to mark the Parkland anniversary, Trump recommitted to “ensuring the safety of all Americans.”

“Let us declare together, as Americans, that we will not rest until our schools are secure and our communities are safe,” Trump said. — AFP

## Maduro blasts US for ‘stealing’ billions and offering ‘crumbs’

**CARACAS:** President Nicolas Maduro hit out at the United States on Friday for “stealing” billions of dollars and offering “crumbs” in return as humanitarian aid, as Washington sanctioned five officials close to the Venezuelan leader. Tons of US aid is piling up in Colombia close to the border with Venezuela as opposition leader Juan Guaido has vowed to defy Maduro's efforts to block the supplies from entering the country.

“It's a booby trap, they're putting on a show with rotten and contaminated food,” said Maduro, speaking at an event in the southeastern town of Ciudad Bolivar. “They've stolen \$30 billion and are offering four crumbs of rotten food,” added the beleaguered socialist leader, referring to the United States. Later Friday, Maduro asked the military to prepare for a “special deployment” to reinforce the border with Colombia — and make it “impregnable.”

“I am not exaggerating. In the White House, Donald Trump and Ivan Duque announced plans for war against Venezuela,” he said, referring to a meeting on Wednesday in which President Donald Trump reiterated that “all options” were on the table with regard to Venezuela. The country is in the midst of an economic crisis that has left millions in poverty and facing shortages of basic necessities such as food and medicine.

Guaido, who is recognized by 50 countries as the interim president, accuses Maduro of causing economic hardship through mismanagement. Among those countries is Costa Rica, whose foreign affairs ministry on Friday gave three Maduro-appointed diplomats “60 calendar days” to leave the country. Maduro meanwhile blames Venezuela's woes on US sanctions. The 56-year-old, the hand-picked successor to socialist firebrand Hugo Chavez, branded it the “war of the oligarchy.” US sanctions mostly target regime individuals and state oil company PDVSA, the government's main source of income, but the US Treasury announced Friday that it was imposing sanctions on five intelligence and security officials close to Maduro.

### Struggle over aid

Those targeted are “aligned with illegitimate former



CUCUTA: Venezuelans take part in a protest against the government of President Nicolas Maduro at the Simon Bolivar International bridge. — AFP

President Nicolas Maduro, who (continues) to repress democracy and democratic actors in Venezuela,” a Treasury Department statement said. Among the five men is Manuel Quevedo, described by the Treasury as the “illegitimate” president of PDVSA. Humanitarian aid has become a key issue in the power struggle between Maduro and Guaido.

The opposition leader, who last month declared himself acting president, has promised to bring in the aid on February 23. Maduro refuses to let it in. And his loyal military has barricaded a border bridge between Venezuela and Colombia. The socialist leader insists the aid is just a cover for a planned US military invasion, while Guaido says 300,000 people could die without the desperately-needed aid. Speaking on Friday, Maduro said six million families had benefitted from subsidized food boxes and claimed to have bought 933 tons of medicines and medical

supplies from China, Cuba and Russia, his main international allies. “We paid for it with our own money because we're beggars to no one,” he said. Guaido accuses Maduro of being a “usurper” over his controversial reelection last year in polls widely branded as fraudulent.

Maduro says the 35-year-old National Assembly speaker is a puppet to the US, which is trying to secure access to Venezuela's gold and vast oil reserves — the largest in the world. He said Guaido's challenge to his authority is “treason.” “The worst thing is stimulating the imperial madness of an extremist Ku Klux Klan government in the White House,” said Maduro. US national security advisor John Bolton announced on Thursday that 25 countries had “pledged \$100 million in humanitarian assistance.” A US defense official said Friday that the American military will transport some 200 tons of humanitarian aid for Venezuela to Colombia in the coming days. — AFP

## Republican commentators put a spell on Trump

**WASHINGTON:** He holds no official government position but has been called US President Donald Trump's “shadow” chief of staff. Fox News commentator Sean Hannity is one of several conservative media personalities who exert enormous influence over the president. Their clout has been on display as Trump fights to make good on his signature campaign promise — building a wall on the border with Mexico.

Having failed to secure congressional funding for the barrier, Trump's declaration of a national emergency on Friday is being viewed by many political analysts as a bid to save face with right-wing pundits. “The president could not handle being labeled a loser by conservative commentators like Laura Ingraham and Sean Hannity,” The New York Times said in an editorial.

“He wants to make sure that Sean Hannity and Ann Coulter and others on Fox News are happy so that they calm down, although some of them won't,” said David

Gergen, an advisor to four previous US presidents. “But fundamentally this is about politics of the base, that he needs to shore up his base,” Gergen said on CNN. Hannity, 57, is perhaps the most prominent voice in Trump's ear but the president also seeks counsel — and approval — from several other media figures whose shows he regularly tunes into.

Coulter, a right-wing author and blogger, and Lou Dobbs, a Fox Business Network host, have been fulminating about illegal immigration for years. Other prominent conservative media personalities pushing for tougher immigration policies include Ingraham and Tucker Carlson of Fox News and radio talk host Rush Limbaugh. Pressure from Coulter, Dobbs, Hannity and the others has been cited as one of the driving forces behind Trump's decision to shut down the government for weeks in the fight with Congress over funding for the wall.

### ‘They don't decide policy’

Trump was directly asked by a reporter on Friday how the conservative pundits helped shape his decision to declare a national emergency. “Sean Hannity has been a terrific, terrific supporter of what I do,” Trump said. “Rush Limbaugh, I think he is a great guy. “Laura Ingraham has been great,” Trump said. “Tucker Carlson has been great.” But, he added, “they don't decide policy.”



WASHINGTON: In this file photo taken on January 24, 2017 Fox News host Sean Hannity is seen in the White House briefing room. — AFP

Coulter has been particularly critical of Trump for failing to build the wall and she lashed out at the president for signing a government funding bill that does not include all of the \$5 billion he wanted for the barrier. “NATIONAL EMERGENCY WON'T HELP,” Coulter tweeted. “IT'S OVER IF HE SIGNS THIS BILL!” Last month, Coulter called Trump a “wimp.” “Good news for George Herbert Walker Bush: As of today, he is no longer the biggest wimp ever to serve as President of the United States,” she tweeted.

Trump responded to Coulter's criticism on Friday by saying that he “hardly knows” her, that she was “off the reservation” and he hasn't spoken to her in “way over a year.” “If I did speak to her she may be very nice,” he said. “I have nothing against her. “I like her for one reason,” Trump added. “When they asked her right at the beginning who is going to win the election, she said Donald Trump.” Hannity, the Fox News host, is seen as the most influential among the stable of conservatives cultivated by Trump.

“He's got Hannity and Coulter all these people in his head full-time — rent-free,” CNN host Chris Cuomo said. “He's incredibly persuasive and powerful.” Cuomo said of Hannity, “I would argue he is without question the most powerful person in the media because what he says the president does.” “What he says the president does,” Cuomo repeated for emphasis during an interview with Matt Gaetz, a Republican congressman from Florida who is one of Trump's biggest supporters in the House of Representatives.

“Hannity is unlike anyone else in the media now,” Gaetz agreed. “They have exchanges and robust discussions,” he said of Trump and Hannity. “I think it's good that we have a president that bounces ideas off a lot of different people,” Gaetz said. “He's not just stuck in the cocoon of the West Wing. “He seeks advice from all over the country.” — AFP

## US judge issues gag order in case of Roger Stone

**WASHINGTON:** A US judge issued a gag order on Friday in the case against Roger Stone, the Trump advisor who has pleaded not guilty to charges stemming from the investigation into whether the president's election campaign colluded with Russia. Stone, 66, is charged with lying to Congress, witness tampering and obstruction stemming from his contacts with WikiLeaks, whose publication of Russian-hacked communications from Democrat Hillary Clinton's campaign gave a boost to Donald Trump.

US District Court Judge Amy Berman Jackson ordered government and defense attorneys to refrain from “making statements to the media or in public settings that pose a substantial likelihood of material prejudice to this case.” Stone was told not to speak to the media or to make public statements around the courthouse or in its immediate vicinity. The federal judge cited the “size and vociferousness of the crowds” attending Stone's court appearances and the “risk that public pronouncements by the participants may inflame those gatherings.”

Stone's court appearances have been rowdy affairs featuring supporters and opponents and a large media contingent. Stone, a veteran Republican consultant, pleaded not guilty in federal court in Washington last month to the seven charges against him. Stone is the sixth campaign associate of Trump indicted by Special Counsel Robert Mueller's team investigating Russian meddling in the 2016 vote.

Trump has repeatedly denied any collusion with Moscow and denounced the probe by Mueller, a former FBI director, as a “political witch hunt.” Stone, who launched his career as a campaign aide to Richard Nixon and has a tattoo on his back of the first US president to resign from office, has spent decades advising political campaigns. His association with Trump dates back to 1979, and he was one of the first to enlist when the billionaire real estate magnate launched his run for the presidency in 2015.

Stone left the campaign months later but the indictment shows he remained in active communication with Mueller's team, providing support and information. Mueller's team has indicted a total of 34 people — but so far, no charges of outright collusion between the Trump campaign and Moscow have been filed. — AFP

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## International

# Snap decision to delay election disappoints voters in Nigeria

## Reports of problems with the delivery of election materials

**ABUJA:** Nigerians hoping to cast their ballots in elections set for Saturday were instead turned away from polling stations after the electoral commission's snap decision to delay the vote by a week. The move "deeply disappointed" President Muhammadu Buhari, who issued a statement calling for calm. "I, therefore, appeal to all Nigerians to refrain from all civil disorder and remain peaceful, patriotic and united to ensure that no force or conspiracy derail our democratic development," he said.

Many voters were caught unawares by the early morning announcement and arrived at polling places to find the doors barred and staff absent. "Why didn't they announce the delay earlier? Why make the announcement in the middle of the night?" asked Chidi Nwakuna, a businessman who showed up early to vote in the southern city of Port Harcourt. Voting had been due to start at nearly 120,000 polling stations in Africa's most populous nation at 0700 GMT, with a record 73 candidates on the ballot.

Buhari, 76, was set to seek a second term of office against a stiff challenge from the main opposition candidate, former vice president Atiku Abubakar, 72. But rumors began circulating late on Friday about a possible postponement after widespread reports of problems with the delivery of election materials, including ballot papers. Members of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) held an emergency session in Abuja and after examining the logistics plans concluded the timetable was "no longer feasible", commission chairman Mahmood Yakubu said.

Presidential and parliamentary elections are now set for February 23, and governorship and state assembly elections have been pushed back to March 9, Yakubu said. "This was a difficult decision for the commission to take but necessary for the successful delivery of

elections and the consolidation of our democracy," he added. The two main political parties swiftly condemned the move and accused each other of orchestrating the delay as a way of manipulating the vote, sentiments echoed by voters. "I see this postponement of the election as a... ploy to rig," said Oyi Adamezie, a voter in the city of Warri.

### 'We will overcome this'

For his part, Abubakar of the main opposition Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) blamed the Buhari government for "instigating the postponement" but called on supporters to remain calm. "We will overcome this. You can postpone an election but you cannot postpone destiny," he added in a statement. Nigeria has postponed voting before: in 2015, INEC announced a six-week delay just one week before the election, citing security concerns linked to the Boko Haram insurgency.

The six-week delay was seen as a way for then president Goodluck Jonathan to claw back votes after a strong challenge from Buhari, an opposition candidate. The same argument

may be made again, with little to separate Buhari and Abubakar. Yet even before the delay's announcement, challenges were apparent in the vote's organization. In many areas suffering intermittent electricity supply and poor road infrastructure, thousands of INEC agents had been working into the night to deliver election materials. "They had much time to prepare," said Austin Onwusoanya, a civil servant in the largest city Lagos who was to manage a polling unit that now stood unused. "There are other things going on."

### Campaign trail

Yesterday's last-gasp postponement comes after an election campaign in which Buhari had sought to por-



**YOLA:** A woman checks her name in a voting list without knowing that the general elections was postponed at a polling station. —AFP

tray himself as a continuity candidate. He came to power in 2015 on a promise to defeat Boko Haram Islamists, tackle rampant corruption and improve the country's oil-dependent economy. But the jihadists still mount attacks, and there is widening insecurity elsewhere, while slow growth as the economy limps back from recession has hit Buhari's stock.

So, too, has the perception he has only targeted political opponents as part of his high-profile anti-corruption campaign. Buhari's purported shortcomings have been a feature of Abubakar's campaign, who has billed himself as a modern, energetic and pro-business leader. The former vice-president's past has also fea-

tured prominently, as the ruling party resurrected controversies from his time in office and alleged links to corruption.

The election — the sixth in the 20 years since civilian rule was restored — is likely to be one of the last times men of Buhari and Abubakar's generation will feature so prominently. They have been fixtures on Nigeria's turbulent political scene for decades and are the oldest on the ballot. Just over half of the 84 million registered voters are aged 18-35, prompting calls for more representative candidates unburdened by involvement in Nigeria's traumatic past. —AFP

## Macron sends invite to Italian prez as ambassador returns

**PARIS:** French President Emmanuel Macron invited his Italian counterpart to Paris, his office said Friday, in a conciliatory gesture as France's ambassador returned to Rome after he was recalled for a week in a diplomatic spat between the neighbors. Macron, who spoke by telephone to Italian President Sergio Mattarella on Tuesday to "reaffirm the importance" of bilateral ties, asked the French ambassador to deliver the invitation at a meeting Friday evening, the Elysee Palace said.

Mattarella, a centre-left politician, is an elder statesman whose job as president carries limited political powers. France had announced on February 7 that it was recalling its ambassador, Christian Masset, to protest "unfounded attacks and outlandish claims" by Italy's populist coalition government — led by deputy prime minister Luigi Di Maio and Matteo Salvini. "I am very happy that the ambassador is on his way back to Italy," Luigi Di Maio, who is deputy prime minister, told reporters in Rome. "I shall meet him, I want to ask him for a meeting," Di Maio added.

Relations between the two countries have fractured due to repeated clashes between Di Maio and Salvini's populist coalition government and France's centrist Macron. Paris was incensed when Di Maio made a surprise visit to France on February 5 to meet a group of radical "yellow vest" protesters who have led demonstrations against Macron. "The wind of change has crossed the Alps," Di Maio wrote afterwards of the three months of protests against Macron, adding that he was preparing a common front ahead of European Parliament elections in May. —AFP

## UK and Russia hold first talks in over a year

**LONDON:** Junior foreign ministers from Britain and Russia met in Germany yesterday in the highest-level contact between the two countries since an alleged nerve agent attack in Britain last March froze diplomatic relations. Britain's Minister for Europe Alan Duncan held talks with Russia's First Deputy Foreign Minister Vladimir Titov on the margins of the Munich Security Conference, according to the foreign office in London.

"Alan underlined that we have deep differences, and the Russian state would need to choose a different path and act as a responsible international partner before there can be a change in our current relationship with Russia," it said in a statement. The meeting is the first between ministers from the two countries following the poisoning of a former Russian spy in the English city of Salisbury on March 4 which Britain has blamed on Moscow.

The attempted assassination of Sergei Skripal, which Britain said was done using a Soviet era nerve agent Novichok, plunged relations to their lowest ebb in decades. The attack killed a British woman who came into contact with the Novichok, as well as injuring several others including a policeman. Among a raft of responses, London suspended all planned high-level bilateral contacts between the two countries, and cancelled ministers and members of the royal family attending last summer's World Cup in Russia. —AFP

## French to mark three months of 'yellow vest' protests

**PARIS:** Demonstrators are to hit French city streets again yesterday, marking three months of "yellow vest" protests as a poll now suggests that most of the country wants them to stop. The number of those attending the weekly rallies has dropped since 287,000 turned out on November 17, the first Saturday of protest.

And for the first time, a poll found Wednesday that more than half those questioned felt it was time to end the protests. On February 9, the 13th weekend of anti-government actions, 51,000 people took to the streets according to police, though protest organizers put the figure at 118,000. Violence has marred nearly every large-scale rally. In Paris, where 4,000 gathered last week, clashes broke out outside the National Assembly building where one demonstrator lost a hand, reportedly as he tried to bat away a stun grenade.

Masked activists tried to break down barriers protecting the parliament but were repelled by police firing tear gas and grenades. As the march continued, vandals burned rubbish bins and cars

and smashed bus shelters, cash machines and shop windows along the route. One of the torched vehicles belonged to Sentinelle, an anti-terrorism unit. Interior Minister Christophe Castaner expressed his "indignation and disgust" in a tweet.

Some 550 shops have been damaged by protesters in the capital since mid November. Thousands of protesters also turned out in the southern cities of Marseille, Montpellier, Bordeaux and Toulouse — strongholds of the movement — as well as several cities in the north and west of France. The "yellow vest" movement started as a protest against rising fuel taxes, but it has become one of opposition to President Emmanuel Macron's policies.

Speaking at a meeting with local mayors on Thursday, Macron said it was time for a "return to reason", adding that authorities would act with "greater firmness" against violent demonstrators. The interior ministry said 1,796 people have been sentenced for rioting or other acts of violence over the past three months, while 1,422 more are awaiting trial. Ex-boxer Christophe Dettinger who became a hero to some protesters after beating up police officers during a demonstration in January was convicted Wednesday and given a one-year prison term.

### 56 percent want protests to stop

An Elabe opinion poll published Wednesday said 56 percent of French people now wanted the protests to stop — 11 points higher than a month ago.

## Vatican defrocks former US cardinal for sex abuse of minor

**VATICAN CITY:** Pope Francis has defrocked a former cardinal in a first for the Roman Catholic church over accusations American Theodore McCarrick sexually abused a teenager 50 years ago, a Vatican statement said yesterday. McCarrick, 88, who resigned from the Vatican's College of Cardinals in July, is the first cardinal ever to be defrocked for sex abuse.

He was found guilty in January by a Vatican court for sexually abusing a teenager, a decision confirmed by the pope in February, with "no further recourse", according to the statement. It said McCarrick was guilty of "sins against the Sixth Commandment with minors and with adults, with the aggravating factor of the abuse of power". The announcement marks a spectacular fall from grace for the once influential cardinal and comes ahead of a Vatican conference from February 21-24 bringing together bishops from around the world to discuss protecting children within the Church.

Sex abuse scandals around the globe, and most recently in the United States and Chile, have shaken the church, with Pope Francis promising a policy of "zero tolerance" even for high-ranking church members. McCarrick, former archbishop emeritus of Washington, was barred from practising as a priest in July last year, after which he resigned his honorary title of cardinal. He currently lives in Kansas.

### Sex with adult seminarians

McCarrick was known for having sex with adult seminarians before he was accused of sexually abusing at least one teenager. Prosecutors in the US state of Pennsylvania last year found 300 priests were involved in child sexual abuse since the 1940s, crimes that were covered up by a

string of bishops. Prosecutors in half a dozen other US states have announced plans for similar investigations.

The pope accepted the resignations of several bishops in Chile last year after investigations revealed decades of sexual abuse by clergy in their dioceses. In March 2015, Pope Francis allowed Keith O'Brien to keep the title of cardinal after the former Bishop of Edinburgh and former leader of the Catholic church in Scotland resigned over allegations of inappropriate sexual behavior towards priests in the 1980s.

The only previous case of a cardinal resigning came in 1927, when Pope Pius XI accepted the resignation of French cardinal Lois Billot, who had himself renounced his status for political reasons. Cardinals act as close papal advisors and can attend conclaves to elect new pontiffs if they are aged below 80. McCarrick had been one of the most prominent American cardinals active on the international stage.

Although officially retired, McCarrick had continued to travel abroad regularly, including on human rights issues. McCarrick was ordained a priest in 1958 and rose through the ranks in the Archdiocese of New York before being installed as archbishop of Washington in 2001, a post he held until 2006. The claims against him were made public in June by Cardinal Timothy Dolan, the current archbishop of New York. Dolan said an independent forensic agency "thoroughly investigated" the allegation.

A review board that included jurists, law enforcement experts, parents, psychologists, a priest and a religious sister then "found the allegations credible and substantiated" and the Vatican ordered McCarrick to stop exercising his ministry. At the time, he released a statement maintaining his innocence but added that he "fully cooperated" in the investigation. Senior US church officials said they had received three allegations of McCarrick's sexual misconduct with adults decades ago, two of which resulted in settlements.

The US Catholic website Crux quoted a man as accusing him of abuse in New York's St Patrick's Cathedral when he



**RENNES:** People demonstrate yesterday in Rennes during the 14th consecutive week of Yellow vest (Gilets Jaunes) movement nationwide protests against French President's policies and top-down style of governing, high cost of living, government tax reforms and for more "social and economic justice." —AFP

And while 58 percent of people still backed or had sympathy for the protesters, that was five points lower than two weeks ago and nine points below the level in early January.

Two out of three people thought the recurring Saturday rallies were no longer in keeping with what "yellow vests" originally stood for. Macron has pledged 10 billion euros (\$11.2 billion) in response to anger over the high cost of living, including tax cuts for some pensioners and measures to boost low wages.

He has also spearheaded a "grand

national debate" by way of the internet and town hall meetings to gather opinions on how the country could be reformed. It was not known how many people might turn out for protests over the weekend as social media messaging has alternatively called for blocking the Arc de Triomphe monument in Paris yesterday, or marching down the Champs-Elysees avenue today. Others suggested "yellow vests" should return to their original tactics of massing at roundabouts nationwide and blocking traffic. —AFP



**VATICAN CITY:** In this file photo taken on March 11, 2013 then US cardinal Theodore Edgar McCarrick arrives for a meeting on the eve of the start of a conclave at the Vatican. —AFP

was a 16-year-old in the 1970s. Other cardinals caught up in scandal include Australia's top Catholic George Pell, number three in the Vatican. Pell faces prosecution in Australia for historical child sexual offences. Pell and Chilean Cardinal Francisco Javier Errazuriz were both removed from the so-called C9 Council of Cardinals, an international advice body set up by Francis himself, the Vatican said in December.

Despite being removed from the C9, Pell, 77, remains in charge of Vatican finances, the third most powerful position in the Roman Catholic Church. He has pleaded not guilty to the charges. Defrocking is the most severe ecclesiastical punishment for a priest, who is reduced to the status of a lay person and no longer allowed to lead mass. —AFP



International

# North Koreans pay tribute to Kim's father in freezing cold

'The great leaders are regarded as our own parents'

**PYONGYANG:** The Day of the Shining Star dawned bitterly cold in Pyongyang. But thousands of North Koreans lined up in temperatures of minus 8 degrees Celsius yesterday to pay their respects to late leader Kim Jong Il on his birthday. Kim, the son of the isolated North's founder Kim Il Sung and the father and predecessor of current leader Kim Jong Un, was born on February 16.

According to Pyongyang's orthodoxy, he came into the world in 1942, in a snow-covered hut at a secret camp on the slopes of Mount Paektu, the spiritual birthplace of the Korean people, where his father was fighting occupying Japanese forces. Outside historians point instead to official Soviet records, which say he was born a year earlier in a Siberian village where Kim Il Sung was in exile. Either way, it is a key anniversary in a nuclear-armed nation whose people are taught from birth to revere the "Paektu bloodline", as the Kim family which has ruled it for three generations is known.

Referred to as the Day of the Shining Star, the occasion is celebrated with flower shows, mass dances in the capital and elsewhere, and laudatory tributes in state media, all reinforcing the underlying narrative. Driver Kim Chol Jun, 42, took his two boys to Mansu Hill, where giant statues of the two older Kims look out over the capital, to pay his respects to them and the current leader. "No sons and daughters feel tired when they visit their parents," he said. "The great leaders are regarded as our own parents,

so I visit here to bow before our parents with my sons." Ordinary North Koreans consistently express unequivocal support for the leadership and its policies when speaking to foreign media.

**Silver screen**

Snow dusted the two monumental panels — one to the fight against Japanese occupiers, the other to the building of socialism — that flank the statues, their faces bathed in the light of the rising sun as small children swept the steps clean. In pride of place before the bronze effigies stood a large floral tribute emblazoned with the name of Kim Jong Un, who is due to hold his second summit with US President Donald Trump at the end of the month.

Pyongyang is under multiple international sanctions over its pursuit of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles, which Washington is pressing it to give up. North Korea has rejected demands for what it calls its "unilateral" disarmament. At the statues, groups ranging from couples and families to hundreds-strong detachments of workers or soldiers assembled turn by turn in front of the images.

After placing individual blooms or flower baskets before the figures, they lined up as an announcer intoned: "Let us pay tribute", and bowed deeply, the military personnel saluting. Kim Jong Il died in 2011 and his remains are preserved in a palatial mausoleum on the outskirts of Pyongyang, but officially he remains Eternal General Secretary of the ruling Workers' Party of Korea. — AFP



**PYONGYANG:** People gather as they wait to pay their respects before the statues of late North Korean leaders Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il as part of celebrations marking the birthday of late North Korean leader Kim Jong Il, known as the 'Day of the Shining Star', on Mansu hill. — AFP

## Drug 'godfathers' surrender to Bangladesh police

**TEKNAF:** Some 102 Bangladeshi meth dealers have surrendered to authorities at a pre-scheduled ceremony in a coastal town, officials said yesterday, as a Philippines-style anti-narcotics crackdown sows fear among kingpins. Bangladesh last year launched a "war" on drugs following a proliferation of illegal substances in the South Asian nation of 165 million people, mostly of cheap methamphetamine pills known as "yaba".

Police said 24 yaba "godfathers", as well as lieutenants and peddlers, surrendered to the country's home minister in Teknaf — the key gateway for smuggling yaba into the country from Myanmar, where the pills are manufactured by the millions. The dealers also surrendered 350,000 vanilla-scented, small red yaba pills — whose name comes from a Thai word meaning "crazy medicine" — and 30 illegal firearms.

The country's police chief Mohammad Javed Patwary said authorities would advocate for lesser prison sentences for those who had surrendered, and would "assist" them in returning to normal life. But he promised "harsh upcoming days" for those who had stayed away. "Those who are in hiding, don't get carried away. You'll not be spared," he told the mass gathering of several thousand locals who came to witness the event.

Teknaf is situated in Cox's Bazar district — home to around a million Rohingya refugees — bordering Myanmar. Cox's Bazar is flooded with yaba, with many of the Rohingya refugees used as "mules" for carrying the pills. The pills have become an easy source of income for the Rohingya, some 740,000 of whom have poured across the border since Myanmar launched a military crackdown in August 2017 that the UN has described as ethnic cleansing. The mass surrender comes during a concerted crackdown against drug traffickers, which has left nearly 300 people dead, including 40 from Teknaf, and seen about 25,000 arrested since May last year. On Friday Bangladesh security forces seized 570,000 yaba pills in separate drives in the border region next to Myanmar's northern Rakhine state.

According to the Department of Narcotics Control, some five million people in Bangladesh are drug users with yaba the most popular substance. The country seized a record 53 million yaba pills last year. In October, authorities made yaba a class-A banned substance and parliament passed a law allowing the death penalty for dealing the drug. Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte's highly controversial anti-drug crackdown has killed thousands of alleged users and pushers since 2016. — AFP

## Amphibious assault craft take beach in US-Thai war drills

**SATTAHIP:** With weapons drawn camouflaged troops leapt out of amphibious assault craft while explosions sounded and parachutists glided in from above as the annual Cobra Gold war games took over a placid Thai beach yesterday. Now in its 38th year, Cobra Gold is one of the largest military exercises in Asia, bringing thousands of forces from the United States, Thailand and other countries together for 11 days of training on Thai shores.

This year's drill includes some 2,000 US Marines, 1,000 US soldiers and hundreds from the country's Navy and Air Force. Yesterday US, Thai and South Korean forces descended on Namsai beach in Chonburi province in a joint drill intended to simulate securing the territory. Captain Melvin Spiese told AFP the goal was to "bring power from ship to shore" and be ready for "any kind of future crisis we might need to respond to with our Thai counterparts."

Helicopters buzzed overhead and fighter jets roared across the skies. Cobra Gold exercises span air, land and sea and feature a jungle survivalist session where participants take turns drinking blood from a severed cobra and snacking on insects and scorpions. Singapore, Japan, Indonesia and Malaysia also took part in the war games. A 2014 army coup in Thailand tested ties with Washington and the kingdom tilted towards China with high-profile arms buys. But US military sales continued and the two countries have upped their engagement under US President Donald Trump, who has stepped back on human rights issues and invited junta chief Prayut Chan-O-cha to the White House. — AFP

## Delhi policeman holds up mirror to bike law breakers

**NEW DELHI:** Traffic cop Sandeep Shahi used to gift helmets to those riding motorbikes on some of the world's most dangerous streets with their head unprotected — but on reflection, he found a better approach. By flashing a mirror at violators, Shahi has been able to shame riders into reflecting on the thin line between life and death on New Delhi's notorious roads.

Although the law mandates proper headgear for bikers in the Indian capital, it is common to see youngsters zip past either without a helmet or with one dangling from their arms, undaunted by the threat of a 1,000-rupee (\$14) fine. Women riding pillion also often give the helmet a miss — sometimes just for fear of ruining their hair-

style. "For the last four years I had been trying to persuade riders to wear helmets but to no avail," Shahi said.

"Then one day when I was riding pillion with my friend on a bike, I saw myself in the mirror without a helmet and I felt ashamed. "Then it struck me that if I make others see themselves in the mirror, they might feel ashamed and start wearing a helmet. A mirror never lies." Shahi says his trick has worked so far. Riders have apologized and promised never to go on the roads again without head gear. "I have also prepared slides about road safety rules which I show to commuters. I am very happy that this simple mirror has proved so effective in curbing violations." — AFP



**NEW DELHI:** This photo taken on February 15, 2019 shows Delhi Traffic Police constable Sandeep Shahi (2L) holds up a mirror as part of a safety awareness campaign. — AFP

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## Washington Watch

## Game over!

By Dr James J Zogby

Hardline supporters of Israel are in panic mode. It was in evidence earlier last week with the all-out assault on the first Somali, African-born immigrant, refugee, Muslim woman elected to serve in the US Congress. Her crime was that she dared to point out, as a leading New York Times columnist and so many others have in the past, the intimidating role that AIPAC plays in shaping US policy toward Israel. The response was nearly hysterical.

Republicans used her as a scapegoat, hoping to turn her into a wedge issue to show that Democrats could no longer be trusted as unquestionable supporters of any and all Israeli policies. Sadly, some Democrats, covering, piled on and joined in the denunciation.

The problem, quite simply, is that those who have given Israel a blank cheque are losing ground among young and minority voters and don't know what to do. Polls show a deep partisan/demographic split on American support for Israel - with millennials and minority voters moving away from Israel toward a more balanced, and even pro-Palestinian, direction. While Republicans are quite pleased with this rift and seek to exploit it to their advantage, some Democrats want to have it both ways. They want to maintain the support from these key constituencies, while at the same time silencing their opposition to Israeli policies.

Reflecting this shift in attitudes, most of the 2020 Democratic presidential aspirants voted against a Senate bill that encourage states to violate the First Amendment by punishing individuals who participate in boycotting Israel. And, of course, the 116th Congress includes two Muslim women, a Somali and a Palestinian, who make no bones about their criticism of Israeli policies that violate Palestinian human rights.

Given this changing landscape, the reasons for the panic are clear enough. What is outrageous, however, has been the way supporters of Israel have decided to respond. They have weaponized anti-Semitism, turning it into a blunt instrument in a crude effort to pummel opponents and silence legitimate debate on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. There are currently bills before Congress that redefine anti-Semitism to include criticism of Israel, criminalize participation in the boycott of Israel, and another that condemns anti-Semitism, but conflates criticism of Israel with heinous behaviors that defame the Jewish people.

As further evidence of the change that's afoot, a few weeks back, one of the New York Times newest opinion writers, Michelle Alexander, penned a significant piece tracing how and why she, an African American civil rights champion, had come to "make a break with Israel". This past Sunday, most likely in response to Alexander's column, the Times published an article by another of their writers, Bret Stephens. The piece was a dizzying mess of faulty logic, bogus "straw men" and fictive history clumsily patched together in an effort to equate what he calls "the progressive left's criticism of Israel" with anti-Semitism.

Stephens rhetorically asks why the left is so critical of Israel and begins his answer by outlining what he claims is their indictment against Israel: "More than a half-century of occupation of Palestinian territories that fair-minded people can no longer ignore, especially given America's financial support for Israel. Continued settlement expansion in the West Bank proves Israel has no interest in making peace on equitable terms. And endless occupation makes Israel's democracy less about Jewish self-determination than it is about ethnic subjugation."

Sounds right to me. But to Stephens this progressive argument is patently false. To make his case, he relies on fictional accounts of history - that are, at best, half true. To establish that Israel has long wanted to recognize a Palestinian state, he claims that Israeli prime ministers offered a state in 2000 and 2008, but were rebuffed. In fact, both offers were made by prime ministers who were on their way out the door - both with single-digit favorable ratings and soon to be booted out of office.

Stephens neglected to mention that even then-Israeli Foreign Minister Shlomo Ben-Ami had conceded that the offer made to the Palestinians in 2000 was inadequate and unworthy of acceptance. His boasting that Ariel Sharon removed every single settlement from Gaza ignores the reality that the withdrawal was done unilaterally without consultation with the Palestinian Authority, as the US had insisted. And that Israel never "left" Gaza, but had simply pulled out the illegal settlements, then turned it into a captive open-air prison.

To demonstrate Palestinian cruelty, Stephens notes the number of Israelis killed by Palestinians in this century, but ignores the fact that eight times more Palestinians have been killed by Israelis during the same period. To prove his bona fides, Stephens declares "I support a two-state solution," but goes on to argue against those who oppose the very Israeli settlement construction that has made that outcome impossible to realize. He says that those who say that Israel ought to stop building in the occupied lands and make peace with the Palestinians are guilty of "calumny." In fact, he's the one guilty of calumny since he claims that the opponents of settlements are all guilty of charging Israel with "boundless greed for Palestinian land and wicked indifference to their plight."

NOTE: Dr James J Zogby is the President of the Arab American Institute



In this file photo taken on Aug 6, 2011, farmers harvest barbary figs in the Moroccan region of Skhour Rhamna region near Marrakech. — AFP

## 'Humble' cactus brings hope to Algeria

For generations Algerians like the Gueldasmi family have barely eked out a living growing prickly pear fruits, but thanks to the cactus's new found virtues their lives are steadily improving. "Now, my future is here. There is no need to go abroad" to find work, said Fethi Gueldasmi, 40, whose family's revenues have been growing thanks to what agronomists and biologists now call the "green gold". Scientific reports indicate that the *Opuntia* species of prickly pears which thrives in arid regions like Algeria's northern Sidi Fredj contains a plethora of virtues.

Everything from the cactus - once considered sacred by the ancient Aztecs - can be transformed to yield nutritional and medical benefits except for its prickly spines. The green spiny discs known as cladodes are used for fodder while their tender inner flesh is a star of the cuisine of Mexico, where the cactus originated and figures on its national flag. Oil extracted from the seeds of fruit has antioxidant benefits and is used in cosmetics for its anti-ageing properties, besides being rich in vitamin C, calcium and magnesium.

The flowers of the cactus go into making herbal tea while the pulp of the red fruit is turned into juice, vinegar, jams and even sorbets. A 2017 study by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) concluded prickly pears could be the answer to much of the world's food security woes and prevent soil erosion.

### 'Green gold'

In Sidi Fredj, once an impoverished town in the Souk Haras province bordering Tunisia, Gueldasmi, like his father and grandfather before him, farms prickly pears. The fruit must be handled carefully to avoid being pricked by the sharp spines. And until recently it was harvested for its tasty, sweet flesh, which only fetched a pittance of 10 dinars (US 0.08 cents) a piece at the local market. Since 2013 however all that has changed with the creation of a cooperative of farmers, scientists and traders in Souk Haras, with help from Mexico, to exploit and market

prickly pear by-products. A small factory was built in 2015 and oil was produced in small quantities before reaching 300 litres in 2017 and 1,000 litres in 2018. The cooperative is hoping to increase the output sevenfold by the end of this year thanks to a new and bigger factory which opened at the end of last year. One tonne of grains is needed to produce one litre of oil, which can fetch more than 2,000 euros (dollars) in Europe.

Algeria's "green gold" is exported to France, Germany

seen their revenues increase thanks to farming and selling prickly pears. Fathi said his family is now able to make home improvements and pay in cash for their groceries instead of signing IOUs. His mother has also been saving money to carry out the hajj, the annual Muslim pilgrimage to Makkah. It is one of the five pillars of Islam and Muslims must undertake the hajj at least once in their lifetime. "Now, my future and that of my (10-year-old) daughter is here. There is no need to travel abroad," he said.

Algeria is a country of 40 million where half the population is under 30, with one in three young people unemployed. Many dream of travelling to Europe to find a job and improve their standard of living. Now "hundreds of families are making a living" from prickly pears, said Mohamed Mohamedi, who heads a farmer's cooperative in the region. This includes women who take part in the harvest of prickly pears and young people.

### No 'humble' cactus

The FAO said in its report that beyond its immense benefits, the "humble cactus" can help fight food insecurity, improve soil quality, promote barley plantations and may even help limit emissions of greenhouse gases. A "cactus stores water in its pads, thus providing a botanical well that can provide up to 180 tonnes of water per hectare - enough to sustain five adult cows, a substantial increase over typical rangeland productivity," FAO said.

"Climate change and the increasing risks of droughts are strong reasons to upgrade the humble cactus to the status of an essential crop in many areas," said Hans Dreyer, director of FAO's Plant Production and Protection Division, in the 2017 report. In Algeria, the farming of prickly pears has helped crop diversification as well, according to Khodir Madani, head of a university research laboratory, with farmers growing cereals and other crops among them. Fethi's father, Youcef Gueldasmi, agreed pointing to a few pistachio trees he planted alongside the cactus. — AFP



### Farming has helped crop diversification

and Qatar and plans are being made to sell it in the United States as well, according to farmer Djamel Chaib. Although Algeria - where most of the fertile land is free of pesticides - has no organic certification body, oil from Sidi Fredj obtained an "organic" label from European agencies and is sold as such abroad.

### 'Crucial food supply'

"While most cacti are inedible, the *Opuntia* species has much to offer, especially if treated like a crop rather than a weed run wild," the FAO said in its 2017 report. It highlighted the 2015 Madagascar drought in which the "cactus proved a crucial supply of food, forage and water for local people and their animals". Around 80 percent of Algeria, Africa's largest country, is arid or semi-arid, providing an ideal terrain for farming prickly pears.

In Sidi Fredj, the Gueldasmi family and others have

### Walls of ice

Ice shelves act as a retaining wall that prevent Antarctic ice from spilling more quickly into the ocean. Icebergs have historically broken off over centuries but their break-up has accelerated in recent years. The loss of ice from the "white continent" rose to an annual net figure of 252,000 million tons between 2009 and 2017 from the average of 40,000 million tons from 1979 to 1990, according to a study released in January. "Large platforms have collapsed in the past. What is not known if the collapses were gradual or instantaneous, like the ones we are seeing today," MacDonell said.

The Antarctic Peninsula, the northernmost part of the continent and site of the Chilean base, is the focus as one of the areas most affected by melting ice - scientists believe because it had more exposure to the ocean. "We have a long-term trend that is pointing to this process of warming and collapse of these platforms," said Chilean glaciologist Francisco Fernandez, part of MacDonell's team.

The Netherlands and several island territories are eager for the results of the study. Were the ice caps of Greenland and Antarctic to melt entirely, a 10-meter rise in sea level expected to result would inundate them, according to INACH data.

### Reading the ice

MacDonell and her team have embarked on a lengthy journey by plane, boat, helicopter and on skis to reach a camp on the Muller ice shelf, which itself lost a 1.6-km long iceberg at the end of last year. They will have to brave blizzards and the sub-zero temperatures of the Antarctic summer to conduct two weeks of sampling before winter descends in the coming month. The team will use radar waves to take measurements of the icebergs and extract ice cores, columns that allow researchers to effectively look back in time.

The cores will be transported to specialist labs in central Chile for analysis in chilled chambers that keep the temperature at -20 degrees Celsius. The scientists hope the models for future melts they will be able to build will serve as a basis for agreements among nations to tackle climate change.

"We cannot make these political decisions but we can say what the scenarios are: if the temperature increases, stays the same or drops, this or that will happen," glaciologist Fernandez said. "That's what we can contribute. The decisions themselves are in another sphere." — Reuters

## Antarctic ice shelves: Searching for clues on climate change

In a remote island outpost on the edge of the Antarctic, hundreds of miles from the southern tip of Chile, scientists at a research base are scouring the ice for clues about everything from climate change to cures for cancer. Chile's Escudero base on King George Island acts as a research hub for a frozen expanse that extends to the South Pole, with more than 300 international scientists taking turns to brave the bitter Antarctic temperatures.

The Chilean Antarctic Institute (INACH) has supported research into a biomolecule called "Antartina", derived from a plant native to the region, which has shown positive early results in diminishing colorectal, liver and gastric cancers in mice. Scientists there also look at lichens that could treat Alzheimer's disease, enzymes to remove lactose from milk and others to improve lettuce crops.

This month a multinational team embarked on a research trip to investigate what causes the break-up of ice shelves, a phenomenon associated with climate change. In 2017, an iceberg the size of Trinidad and Tobago broke off a shelf in Antarctica, sparking widespread alarm, fears of shipping accidents and a further rise in sea levels. "There are different theories related to changes in sea temperatures eating the platforms, and another that has to do with the behavior of water and its drainage," New Zealand glaciologist Shelley MacDonell, the team leader, as she prepared to travel to one of the icebergs affected.

MacDonell's team wants to be able to predict where and when ice shelves might rupture in future. The scientists hope their research will help the mapping of the shape of world's southernmost continent in the decades to come, and allow island and coastal nations to plan for rising sea levels. "There is a whole dynamic (of the Antarctic ecosystem) that needs to be studied quickly, like the upcoming scenarios of climate change," said INACH's director, Marcelo Leppe.

## Pushing packaging out of the US delivery process

New Yorker Tamara Lim loves packaging, but in a less-is-more kind of way. As a former manager at online retail giant Amazon.com Inc, known for sometimes shipping goods in outside disposable cartons, the 26-year-old says she regularly heard clients asking why they received "this tiny, little thing in a huge box". "Can you do something about that?" she recalls them asking.

Some five months ago, Lim did. She launched the Wally Shop, the first grocery delivery service in the United States promising only reusable packaging. Several hundred customers order their groceries from The Wally Shop online, she said. Currently, the service only covers the Brooklyn section of New York City, though it hopes to grow to Manhattan by the spring, said Wally Shop communications director Sabrina Katz.

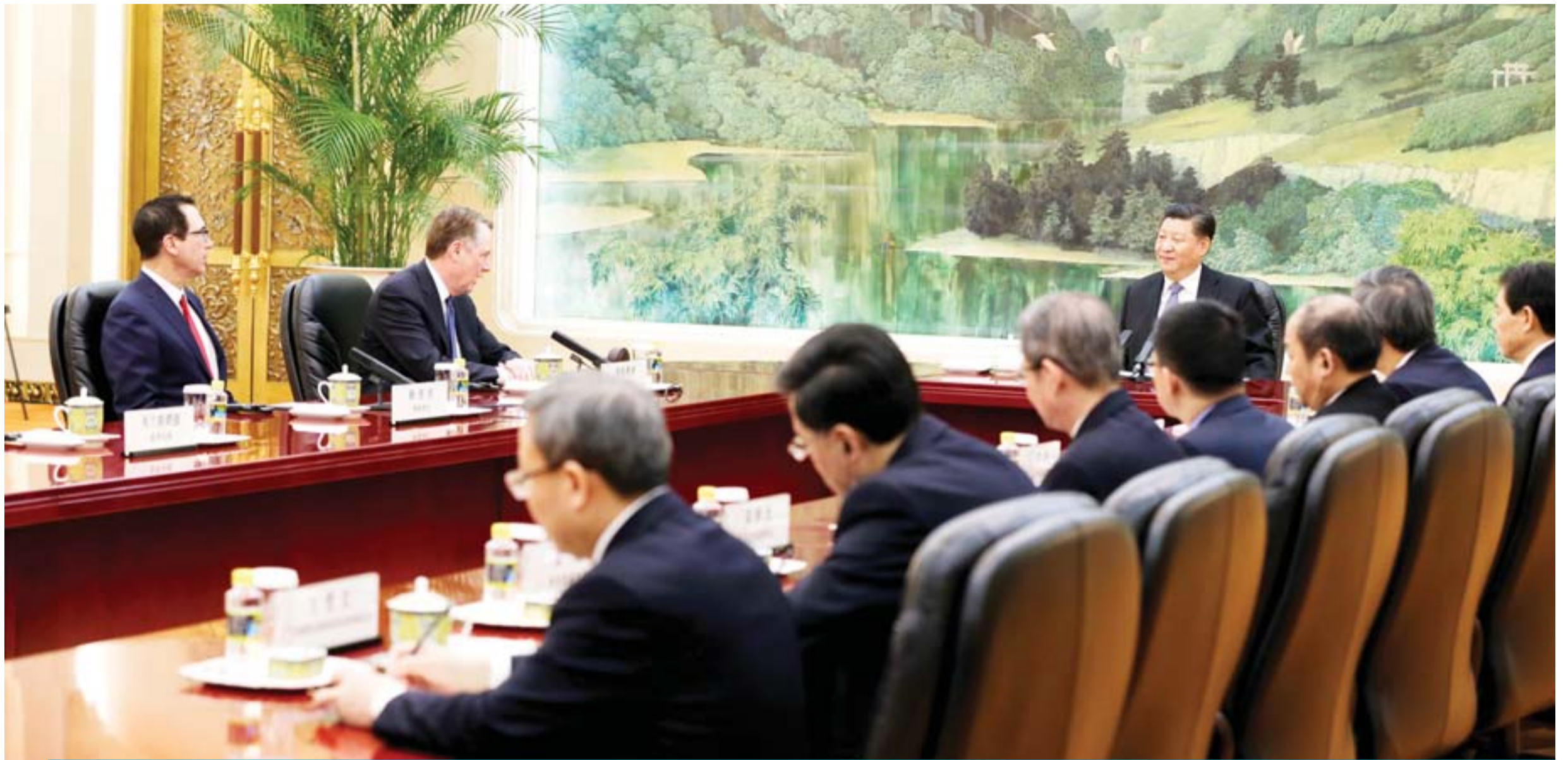
The service delivers local products ranging from vegetables to pasta to bread via bike courier in re-usable glass jars or cloth bags, Lim said. The bike couriers return to pick up the shipping material after the goods have been consumed, ensuring a zero-waste formula. "We're sort of like the milkman" of groceries, said Katz, referring to local milk delivery services that once were commonplace but are now nearly extinct.

That comparison was also made by Susan Selke, who heads the School of Packaging at Michigan State University. "One ... thing that's being talked about recently is a return to the milkman," she told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. The profession's disappearance speaks to the modern food industry trend of selling products far from where they are produced. The result is packaging that is largely inconvenient to reuse, Selke said.

Plastic production has surged over the last 50 years, leading to widespread use of inexpensive, disposable bottles, cups, takeaway containers and other products. Last March, US campaigners called on the nation's largest supermarket chain, Kroger Co, to introduce a plastics-free aisle, giving shoppers the option of buying products without pollution-making packaging. The petition came less than a month after Dutch organic chain Ekoplaza set up what it said was the world's first such supermarket aisle, a move hailed by environmentalists. — Reuters

## Business

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**12** Oil prices rebound in Jan; draft budget signals fiscal expansion**13** Global Finance awarded NBK 'Best Private Banking Services' in Kuwait**14** Ithmaar Holding reports net profit of \$10.06 million for 2018

US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer (2nd L) speaks with Chinese President Xi Jinping next to US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin (L) during a meeting at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on February 15, 2019. — AFP

# Warba Bank acquires AUB's share in KMEFIC

## Deal signed in the presence of Shaheen Al-Ghanem and Tareq Muhmood

**KUWAIT:** Warba Bank signed a sale and purchase agreement with Ahli United Bank B.S.C and its subsidiary (Ahli United Bank K.S.C.P), to acquire their respective shareholding in Kuwait and Middle East Financial Investment Company (KMEFIC), representing 75.72 percent of the Company's outstanding shares, subject to securing all regulatory approvals. The deal was signed in the presence of Shaheen Hamad Al-Ghanem, Warba Bank's Chief Executive Officer and Tareq Muhmood, acting Chief Executive Officer of Ahli United Bank (Kuwait).

Commenting on the deal, Al-Ghanem said: "Praise be to Allah, the achievement of the Investment Banking Group at Warba Bank through the acquisition of Ahli United Bank Group's share in KMEFIC stems from our strategic growth initiative which calls for the establishment of an asset and wealth management platform that positions the bank to provide an integrated financial product offering to its retail and institutional customers, whilst concurrently accelerat-

ing our strategic objectives by acquiring a leading firm in the asset management and financial services field".

He elaborated: "This deal debuts our investment activities in 2019 following the capital increase last year, which resulted in strengthening the Bank's capital base reaching KD 285 million by the end of 2018. The share capital increase of 50 percent was fully covered by the Bank's shareholders oversubscribing to all shares offered for a total amount of KD 90 million".

Al-Ghanem explained that the capital increase establishes a solid base to grow the Bank's investments in the upcoming period in vital economic sectors, as well as for financing mega national and regional projects that will secure steady and lucrative returns for both shareholders and customers.

Al-Ghanem added: "the capital increase is also a key factor in strengthening the Bank's operations and expansion in the corporate sector, which would solidify its leading position in the banking industry; this

will be achieved by providing financing facilities for local companies and projects across economic sectors including: oil and gas, education, construction and contracting; as well as participating in syndicated financing deals with other banks. In the next two years, the Bank will also seek to achieve greater risk allocation balance and diversification between its real estate portfolio and other sectors.

Presenting AUB's view, Tareq Muhmood said: "The decision to sell AUB's share in Kuwait and Middle East Financial Investment Company (KMEFIC) came in line with AUB's strategic objectives with a view to ensure our focus on our core businesses. He has further commented that the positive impact of this transaction on AUB will serve the interests of both our shareholders and customers.

KMEFIC is a Kuwaiti public shareholding company listed on the Kuwait Stock Exchange since July 1997. It operates within the diversified financial sector with emphasis on asset management.



KUWAIT: Shaheen Hamad Al-Ghanem (left) and Tareq Muhmood during the signing of the agreement.

## Trump: US could extend March 1 China deadline

**WASHINGTON:** President Donald Trump said Friday the trade negotiations with China were going "extremely well" and again offered the possibility of extending the March 1 deadline for a sharp rise in punitive tariffs.

Senior officials completed two days of high-stakes talks in Beijing on Friday as they try to avert the US threat to more than double tariffs on \$200 billion in Chinese goods, which would be an unwelcome shock to the world's second largest economy as it already has shown signs of slowing.

"It is going extremely well," Trump said of the talks. "The tariffs are hurting China very badly. They don't want them and frankly if we can make the deal it would be my honor to remove them," he told reporters

at the White House.

The president confirmed his comments earlier this week that he might be willing to hold off on increasing tariffs to 25 percent from the current 10 percent, if Washington and Beijing are close to finalizing an agreement to deal with US complaints about unfair trade and theft of American technology.

"There is a possibility that I will extend the date," he told reporters. "If I see we're close to a deal or the deal is going in the right direction, I would do that."

After progress in the talks in Beijing, a fourth round of negotiations is scheduled for next week in Washington. Trump said he likes tariffs that are bringing "many billions of dollars pouring into our Treasury," but continues to state that China is paying the duties, when in fact they are paid by US companies and ultimately by American consumers in the form of higher prices.

**"The vibe is good"**

Chinese President Xi Jinping hailed the "important step-by-step progress," and said he hoped the two delegations would continue to "work hard" for a "win-

win" agreement, according to China's state news agency Xinhua. Wall Street was cheered by the talks' optimistic tone, with the benchmark Dow Jones Industrial Average rising nearly 450 points or 1.7 percent, for its eighth consecutive week of gains.

American officials accuse Beijing of seeking global industrial predominance through an array of unfair trade practices, including the "theft" of American intellectual property and massive state intervention in commodities markets.

Since a December detente, China has resumed purchases of some US soybeans and dangled massive buying of American commodities to get US trade negotiators closer to a deal.

The talks have included discussion of purchases to reduce the "large and persistent bilateral trade deficit," the White House said in a statement.

But many China experts say Beijing's Communist Party rulers are unlikely to make significant changes to industrial policies without a long and tough fight.

Still, expectations for an accord have been growing as China faces pressure from slowing economic growth. "We all believe that China-US relations have broad

common interests in safeguarding world peace and stability and promoting global economic prosperity and development," Xi told the US negotiators.

US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer, who led the American delegation, told Xi on Friday that while there was more work to do, they had made progress.

Lighthizer and US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin met with China's top trade negotiator Liu He, Foreign Minister Wang Yi and central bank chief Yi Gang. Bloomberg News reported that the White House was considering a 60-day deadline extension, but Trump did not offer any particulars. Trump's economic advisor Larry Kudlow said of the talks that "the vibe is good," but there was no decision yet on extending the 90-day tariff truce.

The two sides last year exchanged tariffs on more than \$360 billion in two-way trade.

China's politically sensitive trade surplus with the US last year hit a record \$323 billion as tariffs kept Chinese buyers away from American agricultural and energy exports. Trump has said that any eventual trade deal would need to be sealed personally with Xi, though no date has been set for a meeting. — AFP

Business

NBK Economic Report

# Oil prices rebound in Jan; draft budget signals fiscal expansion

## Global markets rally as US-China trade tensions ease

**KUWAIT:** After December's volatility, global financial markets recovered in January helped by a dovish policy shift by the US Fed and amid hopes for easing tensions on the US-China trade war. The news benefitted both oil prices and the Kuwaiti stock market, the latter rising 2.5 percent for its best month since July. There was also positive news on the domestic macroeconomic front, with employment growth and real estate activity both coming strong at the end of last year. This seems to support the case that underlying growth may be gradually improving. There were important signals on fiscal policy, too. The draft budget for the coming year points to an expansionary fiscal policy which should bode well for the near-term growth outlook, albeit at the expense of a larger fiscal deficit and a possible drawdown in the government's financial reserves.

### Crude output falls

The price of Kuwait Export Crude bounced by 17 percent in January to finish the month at \$61/bbl, more than recouping the losses seen in December. The rally was helped by news that OPEC+ was making progress in implementing its 1.2 million b/d production cut aimed at clearing the global oil glut. While official figures are not yet available, survey data point to a drop in OPEC output of 1 million b/d in January. Saudi Arabia is said to have cut by 0.4 million b/d, deeper than targeted. In compliance with the OPEC+ decision, Kuwait is targeting a reduction of 85,000 b/d to 2.72 million b/d, which would leave crude output down around 1 percent on average this year, from a 1.4 percent rise in 2018.

The government has presented the draft budget for FY2019/20 to parliament for approval. It signals a looser fiscal stance, with spending rising 4.7 percent y/y in budget-on-budget terms to KD 22.5 billion. Within the total, capital spending is seen rising 0.8 percent y/y to KD 3.3 billion, while current spending rises 5.3 percent to KD 19.2 billion. The rise in current spending includes a 7 percent rise in wages & salaries, and an 11 percent rise in spending on goods & services. The latter mostly reflects larger subsidy payments for power stations due to a higher oil price assumption (\$55/bbl versus \$50/bbl before). With revenues projected to rise 8.6 percent to KD 16.4 billion, this leaves a deficit of KD6.1 billion before transfers to the Reserve Fund for Future Generations (KD 7.8 billion after). Note that the government's forecasts are typically conservative, and the eventual budget position is likely to end up stronger than projected.

While spending usually comes in below budget, the planned increase, if implemented in full, would provide significant support for economic growth over the coming year. However, in the absence of economic reform measures on both revenues and expenditures, and notwithstanding the government's large financial reserves, rising current spending reduces the government's ability to react to future oil shocks. Provisional public finance data for the first nine months of FY2018/19 (to December) suggest that the fiscal outcome may come in better than budgeted. A surplus of KD 3.6 billion was recorded year-to-date, as spending came in soft but also as rising oil prices boosted revenues. Year-to-date spending fell 3.3 percent y/y, with capital spending down 0.4 percent. The execution rate for capex fell to 45 percent of the full-year total, down from 52 percent at the same stage last year. Spending rates normally accelerate in the final three months of the year however, but we still expect a small deficit for the year as a whole.

### Employment growth

According to the official biannual data release, employment saw an encouraging pick-up through 2018. Total employment rose 4.2 percent y/y in December - driven by increases in both Kuwaiti employment (+3.7 percent y/y, a multi-year high) and expat employment (+4.3 percent y/y) - up from growth of 2.4 percent in December 2017. Kuwaiti employment continues to be predominantly driven by public sector hiring, which was up 4.0 percent y/y, while expat jobs growth mainly stemmed from hiring in the construction, real estate and hospitality sectors.

Meanwhile, population growth rose to 2.7 percent y/y from 2.0 percent in 2017. Expat population growth reached 2.8 percent, amid a decline in the number of expatriate dependents.

### Real estate sales

The real estate market ended 2018 on a very strong note. December saw sales of KD470 million, the second highest monthly sales of 2018 and far exceeding the monthly average of the year. The surge was driven by much higher activity in all three sub-sectors, but most notably the commercial sector which saw sales spike to a two-year high of KD 127 million on stronger volumes. This sector may have benefitted from a surge in the number of commercial business licenses (start-ups) issued during 2018, encouraged by the ongoing easing of requirements and procedures by MOCI. Apartment sales meanwhile surged to their second highest in four-and-a-half years.

The strong sales figures for December were accompanied by positive price changes in both the residential and invest-

ment sectors. Monthly price movements have been mostly positive since September, showing a consistent but mild uptrend, and year-on-year changes in all sectors were positive as of the year's end. In total, 2018 sales were KD3.4 billion, up 54 percent from 2017, and the highest since the surge in 2014.

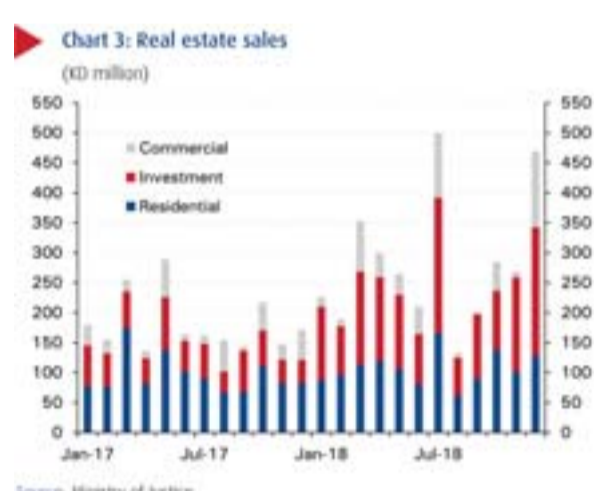
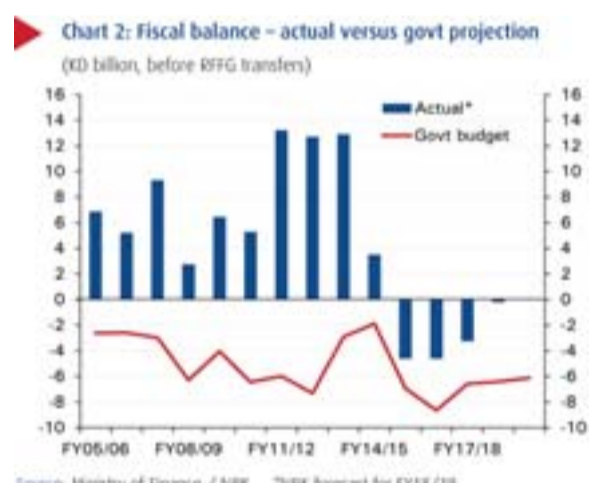
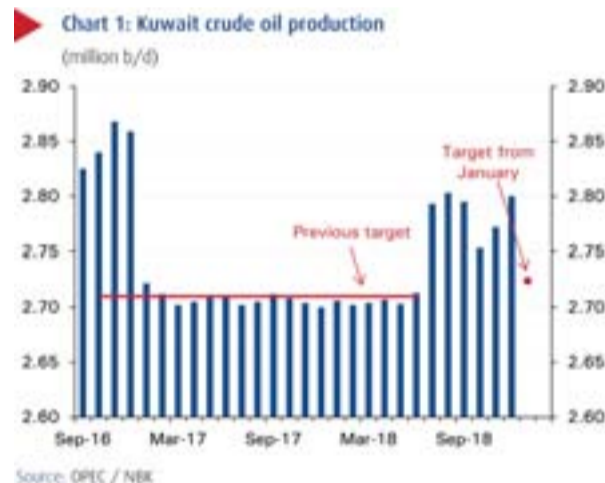
### Consumer spending rises

According to the NBK consumer index, consumer spending growth slowed slightly to 0.7 percent m/m in January from 0.9 percent m/m in December, as increases in both durables (0.8 percent) and services (1.2 percent) spending were offset by a decline in non-durable expenditures (-0.9 percent m/m) for the sixth straight month. On a year-on-year basis, consumer spending remained in decline at -1.7 percent, a slower pace of contraction than December's -1.9 percent. Nonetheless, the outlook for spending remains fairly encouraging given solid consumer confidence, low inflation and stronger employment growth.

Inflation picked up in December to 0.4 percent y/y from a 15-year low of 0.1 percent in November. The pickup came mostly from slower deflation in some of the major index sub-components: food deflation slowed to -0.1 percent from -0.4 percent in November, while housing deflation eased to -1.1 percent from -1.4 percent in November. But our measure of core inflation, which excludes food and housing, also rose, to 1.7 percent from 1.3 percent in November. Items including furnishings & household maintenance, transportation, communication, education, and clothing & footwear, together weighing in at 35 percent of the CPI basket, all saw modestly higher inflation during December. We expect a slight rise in inflation overall this year to an average of 2.0 percent from 0.6 percent in 2018.

### Credit growth reaches 13-month high

Credit growth rebounded to a 13-month high of 4.3 percent y/y in December from 3.0 percent in November, supported by



stronger lending to both businesses and households as well as the usual end-of-year jump in lending for the purchase of securities. Lending to businesses rose 5.3 percent y/y, up from 3.3 percent in November, driven mainly by a significant improvement in real estate borrowing. Household borrowing rose 6.0 percent from 5.8 percent the previous month. Growth in housing loans remains the key driver (6.8 percent y/y), while growth in consumer loans (although up m/m) remained in decline.

Meanwhile growth in deposits edged up to 3.2 percent from 2.9 percent before, due to a strong rise in government deposits after five consecutive months of decline. The M2 money supply measure increased by 4.0 percent y/y versus 4.4 percent in November.

### Equity market

Boursa Kuwait (BK) made a solid start to the year in January, with the All-Share index rising 2.5 percent m/m. In contrast the MSCI-GCC rose 7.5 percent, lifted by a surge in Saudi's TASI. BK turnover was strong at a daily average of 180 million shares, the highest since April 2017. Market capitalization breached the KD30 billion mark for the first time since 2014. The rally was led by financial and banking stocks, which rose by 5.6 percent and 4.1 percent m/m, respectively. Financial and banking stocks were boosted by good earnings and the removal of foreign ownership limits in the banking sector (subject to CBK approval). Net foreign inflows, although moderating from the record high of December, remained solid at KD48 million, roughly double the average monthly net inflow of 2018.

### Bayt.com weekly report

## How to choose the right company for you

On average people in the Middle East are changing jobs once in around two and a quarter years. In an era of higher workplace volatility, professionals often find themselves wondering where to work next and uncertain how to evaluate the different job offers. Experts from Bayt.com have prepared this article, which will explore some of the dimensions worth considering when deciding what company to work for.

### Size of Company

While there is no right or wrong size of company, there will be a size that agrees best with your career level, preferences, priorities, objectives and character.

### Larger companies:-

Larger companies typically have sprawling HR departments and sophisticated HR policies that protect the employee and focus on maximizing employee productivity, engagement and satisfaction. They tend to pay better due to larger and revenue bases and profitability and they typically pay on time and offer more benefits including sophisticated training and development programs. Larger companies are also typically more stable and sustainable financially which makes it easier to think ahead in your career and plan for the long run.

On the downside, larger companies can be more rigid, bureaucratic and inflexible as well as impersonal, with less room for visibility at the top and more layers of management approval required for every decision. Moreover, positions tend to be clearly defined and delineated with less room for ambiguity and more specialization required, so you are less likely to be involved in varied projects that challenge and extend your skill-set in lateral directions.

### Smaller companies:-

In a small company your efforts may be noticed more rapidly, there is usually more visibility by top management and you are more likely to participate in and be exposed to multiple tasks and projects and in the process learn valuable new skills. There tends to be more flexibility in smaller companies and it is typically easier to get buy-in for and implement change. Opportunities for growth and advancement are great if your performance is good and you are confident of your abilities, as it is easier to shine and be noticed in a small company.

However if your performance is not up to par or you are not a great cultural fit, that is quite likely to be quickly noticed too. Moreover, if it is a small family business, the senior executive positions may be taken by family members which limits room for advancement at the very top. Often, remuneration packages are less in smaller companies due to smaller revenue bases and profitability. Training opportunities may also be very limited in smaller companies and HR systems and policies are often very basic. Small companies that are not financially sound may miss employee salaries and bonus payments and their long-term viability and sustainability is often jeopardized.

especially if barriers to entry in the industry are low and the company's product and service line is not clearly differentiated.

### Market Share of Company

Ideally, you should choose a company with a robust and growing market share that is at the forefront of its industry and in no danger of being made obsolete by the competition. A company that is losing customers and shrinking its business may not have room for you in the long run. Look for companies that lead in their industry and are performing well, acquiring new clients and retaining the business and loyalties of old ones.

### Unique Value Proposition

Look for a company that has clearly and cleverly differentiated itself from its competition and can articulate its unique value propositions confidently and articulately. Lack of a clear value proposition means no ammunition in the face of incumbent competitors or copycat competitors who jump on the bandwagon where barriers to entry are low.

### Products and Services Offered by Company

Make sure you are comfortable with and will enjoy working with the array of products and services the company offers. It is not too wise to take a job in a company where you will not take pride or feel a sense of ownership in the products you represent. Also make sure the line of products/services has a bright future and is not in danger of being obsolete by new technologies or market trends and preferences.

### Company Culture and Values

Not every great company will necessarily be the right cultural fit for you. Ask about the culture and the team and try to ensure that the ethics, values, team dynamics, management style and atmosphere are agreeable to you.

### Reputation of Company

A company's reputation is key. Ask a lot of questions and do your research to make sure you get a firm grasp of it. Understand the track record of the company and its image in the market. Ideally you should select a company with high and very positive brand recognition and association and a stellar reputation.

### Management Team

Management styles vary. It is important that you are comfortable with the style at a particular company and feel you can meet your objectives, thrive, grow and even excel in this environment. Look for management who are highly respected and revered in the industry and from whom you will have a lot to learn.

### Employee Turnover

Some companies have substantially higher employee turnover than others and these should be approached very carefully if you are looking for long-term employment, job security and career stability. Understand why a certain position is open, what happened to the predecessors and what the management's attitude is towards employee development and retention before you risk becoming another victim in the turnover wheel.

## 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 Riyal	81.227
Qatari Riyal	83.661
Omani Riyal	791.163
Bahraini Dinar	808.820
UAE Dirham	82.931

#### ARAB COUNTRIES

Egyptian Pound - Cash	19.700
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	17.259

Yemen Riyal/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	0.386507	0.400407
Czech Korune	0.005388	0.014689
Danish Krone	0.042063	0.047063
Euro	0.337315	0.351015
Georgian Lari	0.132152	0.132152
Hungarian 0.001148	0.001338	
Norwegian Krone	0.031231	0.036431
Romanian Leu	0.065299	0.082149
Russian ruble	0.004588	0.004586
Slovakia	0.009111	0.019111
Swedish Krona	0.028818	0.033818
Swiss Franc	0.297041	0.0308041
<b>Australasia</b>		
Australian Dollar	0.209932	0.221932
New Zealand Dollar	0.203270	0.212770
<b>America</b>		
Canadian Dollar	0.224917	0.233917
US Dollars	0.300650	0.305850
US Dollars Mint	0.301050	0.305850
<b>Asia</b>		
Bangladesh Taka	0.003056	0.003857
Chinese Yuan	0.043496	0.046996

Hong Kong Dollar	0.037068	0.030818
Indian Rupee	0.003724	0.004496
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000017	0.000023
Japanese Yen	0.002677	0.002857
Korean Won	0.000260	0.000275
Malaysian Ringgit	0.070865	0.076865
Nepalese Rupee	0.002612	0.002952
Pakistan Rupee	0.001570	0.002340
Philippine Peso	0.005811	0.006111
Singapore Dollar	0.219251	0.229251
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001342	0.001922
Taiwan	0.010169	0.010349
Thai Baht	0.009387	0.009937
Vietnamese Dong	0.00013	0.00013
<b>Arab</b>		
Bahraini Dinar	0.793520	0.810020
Egyptian Pound	0.017133	0.019733
Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000086
Iraqi Dinar	0.000211	0.000271
Jordanian Dinar	0.425393	0.434303
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000157	0.000267
Moroccan Dirhams	0.022152	0.046152
Omani Riyal	0.784981	0.790861
Qatar Riyal	0.079390	0.084330
audi Riyal	0.080153	0.081453
Syrian Pound	0.001292	0.001512
Tunisian Dinar	0.095066	0.103066
Turkish Lira	0.051117	0.062617
UAE Dirhams	0.081520	0.083220
Yemeni Riyal	0.000990	0.001070

## Business

# Global Finance awarded NBK 'Best Private Banking Services' in Kuwait

## Khalife: Award reflects the constant confidence the customers vest in NBK

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) has been awarded the "Best Private Banking Services for 2019" in Kuwait for the fifth consecutive year. Founded in 1987 and headquartered in New York City, Global Finance is one of the leading financial magazines with a mission to publish specialized economic reports and analysis. Its monthly circulation exceeds 50,000 in over 188 countries around the world.

Global Finance's editorial review board relies on input from industry analysts, corporate executives and technology experts, in addition to entry submissions provided by nominated banks as well as a series of independent research based on measurable indicators and criteria for assessing banks' performance.

The nominated banks for this year were assessed for their private banking services extended over the period from July 2017 until June 2018. "Awarding NBK the title of "Best Private Banking Services" in Kuwait for the fifth consecutive year reflects the constant confidence the customers vest in NBK and their appreciation of the superb quality of its services and products, as well as its ability to rise above all challenges," said Malek Khalife, Deputy CEO - Head of Global Private Banking.

He added: "The excellent, strong and durable relationships NBK has always maintained with its high net-worth customers enabled the bank to assume a

unique and leading position in the field of wealth management and private banking on both local and regional markets. NBK also succeeded in maintaining the highest service quality standards while consistently endeavoring to provide the most innovative spectrum of investment and wealth management products and solutions to satisfy the increasingly changing needs of customers."

"Thanks to its largest local and international network strategically located in the major world financial centers, NBK has always maintained a dominant and advanced position to provide the best banking and investment solutions that covers a wide range of international markets, taking into consideration the specific profile of each and every customer," noted Khalife.

"I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks and gratitude to both the trust of NBK clients as well as the invaluable efforts of the Private Banking team at NBK that enabled the bank to win such a prestigious title for the fifth consecutive year," said Khalife.

Global Finance "Best Private Banking Services Award" recognizes private banks that provide excellent services and products to meet high net worth investors' individual needs through providing tailored products and services to help them maintain and grow their wealth.



## Factories to test economy's 'delicate equilibrium': BoE head

LONDON: The world economy is caught in a "delicate equilibrium" between stabilization and a further downturn, according to Bank of England Governor Mark Carney, and that balance could look even shakier over the next few days.

Early measures of factory activity from Asia, Europe and the United States - which typically give signals of momentum in the overall economy - will be scrutinized by investors, many of whom fear that the sudden weakness of late 2018 is intensifying. Trade tensions have weighed heavily on factories around the world, something that is likely to be high on the minds of negotiators from the United States and China when they resume their talks to avert an escalation of their tariff war. Things looked very different a year ago. The world economy seemed to have finally kicked into a higher gear, nearly a decade after the financial crisis of 2007-08, with all regions joining in the upswing.

But a combination of US President Donald Trump's aggressive stance on trade and worries about the impact of central banks raising interest rates - the US Federal Reserve increased borrowing costs four times in 2018 - has raised fears that the world could be heading back into recession.

Carney, in a speech on Feb 12, said he believed growth was likely to stabilize at its new slower pace, helped by central banks scaling back their plans for removing the massive levels of stimulus they have held in place for a decade. "But this is a judgment, not a guarantee. The world is in a delicate equilibrium," Carney warned.

The most recent signs from the world economy have not been promising. US retail sales for December were far weaker than expected and Germany avoided a recession by the narrowest of margins.

Britain - weighed down by the uncertainty about Brexit as well as the global weakness - is heading for its slowest year of growth since 2009, according to the BoE, while China's economic growth last year was the weakest in 28 years. In the next few days, a string of surveys of manufacturing will give a fresher sense of whether the slowdown of last year is dissipating or getting worse.

Purchasing manager indexes (PMIs) for the eurozone, the United States and Japan are due on Feb. 21 and there will be other measures of factory output in the form of US durable goods data and industrial orders in Japan and Italy. Chris Williamson, chief business economist at IHS Markit which publishes the PMIs, said that in late 2017 only one country's factory sector - Colombia's - was shrinking. Now 11 of the 30 countries he covers are contracting, including those in China and Germany, from where problems are rippling out into Asia and eastern Europe respectively.

"A lot of the anecdotal evidence that we get is blaming trade wars and tariff worries, and the gloom it is casting over the prospects for the year ahead," Williamson said.

Markit's global export index had been in decline for five months, highlighting how the slowdown was led by weaker trade, although a slight pick-up in optimism among manufacturers around the world in January offered a hint of hope. Much of that optimism hinges on the chance of the United States and China finding a way to de-escalate their trade war. Chinese President Xi Jinping said on Friday that talks with the United States would continue in the coming days and he hoped the two sides will be able to reach a deal.

But many investors want to see more definitive signs that the clouds hanging over the economy really are lifting. Toby Vaughan, chief investment officer with Brown Shipley, a British private bank and wealth management firm, said his team scaled back on equity holdings in October and have not yet raised their exposure back up.

"The reality is, none of those factors have really changed. There are some encouraging signs, but it's headlines and rhetoric with regard to US-China for example," he said.

While Washington and Beijing are sounding positive about their trade stand-off, officials in Europe are worried that the Trump administration is preparing to hit European automobile exports with tariffs, citing national security grounds. "Such a development would likely be taken negatively by markets as it would risk a direct response of tariffs from the EU and a step up in tensions," economists at ING said in a note to clients. "Businesses and consumers will face higher prices in such a scenario along with the likely disruption to supply chains - and all of this could see a repeat of the steep equity market falls which were seen in late 2018." — Reuters

## Ethiopia, Djibouti reach deal on natural gas pipeline

ADDIS ABABA: Landlocked Ethiopia yesterday said it had concluded a deal with Djibouti to build a 765-km (475-mile) pipeline to transport its natural gas to ports in the neighboring Horn of Africa nation.

Ethiopia's mining ministry said the pipeline will be built by Chinese firm Poly-GCL and transport gas from fields in the eastern Ethiopian Somali region to Djibouti to be exported from there.

There was no mention of cost, nor of when the project will come on stream. All but 65 km of the pipeline will be located in Ethiopia, whose government has previously announced plans to generate \$1 billion annually from extraction of natural gas and crude oil deposits. Ethiopia, Africa's second most populous country with around 100 million people, relies heavily on Djibouti's ports for exports and imports.

The country additionally hopes that a recent rapprochement with its former province of now independent Eritrea will afford it an additional access to the sea. —AFP

## Global stocks surge on hopeful signs from US-China trade talks

NEW YORK: European and US stock markets leapt on Friday as positive signs emerged from US-China trade talks aimed at averting an escalation of a tariff war between the world's top two economies.

US President Donald Trump said the negotiations in Beijing were going "extremely well" and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping announced the talks would continue in Washington next week.

Trump also said there was a "possibility" he would extend a March 1 deadline for a sharp rise in tariffs on \$200 billion Chinese goods to go into effect. The Dow Jones Industrial Average index finished the day up 1.7 percent to 25,883.25 to close its eighth straight week of gains.

"There is a lot of optimism that a deal will be done," said Bill Lynch on Hinsdale Associates. "I'll believe it when I see it but it seems that a deal is fairly close."

Investors also greeted Trump's decision to sign a

spending bill that averts another government shutdown. Meanwhile, Trump's decision to declare a national emergency to fund a wall along the Mexican border, which is expected to face legal challenges, is a "side issue," Lynch said.

European markets also "went gaga" for the news of further trade talks, as Frankfurt's DAX 30 closed up 1.9 percent and the Paris CAC 40 followed suit with a 1.8 rise on the day.

Madrid's IBEX 35 index rose 2.0 percent after Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez called an early general election, following the rejection of his draft budget in parliament over the Catalan secession crisis. London's index also rose after stronger than expected British retail sales were reported for January, as consumers seemed to shrug off Brexit blues.

Oil prices continued to push higher on evidence members of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries are implementing production cuts. Brent oil futures finished at \$66.25 a barrel, up 2.6 percent for the day and 6.7 percent for the week.

After a brutal end of 2018, US stocks have been on a tear since late December on expectations of a US-China trade deal and relief at the Federal Reserve's shift to a more dovish posture.

These views have allowed the market to overlook signs of weakness, such as Federal Reserve data on Friday that showed a big drop in US manufacturing for January. —Reuters



NEW YORK: A trader works ahead of the closing bell on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) on Friday in New York City. — AFP

## Samsung to launch US retail stores in smartphone push

SAN FRANCISCO: Samsung announced Friday it will open three US retail stores to promote its Galaxy line of smartphones as the South Korean giant sets to launch an updated flagship handset.

The move ramps up Samsung's efforts to compete on the home turf of Apple, which has hundreds of retail outlets in the US and around the world.

Samsung said in a statement it made the move after feedback from customers.

"They told us that they love having the ability to walk into a store and experience how the latest technology from Samsung works together to create a unique, immersive experience," the company said in a statement. "Galaxy fans, in particular, mentioned that they were looking for a space to call their own, a place where they can get a feel for Samsung products first-hand."

The new stores will be at the Americana at Brand mall in Los Angeles; Roosevelt Field in Garden City, New York; and The Galleria in Houston, Texas.

Samsung is holding a product launch Wednesday in San Francisco amid speculation it may launch a folding smartphone, which would make it the first of the major handset makers in the segment.

Samsung has previously opened pop-up stores in the US and has a center showcasing its technology in New York City. "Our new Samsung Experience Stores are spaces to experience and see Samsung technology brought to life, to empower people to do what they never thought was possible before," said YH Eom, president of Samsung Electronics America.

"We want to build a 'playground' for Samsung fans—a place to learn about and try out all of the amazing new products we have to offer."

Samsung remained the number one global handset maker with a 20.8 percent share in 2018 despite an eight percent sales slump for the year, according to research firm IDC—which said last year showed the worst overall decline in sales for the smartphone sector. —AFP

## Portugal's economy: An express train at risk of derailing

LISBON: The passengers on a night train chugging along Portugal's northern coast last month got the fright of their lives when the 40-year-old locomotive's diesel engine literally fell off. Luckily, the train didn't derail and Portugal Railways ordered taxis to take the 15 passengers home. But the incident was a shocking reminder of Portugal's chronic underinvestment in public services and the hidden frailty of its economic rebound.

The Portuguese economy, bailed out by the European Union eight years ago, is booming.

It is enjoying its highest economic growth in nearly two decades, fuelled by record tourism, an upswing in the housing market, a growing tech sector and strong exports. Private investment has returned to 2009 levels, helped by foreign investors including Chinese companies.

But for every glitzy new hotel and fancy restaurant in Lisbon there is a creaking bit of infrastructure or aging locomotive, including the one that fell apart in late February. It had been rented from neighboring Spain as a stopgap measure. Some economists fear a lack of public investment is starting to undermine the economy, or worse, could be storing up trouble should another recession come.

And with total debt close to 120 percent of gross domestic product, one of Europe's highest, the ruling Socialists have limited room to finance a big investment drive without putting almost a decade of budget repair at risk. The budget deficit, once 11 percent of GDP during Portugal's 2010-14 debt crisis, has been almost eliminated

under the Socialists. But that has come largely at the expense of public investment, according to Ricardo Arroja, visiting economics professor at the University of Minho.

Arroja said the government was not taking a long-term view. "Since the start of the legislature, this has been navigation by sight," he added. In 2018 public investment reached 4.14 billion euros (\$4.7 billion), but in a sign of how this item of spending has been used to balance the books in recent years, it was cut from an initial budgeted amount of 4.53 billion euros.

Public investment represented 2.1 percent of GDP in 2018, up from 1.5 percent in 2016 but still less than half of the 5.4 percent registered in 1960, according to Pedro Brinca, professor of economics at Nova School of Business & Economics. However the government says it has had little choice but to prioritise cutting the deficit, to gain credibility among investors and help the economy recover.

### 'Burden for future'

A recent report by the International Monetary Fund found Portugal actually had net public investment of about negative 1.2 percent of GDP in 2016, putting it at the bottom of a list of 26 rich countries, including Greece, Italy and Spain. That means it is not spending enough to offset the depreciation of state assets.

"We are consuming capital, that is we don't have sufficient investment to replace capital (stock)," Luis Moraes Sarmento, deputy director of the statistics department at the central bank, said at a recent conference. "These two things mean that we are leaving behind a burden to future generations that is extremely high. We are confusing the good times with having no problems on the horizon." Brinca said Portugal's declining capital stock "could have especially serious effects for economic growth". — Reuters

## Business

# Ithmaar Holding reports net profit of \$10.06m for 2018

## IB Capital acquires an additional stake in Solidarity Group Holding

**KUWAIT:** Ithmaar Holding B.S.C., a Bahrain-based financial institution, and its wholly-owned subsidiary, Ithmaar Bank B.S.C. (closed), a Bahrain-based Islamic retail bank, both reported profits as they each announced their financial results for 2018.

The announcement by the Ithmaar Holding Chairman Prince Amr Al-Faisal, who is also the Ithmaar Bank Chairman, follows the review and approval of both Board of Directors of the consolidated financial results for the year ended 31 December 2018.

Ithmaar Holding reported a net profit of \$10.06 million for the year ended 31 December 2018, as compared to a net loss of \$72.40 million for 2017. This included a net loss attributable to equity holders for the year ended 31 December 2018 of \$23.98 million, as compared to the \$84.71 million net loss reported for the same period in 2017. EPS for the year has improved to negative US Cents 0.82 compared from negative US Cents 2.91 for the same period in 2017.

The results included a net loss of \$1.28 million for the three-month period ended 31 December 2018, as compared to a net loss of \$56.2 million for 2017. Net loss attributable to equity holders for the three-month period ended 31 December 2018 was \$26.71 million, a decrease of 53.7 percent as compared to a net loss of \$57.67 million reported for the same period in 2017. EPS for the three-month period ended 31 December 2018 decreased by US Cents 0.92 compared to negative US Cents 1.98 for the same period in 2017.

Also in December 2018, Ithmaar Holding's other wholly-owned subsidiary, IB Capital, acquired, an additional stake in Solidarity Group Holding, one of the largest Takaful Group companies in Bahrain. As a result, Solidarity Group Holding became a subsidiary of IB Capital. During December 2018, Dilmunia Development Fund I L.P., a fund which is managed by Ithmaar's wholly-owned subsidiary, Ithmaar Bank, became subsidiary of Ithmaar Bank after the Bank's shareholding in the company increased to more than 50 percent.

"On behalf of the Ithmaar Holding Board of Directors, I am pleased to announce that, despite increasingly challenging market conditions, the Group is continuing its planned transformation in 2018 and

concluded the year with remarkable achievements," said HRH Prince Amr. "These included improved financial performance, as well as the realization of key growth initiatives," he said.

"The 2018 results show that net income before provision for impairment and overseas taxation for the year ended 31 December 2018 increased to \$43.42 million, a 96.8 percent increase from the \$22.10 million reported for the same period last year," said Prince Amr. This was mainly due to higher share of profit after tax from associates resulting from reclassification from held-for-sale to associate during the period," he said.

"As a result, our operating income for the year ended 31 December 2018 increased to \$259.82 million, a 12.7 percent increase from the \$230.56 million reported for 2017. Operating income for the three-month period ended 31 December 2018 was \$48.34 million, a 2.3 percent decrease from the \$49.48 million reported for the same period in 2017," said Prince Amr.

"Ithmaar's balance sheet decreased marginally by 1.4 percent with total assets at \$8.49 billion as at 31 December 2018, compared to \$8.61 billion as at 31 December 2017," said Prince Amr. Total owners' equity stood at \$116.36 million as at 31 December 2018, a 67.3 percent decrease compared to \$355.33 million as at 31 December 2017, mainly due to the Accounting standard, FAS 30 impact of previous year recognized in equity and the foreign exchange impact of devaluation of Pak rupee during the year recognized in equity," he said.

"On behalf of both Boards of Directors, I take this opportunity to express our sincere thanks and appreciation to our shareholders for their confidence, and to the relevant regulators and other authorities for their guidance and support," said Prince Amr. "In particular, we are grateful to the Central Bank of Bahrain, to the Bahrain Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Tourism, the Bahrain Bourse, Boursa Kuwait and the Dubai Financial Market for their continuous guidance and support," he said.

"I am pleased to inform you that as part of its Digital Strategy, Ithmaar Bank completed a major upgrade during 2018 to its IT infrastructure and systems. The upgrade, which was implemented to help support busi-

ness growth, improve operational efficiency, improve internal controls and enhance customer experience, included a major project of upgrading the Bank's core banking system and implementation of new eBanking system. The new system provides a strong foundation to support growth, allowing for the flexibility of quickly launching new products and services with focus on customer centricity," said Prince Amr.

Ithmaar Holding Chief Executive Officer, Ahmed Abdul Rahim, who is also the Ithmaar Bank Chief Executive Officer, said that performance of both institutions against the challenging market conditions of 2018 further reconfirm that sustained efforts to turn the Group around are indeed paying off.

"Ithmaar Bank's financial results show a net profit of BD14.14 million for the year ended 31 December 2018, an increase of 126.7 percent compared to the net profit of BD6.24 million reported in 2017," said Abdul Rahim. "Net profit attributable to equity holders for the year ended 31 December 2018 was BD1.41 million, a decrease of 10.9 percent compared to the net profit of BD1.58 million reported in 2017," he said.

"The results included a net profit of BD9.38 million of the three-month period ended 31 December 2018, compared to a net loss of BD0.44 million reported in 2017," said Abdul Rahim. "Net loss attributable to equity holders for the three-month period ended remains unchanged at \$0.15 million compared to same period previous year," he said.

"Net income before provision for impairment and overseas taxation for the year ended 31 December 2018 was BD13.70 million, a 28 percent decrease compared to the BD19.03 million reported for 2017," said Abdul Rahim. "Total income remained stable in 2018, with the Bank reporting BD151.7 million for the year ended 31 December 2018," he said.

"Ithmaar Bank's balance sheet decreased marginally by 3.5 percent with total assets at BD3.13 billion as at 31 December 2018, compared to BD3.24 billion as at 31 December 2017," said Abdul Rahim. "Meanwhile, due to market conditions, the equity of unrestricted investment account holders stood at BD1 billion as at 31 December 2018, a decrease of 6.6 percent as compared to BD1.06



Prince Amr Al-Faisal



Ahmed Abdul Rahim

billion as at 31 December 2017. Total owners' equity stood at BD85.39 million as at 31 December 2018, a 44.8 percent decrease compared to BD154.60 million as at 31 December 2017, mainly due to the Accounting standard, FAS 30 impact of previous year recognized in equity and the foreign exchange impact of devaluation of Pak rupee during the year recognized in equity," he said.

"I am also delighted to inform you that Ithmaar Bank's retail banking subsidiary in Pakistan, Faysal Bank Limited, has maintained growth momentum and the Bank's footprint now extends to 455 branches in more than 100 cities across Pakistan, after having added 50 branches during 2018. The Bank aims to have expanded its retail banking network by 100 during 2019 to reach 555 branches by the end of 2019," he said.

Early in 2018, the Bank launched the Ithmaar eQ app, which is a smartphone electronic queuing app designed to significantly reduce and potentially even eliminate customer waiting time altogether. The Ithmaar eQ app allows customers to directly book appointments or issue virtual eTickets for the nearest or most convenient branch, timings and directions, and notifies customers when their turn approaches. The app also provides significant MIS on customer behaviour. Ithmaar Bank operates one of the largest retail banking networks in Bahrain with 16 branches and 45 ATMs in strategic locations around the Kingdom.

## Burgan Bank announces new winner of Al-Thuraya draw

**KUWAIT:** Burgan Bank, announced yesterday Ayman Abd Alrasoul Khalaf Mirza as the lucky winner of the Al-Thuraya Salary Account monthly draw.

The draw rewards new and existing customers who transfer their salary to Burgan Bank by offering them a chance to win a Nissan Patrol SUV every month. With every KD 10 available in the account, the customer receives one chance to enter the draw.

The Al-Thuraya account holders have the option to hold money in Kuwaiti dinar and other major currencies and can access account-related services such as standing orders, loans and credit cards, and benefit from the discounts and offers throughout the year.

## Total to move jobs away from London, but says Brexit not to blame

**PARIS:** French energy giant Total said Friday it will move some of its trading and marketing activities from London to Paris and Geneva, but insisted that Brexit had not influenced the decision. The company said the move, which British media reported will affect 200 jobs, was a result of Total acquiring the LNG (liquid natural gas) portfolio of fellow French energy firm Engie.

"Total plans to consolidate its LNG trading and marketing activities and bring together similar business teams currently split across multiple locations in Europe (London, Paris and Geneva)," the company said in a statement.

"Total's European trading operations will be consolidated in Geneva, the leading commodity trading hub of the continent." The firm's London-based LNG marketing activities meanwhile will be moved to Paris to join the existing team in the French capital.

"Brexit is not at all a factor influencing this project," the firm said.

"This project is the consequence of the necessity to regroup teams split between the locations after the acquisition of Engie assets and teams." Dozens of companies have been reported to have moved or said they would move their operations from Britain to continental Europe ahead of March 29, when Britain is due to leave the European Union.

But with just six weeks to go, British Prime Minister Theresa May is struggling to persuade parliament to back her divorce deal, prompting fears the country could crash out without a deal. —AFP

## Turkish Airlines introduces its new The LEGO Movie 2

**KUWAIT:** Turkish Airlines, flying passengers to more global destinations than any other airline, preparing for a brand new journey set to be started with its move to its new state-of-the-art home base, Istanbul Airport, continues its partnership with The LEGO Movie franchise with the recent digital debut, of a new fun and original safety video. It stars characters from the latest big-screen animated LEGO adventure, The LEGO Movie 2, from Warner Bros. Pictures, in theaters worldwide beginning February 8, 2019.

Back in August 2018, Turkish Airlines debuted the first-ever LEGO passenger safety video, which was also inspired by the LEGO Movie franchise. The video topped the viral charts with 20 million views in just one month and then brought home the gold at the 2018 Clio Entertainment Awards.

In tandem with the release of the eagerly anticipated sequel to the blockbuster hit The LEGO Movie, the Star Alliance airline has now debuted a sequel of their own - a second inflight safety video featuring LEGO characters, which will be shown on all flights starting March 1, 2019. The second video features Emmet, Lucy and others from the cast of The LEGO Movie 2 in starring roles, with

LEGO Batman himself at the helm, as the director of the 4 minute 27 second film.

Alongside the animated leads, the safety video also features some of Turkish Airlines' most exciting and recognizable destinations, bringing some of these 306 destinations - which Turkey's national flag carrier serves - to life, brick by brick. The video journeys across five continents, visiting Bali, Moscow, San Francisco, Rome, Cape Town, Hong Kong and Tokyo, ending finally at Turkish Airlines' iconic new home at Istanbul Airport.

The colorful ensemble from The LEGO Movie franchise can also be seen off screen and in the skies, living up to a specially wrapped narrow body Airbus A321-231 livery, currently serving the European routes of the flag carrier airline.

"With one of the youngest fleets in the world, Turkish Airlines continues to build on its peerless brand experience. We are excited to present our passengers with this new innovative safety video as we prepare to make our move to Istanbul Airport, designed from the ground-up to be an unprecedented experience by itself," said M. Ilker Ayçi, Turkish Airlines' Chairman of the Board and the Executive Committee.

Production on The LEGO Movie 2 safety video lasted for a total of 979 hours over the course of 4 months and among five different countries including Turkey, the USA, the UK, Canada and Australia. There were over 400 people involved in the creative process - 252 of whom were extras, in addition to the six-strong featured cast in the live action end sequence. The live action crew consisted of over 80 people, while the animation team included almost 70.



The new safety video also features 24,000 LEGO minifigures in the crowd for the Super Hero Cape Town match and a whopping 20,330,795 LEGO bricks used to build all the locations in the new video - ten times the amount of bricks

used in the first LEGO Movie-themed safety video. 11 different versions of the new safety video exist, both in English and Turkish, to cover safety particulars of the 28 different airplane models in the Turkish Airlines fleet.

## Gulf Bank welcomes winner of yearly salary account draw Fawziya Ali

**KUWAIT:** Gulf Bank was pleased to welcome Fawziya Mansour Amir Ali, the lucky winner of its Kuwait's largest salary cash prize of KD 250,000. Fawziya received her grand cash prize upon visiting the bank's Head Office on 13th February 2019, where she was welcomed by members of the Bank's senior management.

Fawziya was announced as the 2018 winner of the Salary Account during an exciting live event at Al Murouj, on 7th February, which was broadcast live on 88.8 FM Kuwait Pulse radio. The winner was delighted by the news and expressed her gratitude to Gulf Bank, commenting during her visit, "Gulf Bank's Salary Account provides exciting cash prizes and benefits, and I am delighted to be a winner of Kuwait's largest salary prize. I never expected to win the incredible grand prize and would like to thank Gulf Bank for offering people a chance to change their lives for the better."

Commenting on Fawziya's visit, Ahmad Al-Amir, Assistant General Manager for External Communications, Gulf Bank, said: "We are delighted to congratulate this year's Salary Account winner, and welcome her to the Bank. We look forward to continuing our legacy, of making dreams come true and providing



our customers with exciting offers and benefits across our products."

The salary account gives new customers the opportunity to receive either a KD100 cash gift upon transferring their salaries to Gulf Bank or an interest-free loan of up to KD 10,000. Customers must have a minimum salary of KD500 and will be eligible for the offer following their first salary transfer to Gulf Bank. Customers can also enjoy additional benefits like a free of charge

Visa or MasterCard credit card for a year, as well as a chance to apply for a loan of up to KD70,000, or a consumer loan of up to KD 25,000.

With the new 2019 Kuwaiti salary offer new customers, who transfer their salaries to Gulf Bank are automatically enrolled in the monthly draws, giving them the chance of winning cash prizes of up to 12 times their salary, and a yearly draw of Kuwait's largest salary prize of up to 100 times their salary.

What's On



Salmiya Co-op Society held a celebration on the occasion of Kuwait National and Liberation Days under the patronage of Sheikha Sheikha Al-Abdullah Al-Khalifa Al-Sabah, the honorary President of Kuwait Disabled Sports Club. Children and adults were presented with gifts. Salmiya Co-op officials and parents of the disabled children and adults attended the event.

Saadiyat Island:  
Your gateway to  
culture, nature,  
relaxation

Amere 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 gastronomical 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 which features Arabian breakfast favorites with touches of western influence. On Lamet Al Saila 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. 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.

ACK students  
intern at  
Deer & Dear

Deer & Dear hosted a group of four Australian College of Kuwait (ACK) students for an internship opportunity. Deer & Dear is a Kuwaiti clothing line with stores all around the country that was founded in 2009. Deer & Dear has been working with ACK and supporting its students since 2017. These students were given practical hands-on experience with the day-to-day activities associated with maintain-

ing a retail store. They were trained in administrative aspects such as merchandizing, packaging and pricing.

Students also had the opportunity to work with helping customers to develop their necessary interpersonal skills for retail. The experience helped ACK's marketing students as they were intentionally put in retail marketing stores. Participating students described the experience as a great opportunity to understand the inner-workings of retail marketing. ACK strives to increase opportunities for students to take part in vocational training in order to develop their professional skills. It offers many opportunities for students in different majors to get hands-on practice in their field before they graduate.



SHR announces  
closure of Safir  
International  
Hotel Kuwait

Safir Hotels & Resorts (SHR) announced the closure of Safir International Hotel Kuwait, to occur at the end of March 2019 with the last guest checking out on March 31, 2019. Located in Bneid Al Gar, the hotel has occupied a prime location with sweeping views of the Kuwait Towers and Arabian Gulf, since 1968 when it first opened as a Hilton hotel.

In 1984, an extension was added to the original hotel building. In 1989, hotel management was taken over by Kuwait Hotels Company and the hotel was renamed Kuwait International Hotel. Two years after the Liberation of Kuwait, the hotel was then renamed "Safir International Kuwait". In 2003, the main building unfortunately had to be demolished, as it had become unsafe to operate as a hotel. Safir continued operating the extension on behalf of the property owner, Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA) as a stand-alone hotel, but now the time has come to terminate operations.

For many years, Safir International

Kuwait was at the heart of Kuwaiti Society, hosting many important social and business events. Its legacy of excellence as Kuwait's second true five-star hotel was legendary. Besides the many international guests that stayed at the hotel throughout the years, the property was also home to the first Chanel and Louis Vuitton boutiques in the Middle East, and it featured the first escalator in Kuwait as well as the country's first Japanese restaurant (Kei). Nabil Shashtari, the hotel's current General Manager, fondly recalls: "There was nothing else like it. Today we have malls like the Avenues, which are full of high-end brands and international cuisine, so it is easy to take these things for granted. But back then, these things were unheard of in the country. Safir International Kuwait changed all of that. It set a precedent for exceptionalism."

"It is always unfortunate to lose a hotel property, but especially one with as much history as Safir International Kuwait," says Fawzi K Al-Musallam, Chief Executive Officer of Safir Hotels & Resorts. "We are very much invested in our relationship with KIA and we are working closely together with their team, to manage the closure of the property in the coming two months". The Hotel's management team is supported by executives from Safir's Kuwait-based headquarters, to ensure that all aspects of the final hand-over are considered in a comprehensive and professional manner.

Health & Technology

# NASA heading back to Moon soon, and this time to stay

WASHINGTON: NASA is accelerating plans to return Americans to the Moon, and this time, the US space agency says it will be there to stay. Jim Bridenstine, NASA's administrator, told reporters Thursday that the agency plans to speed up plans backed by President Donald Trump to return to the moon, using private companies. "It's important that we get back to the moon as fast as possible," said Bridenstine in a meeting at NASA's Washington headquarters, adding he hoped to have astronauts back there by 2028.

"This time, when we go to the Moon, we're actually going to stay. We're not going to leave flags and footprints and then come home to not go back for another 50 years" he said. "We're doing it entirely different than every other country in the world. What we're doing is, we're making it sustainable so you can go back and forth regularly with humans." The last person to walk on the Moon was Eugene Cernan in December 1972, during the Apollo 17 mission.

Before humans set foot on the lunar surface again, NASA aims to land an unmanned vehicle on the Moon by 2024, and is already inviting bids from the burgeoning private sector to build the probe. The deadline for bids is March 25, with a first selection due in May, a tight timeline for an agency whose past projects have run years behind schedule and billions over budget. "For us, if we had any wish, I would like to fly this calendar year. We want to go fast," said Thomas Zurbuchen, the associate administrator of NASA's Science Mission Directorate.

However, he admitted that "we may not be able to." NASA's accelerated plans flesh out the Space Policy Directive that Trump signed in December 2017, envisaging a return to the Moon before a manned mission to Mars, possibly in the 2030s. NASA plans to build a small space station, dubbed Gateway, in the Moon's orbit by 2026. It will serve as a way-station for trips to and from the lunar surface, but will not be permanently crewed like the International Space Station (ISS), currently in Earth's orbit.

As with the ISS, NASA would seek the participation of other countries, who could provide some of the necessary needed, such as modules for the Moon station or vehicles to allow landings on the surface. "We want numerous providers competing on cost and innovation," Bridenstine said. Before this manned program, NASA is also pushing to send scientific instruments and other technological tools to the Moon in 2020 or even before the end of this year.



WASHINGTON: In this file photo NASA Administrator Jim Bridenstine speaks during an event at NASA headquarters in Washington, DC. — AFP

The agency is also calling for quick-turnaround bids to manufacture and launch such instruments, offering financial incentives to make it happen fast. "We care about speed," said Thomas Zurbuchen, associate administrator of NASA's Science Mission Directorate. "We do not expect that every one of those launches or every one of those landings will be successful. We are taking risks." —AFP

## New species of Angolan 'horned' spider unearthed

JOHANNESBURG: South African researchers have revealed the discovery of a new species of spider with an unusual horn-like protrusion on its back from the forests of central Angola, considered the first of its kind. Named 'Ceratomyrus attonitifer', the arachnid belongs to the group known as the horned baboon spiders that possess a type of protuberance, but nothing like the softer and longer protrusion of this species.

"So this spider is absolutely unique in the world. It has this huge horn sticking out the middle of its head and no other spider in the world has anything like that," South African national biodiversity institute arachnologist Dr Ian Engelbrecht said. "There are other species that have a horn on the carapace but that's a muscular structure... This structure looks like it's full of fatty tissue."

Researchers first came across the odd looking spider in 2015 when collecting specimens as part of surveys done in the Okavango catchment, straddling Angola, Namibia and Botswana. Several female specimens from the Miombo forests of central Angola were collected out of burrows for the Okavango Wilderness Project. Surprisingly locals were able to furnish experts with information on the biology and behaviour of the spider they had long dubbed as "chandachuly".

South African researchers have only sketched the description of their new specimen but remain unsure of the horn function. "It doesn't make sense that the spider has such a big horn," Engelbrecht said adding that it might "provide some functionality similar to a camel hump or something like that but at this point we really have no idea." —AFP

CLINIC

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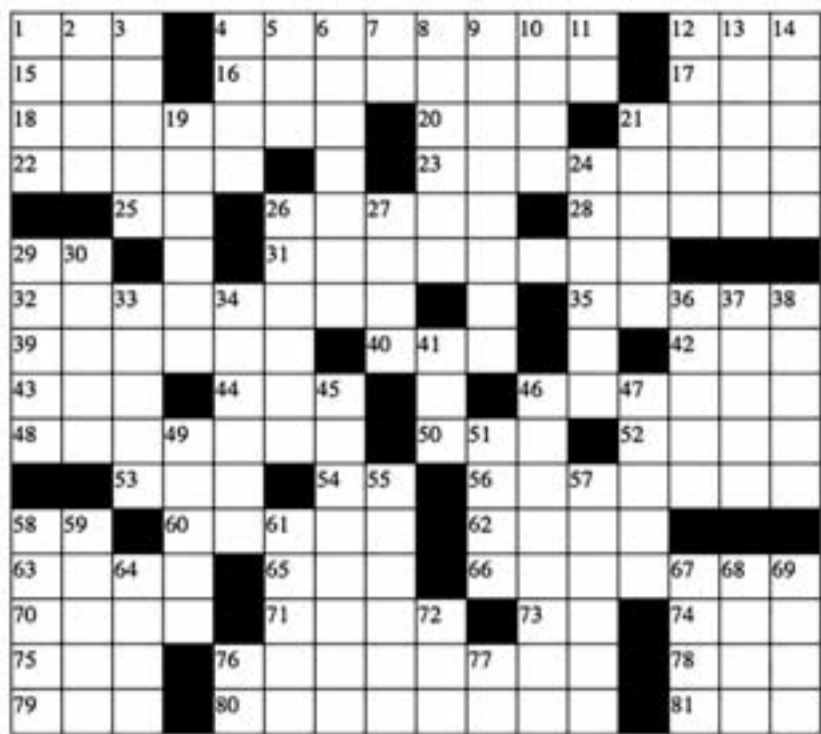
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Stars

CROSSWORD 2138



ACROSS

- The syllable naming the sixth (submedian) note of a major or minor scale in solmization.
- An associate who shares an apartment with you.
- A doctor's degree in dental surgery.
- Devoid of warmth and cordiality.
- (chemistry) Of or containing mercury.
- A dissolute man in fashionable society.
- Scottish ballet dancer and actress (born in 1926).
- The 26th letter of the Roman alphabet.
- 100 penni equal 1 markka.
- A man skilled in equitation.
- A highly unstable radioactive element (the heaviest of the halogen series).
- A sharp abrupt noise as if two objects hit together.
- A long-playing phonograph record.
- An ache localized in the back.
- Breed of large wiry-coated terrier bred in Yorkshire.
- Type genus of the family Lepididae.
- Covered with or resembling slime.
- Fish eggs or egg-filled ovary.
- An antiviral drug used in the treatment of AIDS.
- Experiencing or showing sorrow or unhappiness.
- A coenzyme derived from the B vitamin nicotinic acid.
- Of or relating to or characteristic of Afghanistan or its people.
- An abnormally large amount of this fetoprotein in the fetus can signal an abnormality of the neural tube (as spina bifida or anencephaly).
- The median ridge on the breastbone of birds that fly.
- The fatty flesh of eel.
- A metallic element having four allotropic forms.
- French naturalist who proposed that evolution resulted from the inheritance of acquired characteristics (1744-1829).
- A state in New England.
- (Greek mythology) A sorceress who detained Odysseus on her island and turned his men into swine.
- An Arabic speaking person who lives in Arabia or North Africa.
- Not only so, but.
- An electrical charged particle.
- (Arthurian legend) One of the knights of the Round Table.
- Assist or encourage, usually in some wrongdoing.
- Being of delicate or slender build.
- An intensely radioactive metallic element that occurs in minute amounts in uranium ores.
- The cry made by sheep.
- A zodiacal constellation in northern hemisphere between Cancer and Virgo.
- The shape of a raised edge of a more or less circular object.
- Belonging to or on behalf of a specified person (especially yourself).
- A river in northeastern Brazil that flows generally northward to the Atlantic Ocean.
- A chronic skin disease occurring primarily in women between the ages of 20 and 40.

DOWN

- A speech defect that involves pronouncing s like voiceless th and z like voiced th.
- A dull persistent (usually moderately intense) pain.
- Doglike nocturnal mammal of Africa and southern Asia that feeds chiefly on carrion.
- A form of magnetic resonance imaging of the brain that registers blood flow to functioning areas of the brain.
- Towards the side away from the wind.
- Accomplishment of an objective.
- A crystalline metallic element not found in nature.
- A Russian peasant (especially prior to 1917).
- Relating to or like or divided into areolae.
- A relative position or degree of value in a graded group.
- An international organization of European countries formed after World War II to reduce trade barriers and increase cooperation among its members.
- A dramatic work intended for performance by actors on a stage.
- English theoretical physicist who applied relativity theory to quantum mechanics and predicted the existence of antimatter and the positron (1902-1984).
- A slap with the flat of the hand.
- A song of praise (to God or to a saint or to a nation).
- A noisy riotous fight.
- Pull along heavily, like a heavy load against a resistance.
- A port city in southwestern Iran.
- Type genus of the Aceraceae.
- Rice cooked in well-seasoned broth with onions or celery and usually poultry or game or shellfish and sometimes tomatoes.
- A long narrow natural elevation or striation.
- A mountain in south central Alaska.
- A manicurist who trims the fingernails.
- A member of the Nahuatl people who established an empire in Mexico that was overthrown by Cortes in 1519.
- Material consisting of seed coverings and small pieces of stem or leaves that have been separated from the seeds.
- A Turkish unit of weight equal to about 2.75 pounds.
- Lose color or turn colorless.
- A cut of pork ribs with much of the meat trimmed off.
- Jordan's port.
- United States writer of stories and plays (1894-1946).
- Emblem usually consisting of a rectangular piece of cloth of distinctive design.
- Pleasant and beneficial in nature or influence.
- 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.
- A populous province in northeastern China.
- A genus of Laridae.
- (in Gnosticism) A divine power or nature emanating from the Supreme Being and playing various roles in the operation of the universe.
- A United Nations agency created to assist developing nations by loans guaranteed by member governments.
- Florny plate covering and protecting part of the dorsal surface of the digits.
- Flat and uninspiring.
- Extinct flightless bird of New Zealand.
- The sciences concerned with gathering and manipulating and storing and retrieving and classifying recorded information.
- A hard malleable ductile silvery metallic element that is resistant to corrosion.

Friday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You're searching for more today in all you touch. The metaphysical, new people and different groups have piqued your interest and isn't ready to take a back seat to anything. You have become a little bored with the mundane and find answers which then create questions. If you could leave work today, be close to home and be out in nature this would be one of your best days you've experienced. Working with others without change is a complaint but talk with some of the more far-thinking people at work and you might find a new friend who has the same mental quest as you.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

In order to receive nurturing, you need to learn to nurture another. Encourage someone you care for to become closer to you. This could be in all walks of your life from personal feelings to career. Today will not help you feel better because you'll feel a little left on the sideline. That's where the nurturing others part comes in. Reach out and touch someone. They'll generally reciprocate. Your last few days have found you needing more love than usual. One bright spot for you, Taurus, is that you'll be asked for help and will have the answers needed to give it. You rock.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Rational thinking, putting everything into order and deciding what should come first is the top of your agenda today. Perhaps that's a good thing because keeping busy on mundane items might be best for you at the moment. If you can it would be better that you stay home, read a book or catch up on your favorite television shows. Game of Thrones, anyone. If you do have to speak publicly or at work make sure you're commanding. If you aren't confident today, Gemini, fake it. Then go home and relax. It'll get better in a few days.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

As the old saying goes, "She could sell ice cream to Eskimos," is true for you today. Your clarity of thought and expression help you to create a great sales program or other important item for your job now. Your boss takes notice and compliments you greatly which is just exactly what you need and desire. People seek you out for friendly advice and you're happy to give it. Your communications skills are at an all-time high right now, Cancer, because people can see your concepts easily as you speak.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

A person who purposefully seeks you out and meets with you today may make you feel just a little bit leery. Take your time getting to know this person because your intuition is right on. If someone makes you feel dirty or uneasy, look them over and get away. They may not be what you need in your life. Don't waste time on too much thought here but instead call someone you care for. Maybe you have an old friend you trust that you need to speak with Leo. Take a friend to dinner and enjoy lively conversation.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You're in a mood for being grateful and thanking the powers that be for all you have and all you are. If you were a child and maybe even now you feeling like skipping with childlike enthusiasm. This is a great time to be alive. Perhaps you've fallen in love with someone a little older than yourself or you just enjoy the comradery of a special friendship. This could be your boss so be careful of any office romance though you're feeling on top of the world, Virgo. Affairs and work don't generally mix. You realize this is one of the best times of your life.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

This could be a time of achieving materially more but not necessarily all you desire. You look at wealth through practical eyes, taking each achievement apart, examining it and looking to see how other wealthy people made their fortune. You're driven to make more in your life. Your boss loves it because he or she reaps the benefit. You'll be rewarded as well, Libra. Communicating with those that have more than you comes easily and the opportunities abound. You might be called to give a lecture on how to create more in life. This is right up your alley. Enjoy today and meet with friends or those you lectured tonight.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Getting out and about seems like the best thing in the world to do today and you can. You don't have to be at work today. The only thing to watch for is that you're overly enthusiastic. You might make someone else uncomfortable and you really don't want that. Being with someone you love is making you think you can be open with the world. That's not so. You know when to be silent. It's worked for you all your life. Try to enjoy the day.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 18)

Your body is calling for a little extra attention. It may be walking, stretching your muscles and enjoying the sights or better yet, spending the afternoon with your lover, you know where. You'd rather exercise than read or play games. Think about a picnic in the park or taking a boat out on the water. Give yourself a change of pace without taking a real travel vacation. You're in the mode of only considering hard facts right now, Sagittarius. You need something concrete to supply your fantasies rather than fairy representations. You're on your spiritual path, believe it or not. Let go and receive.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

This could be the beginning of time to create the best in your life for your job as well as your love life. If you've recently broken off with a lover, be sure not to come into contact with them today. You have a great day going on and you don't want it ruined. An argument which you can't win may be had with that old love now. Keep your mind on positive items today, Capricorn. Once your day turns to not what you expected, it will only get worse. Arguments are contagious. When you've had one, you'll find another. Go home early and take some quiet time to reassess the situation.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

You have a need to be respected today. If you feel undervalued, you may feel the urge to move on at work before you have your work needs met and progressing. Keep your mind in gear and your temper under guard. You're practical as long as you keep your emotions under control. Your ambition drives you forward, Aquarius, which isn't a bad thing but you may cause an argument if you're overzealous now or get angry about other's ignorance. Think before you act on each mental or emotional item today. You want to keep your homelife open to your ideas and to giving you the love and encouragement you need. Be nice.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Seems like you have a bit of a rebellious spirit today. You may tend to ignore or fail to appreciate the law. Your values may not be in line with the traditional values of the majority. You seem to be marching to the beat of your own drum. You may find yourself involved in conflict with someone who doesn't appreciate your decisions or actions today. Someone may see your other-worldly views as offensive. Work on becoming more tolerant of other's views, and you may find others becoming more tolerant of yours.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Types of Music 2

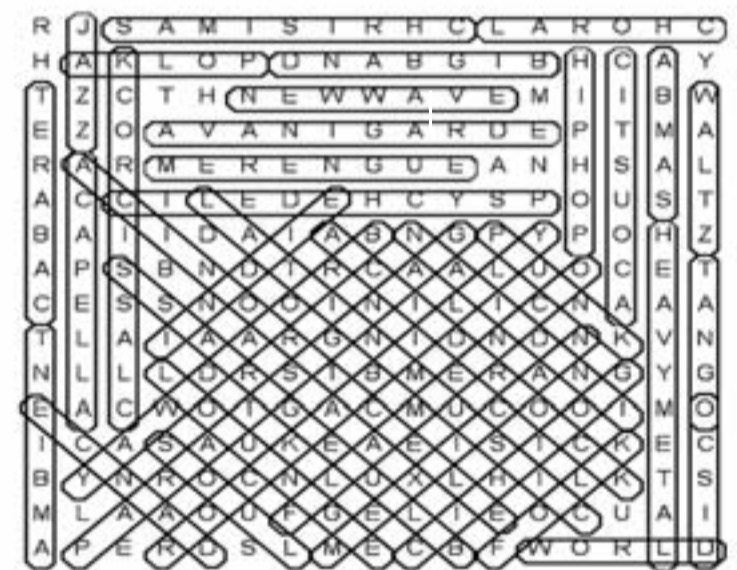
Find and circle all of the different types of music that are hidden in the grid. The remaining 15 letters spell an additional type of music.



- |             |              |                |               |
|-------------|--------------|----------------|---------------|
| ACID JAZZ   | CLASSICAL    | GYPSY          | REGGAE        |
| AFRICAN     | COUNTRY      | IRISH          | ROCK AND ROLL |
| ALTERNATIVE | DOO WOP      | MAMBO          | SALSA         |
| BEBOP       | ELEVATOR     | MARIACHI       | SURF          |
| BLUES       | EUROPOP      | MIDDLE EASTERN | SWING         |
| BOLLYWOOD   | EXPERIMENTAL | NEW AGE        | TECHNO        |
| BOSSA NOVA  | FOLK ROCK    | NEW ORLEANS    | TRIP HOP      |
| BRAZILIAN   | FUNK         | OPERA          | TROPICAL      |
| CELTIC      | GOSPEL       | POP MUSIC      | URBAN         |
| CHAMBER     | GRUNGE       | PROGRESSIVE    | ZYDECO        |

Friday's Solution

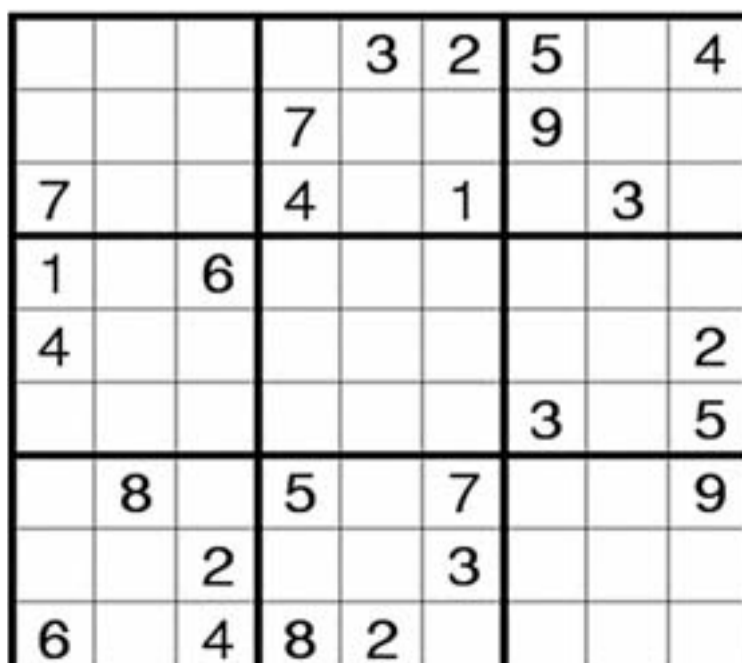
Types of Music 1



- |             |              |             |             |
|-------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| ACAPPELLA   | CHRISTMAS    | HIP HOP     | PSYCHEDELIC |
| ACID ROCK   | CLASSIC ROCK | INDIAN      | PUNK        |
| ACOUSTIC    | DANCE        | INDIE       | ROCKABILLY  |
| AMBIENT     | DISCO        | JAZZ        | SAMBA       |
| AVANT-GARDE | ELECTRONICA  | LATIN MUSIC | SOUL        |
| BIG BAND    | FLAMENCO     | LOUNGE      | TANGO       |
| BLUEGRASS   | FOLK         | MERENQUE    | WALTZ       |
| BROADWAY    | GANGSTA RAP  | MEXICAN     | WORLD       |
| CABARET     | GOTHIC       | NEW WAVE    |             |
| CHORAL      | HEAVY METAL  | POLKA       |             |

The hidden message is: RHYTHM AND BLUES

Daily SuDoku



Friday's Solution



# Lifestyle

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2019



Models present creations from London based Turkish designer Bora Aksu during their 2019 Autumn / Winter catwalk show at London Fashion Week in London. — AFP

## A BLACK PRINCE EVOKING MIGRANT SUFFERING AT THE BALLET

**F**ernando Montano was once a migrant who fled poverty, prejudice and the daily threat of violence from Colombia's drugs gangs before becoming a star at the Royal Ballet in London. Now he's slipped into the skin and bare feet of the African migrants braving precarious sea journeys as they too flee wars and hardship in the hopes of a better future in Europe or the United States.

Montano, 33, is a soloist interpreting the lead role in "Baroque Journey"—a comic opera that takes aim at the contemporary drama of migration. Released in Italy in 2018, it arrived in Colombia's capital Bogota last month. This piece has a particular flavor for Montano, who is black and was at just 14 already a migrant himself, although one who had already displayed the talent that would eventually take him to the top.

“ I try to live through opera ”

Now he dances for one of the most prestigious ballets in the world and, through his art, sends a message to the multitudes of migrants often risking their lives to flee Africa, the Middle East or Latin America. Migration “is everywhere,” Montano said in an interview. “I was a migrant for more than half of my life. I had to learn foreign languages, adapt to the society of those countries, learn about their riches and their weaknesses,” he said.

### Palpable emotion

Before the final curtain call at the Colon Theatre, Montano warms up, protecting himself from the icy Andean cold with wooly leggings. Thereafter for an hour and a half, he is a symphony of movement. His mastery of movement leaves the audience stunned into silence. In the opera, he plays the role of a migrant who rescues two Italian couples after their boat capsizes in a storm.

His sinewy figure half-naked, he saves the Europeans from drowning to the backdrop of Antonio Vivaldi's “Summer” from Four Seasons. The emotion in the theatre is palpable. That night, before stepping onto the stage, Montano learnt that a boat carrying 32 Congolese migrants had sunk in the Caribbean Sea.

They were trying to reach Panama from where they could travel on to the United States. Nineteen bodies, many of them children, were pulled from the sea. “I try to live through opera so that, maybe, I won't suffer so much,” he said.

### A black prince

Montano is from Buenaventura, an impoverished port town on Colombia's Pacific coast wracked by drug-trafficking violence. His childhood memories are of the whistle of the sea wind and the sound of gunfire. His father, a tough man who filled sacks of concrete for a living, dreamed that his son would become a footballer, but Montano was seduced by dance after watching it on television. With the “seed sowed” he joined his first dance academy at the age of 12 in Cali.

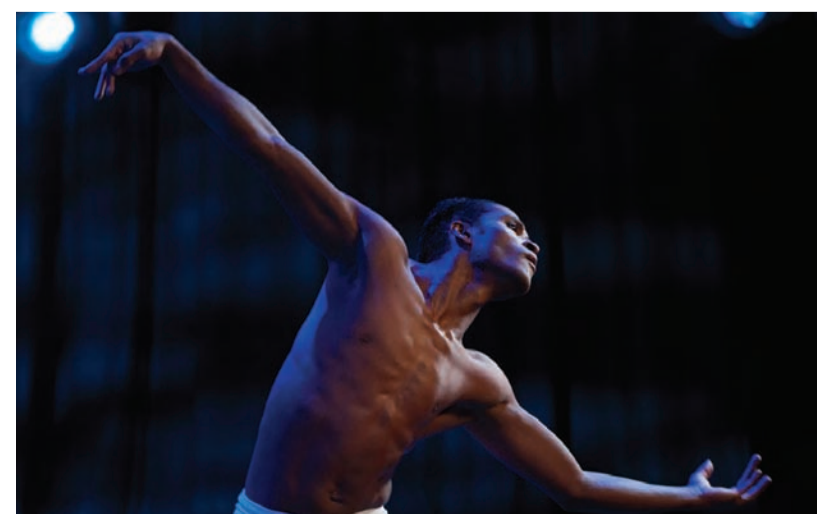
Two years later he earned a scholarship to continue his training in Cuba and after that it was destination Europe where he would come of age. Brought up in a macho environment rife with prejudice, Montano believes his talent saved him from persecution. The other kids couldn't manipulate their bodies the way he could. Yet during his early years at the Royal Ballet he would



lighten his skin with makeup in a bid to avoid “looking like a fly in a glass of milk.”

Dubbed the “Colombian Billy Elliot” by British media, Montano has overcome that complex and is now one of four black dancers among 100 at the Royal Ballet. “There aren't many and even now I think they think hard before giving opportunities to a black dancer,” said Montano. “Maybe people still can't imagine there could a black prince.”

Montano doesn't forget his origins, though, and remembers the time his father and another child from his community came to watch his first theatre performance. “They had never seen an opera and the kid loved it. That's where you realize that this form of art is barely visible in Latin America.”—AFP



Colombian dancer Fernando Rodriguez Montano performs in the comic opera 'Baroque Trip' at the Colon Theater in Bogota. — AFP photos



# London Fashion Week



Models present creations from London based Turkish designer Bora Aksu during their 2019 Autumn / Winter catwalk show at London Fashion Week in London.



## COLORFUL START TO LONDON FASHION WEEK AS BREXIT WORRIES PERVADE



London-based Turkish designer Bora Aksu waves at the end of his 2019 Autumn/Winter catwalk show at London Fashion Week in London. — AFP photos

London Fashion Week kicked off five days of catwalk shows on Friday with a splash of color, as fears of Brexit—now looming large on the horizon—look set to dominate. The fashion world descends on the British capital just weeks before Britain is due to leave the European Union, with anxiety over the diplomatic upheaval prompting some showcasers to strive for an upbeat tone.

Turkish designer Bora Aksu, who unveiled his latest collection Friday, said he had deliberately deployed pastel shades and an “optimistic color palette” to lighten the heavy mood currently pervading London. “I try to bring some hope into the winter collection,” the London-based designer said, noting the long shadow cast by Brexit which he had tried to swamp with plenty of white, beige, lilac, mint green and peach pink on show. “I think we need... more colors in life generally and more hope.”

The first two days of more than 80 catwalk shows will feature a raft of young talents including Matty Bovan, Ashley Williams, Molly Goddard, Simone Rocha and from the model, designer and TV presenter Alexa Chung. Meanwhile four of Britain’s leading designers—Roksanda, JW Anderson, Christopher Kane and David Koma—are to reveal their new collections today.

### Public access

London Fashion Week will get also get a first glimpse of Victoria Beckham’s new collection today. Beckham’s chic and sober designs are more used to gracing the New York catwalks, but she celebrated her brand’s tenth anniversary last year by presenting in London for the first time. The former Spice Girl, now a respected designer, is still sailing in troubled financial waters however, having recorded losses of up to £10.3 million for the year 2017.

Today will also feature Vivienne Westwood and Pam Hogg, two icons of British punk-rock culture, as well as Frenchman Roland Mouret, known for his mastery of

sensual designs, and Fashion East, Lulu Kennedy’s talent-incubator label. This year will be the first time that members of the public will be able to attend the event, which is usually reserved for buyers, journalists and VIPs. The “London Fashion Week: Insiders” project will release a limited number of tickets, ranging in price from £135 to £245.

### Brexit ‘dreaded’

The increasing importance of the week reflects Britain’s booming fashion industry, with revenues for women’s ready-to-wear rising by 5.5 percent to £30.9 billion in 2018, according to market analyst group Mintel. However, uncertainty surrounding the country’s departure from the EU is worrying those in the industry, who do not appear to share Brexiteers’ predictions of a so-called “Brexit dividend” in global trade.

According to a survey conducted by consulting firm Fashion Roundtable, 96 percent of industry professionals in Britain say they voted to stay in the European Union in 2016. “Since that referendum the British fashion industry has asked for continued access to talent, tariff-free trade, frictionless borders,” said Caroline Rush, chief executive of the British Fashion Council, noting it had been frustrated by the response.

She added Brexit remains “dreaded” by the industry, especially as the March 29 exit date nears with no-deal looking increasingly likely. “We will further develop our international outreach and reinforce the reputation of the UK as one that is open, global, innovative and welcoming,” Rush said.—AFP



Canadian born designer Mark Fast acknowledges the applause after presenting his 2019 Autumn/Winter collection.



Polish designer Marta Jakubowski acknowledges the crowd during her 2019 Autumn/Winter London collection.



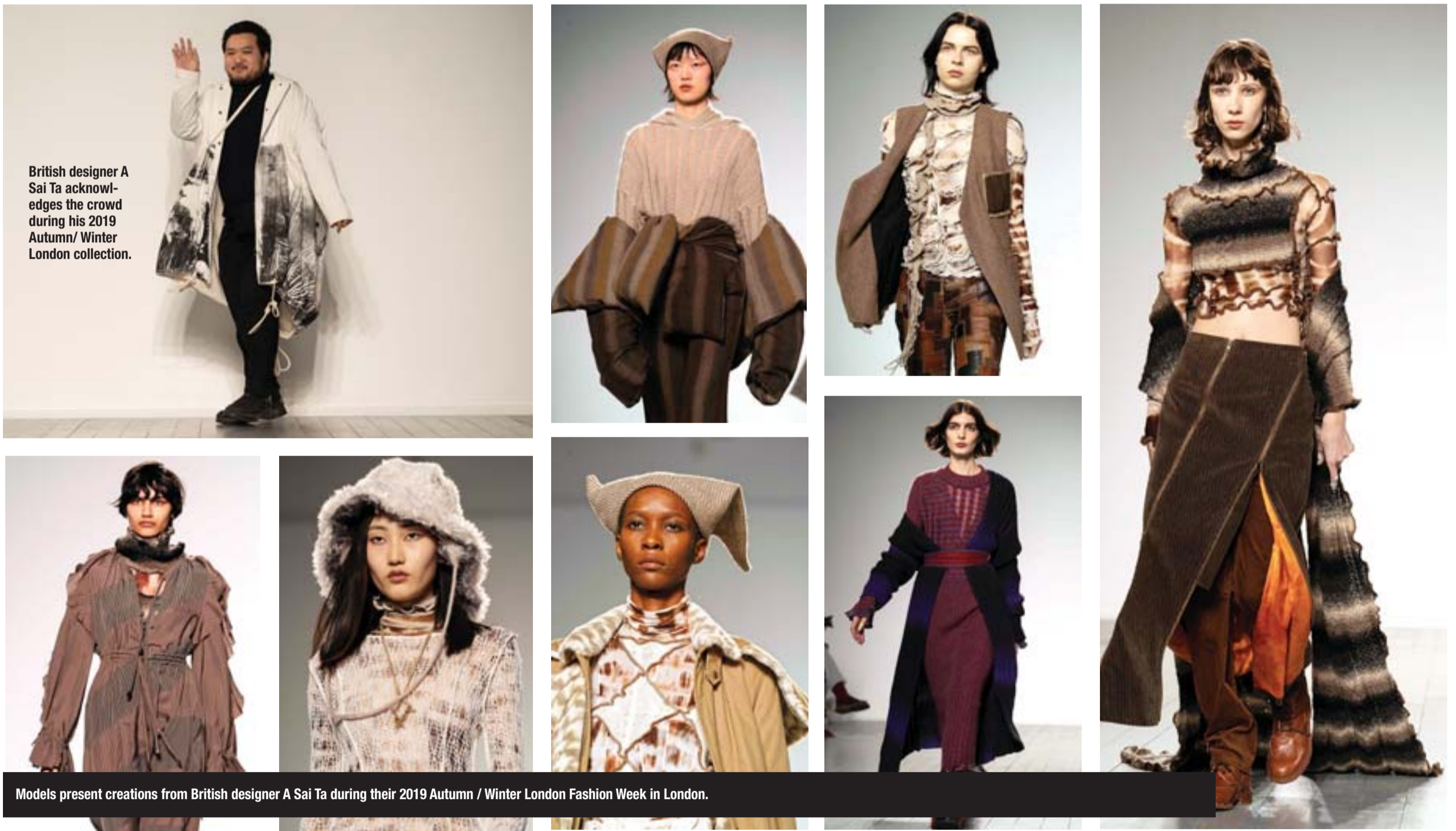
Models present creations from Polish designer Marta Jakubowski during their 2019 Autumn/Winter London Fashion Week in London.



Lifestyle | Fashion



Models present creations from Canadian born designer Mark Fast during their 2019 Autumn / Winter London Fashion Week in London.



British designer A Sai Ta acknowledges the crowd during his 2019 Autumn/ Winter London collection.

Models present creations from British designer A Sai Ta during their 2019 Autumn / Winter London Fashion Week in London.

## New-look Burberry tops the bill at London Fashion Week

After New York, the fashion world descends on London Friday for more than 80 catwalk shows over five days—just weeks before Britain is due to leave the European Union, creating potential headaches for the industry. Italian designer Riccardo Tisci, formerly of Givenchy, will be showing off his second Burberry collection. He took over from Christopher Bailey in March 2018 with the mission of giving the venerable company a new lease on life.

The British institution, founded in 1856, reported mixed sales at the end of last year compared with those achieved in recent years, and hopes its women's

autumn-winter 2019-20 collection will kick-start the engine. The designer declared his ambitions in Vogue, saying he wanted to “sustain the Burberry heritage” but “go with the times, with modernity”. Tisci’s show takes place today, February 17 at 1700 GMT.

The time is no coincidence, with 17 being the favorite number of the Italian, who left his family to begin his fashion career aged 17. Fashion Week will get also get a first glimpse of Victoria Beckham’s new collection today. Beckham’s chic and sober designs are more used to gracing the New York catwalks, but she celebrated her brand’s tenth anniversary last year by

presenting in London for the first time.

### Public gets first invite

Four of Britain’s leading designers—Roksanda, J.W. Anderson, Christopher Kane and David Koma—are to reveal their new collections tomorrow. The first two days will feature shows from young talents including Matty Bovan, Ashley Williams, Molly Goddard, Simone Rocha and from the model, designer and TV presenter Alexa Chung. This year will be the first time that members of the public will be able to attend the event, which is usually reserved for buyers, journalists and VIPs.

“The industry is anxious and worried and uncertainty is never good for the mood of anyone, let alone an industry based on freedom of movement,” Tamara Cincik, founder and CEO of consultancy firm Fashion Roundtable, said. “Retail is already dealing with huge losses to footfall on the high street with the growth of online sales outlets. No deal will mean that we are stuck at borders or goods won’t get in.”—AFP

# ISRAELI PHOTOGRAPHER REVIVES ARCHAIC ART FORM IN BORDER SERIES

“Even my dog is borderline”

Edward Kaprov makes a final adjustment to the oversized, traditional-style camera perched on a heavy tripod aimed at an Israeli military jeep near the Gaza border. “Let’s give it a shot,” the 43-year-old says as he strides briskly to the tent that serves as his darkroom. Kaprov, a professional photographer, says he took to the mid-19th century wet-plate collodion process as part of an artistic project to “create a dialogue between the past and future”.

The method entails coating a glass plate in liquid substances, fixing it in the camera, exposing it for a few seconds and then developing it—all within 10-15 minutes. Technological advances are all but ignored in the process which has remained nearly unchanged since it was invented in 1851 — though Kaprov does use his smartphone as a light meter. Kaprov unloads a table, basins, coolers and plastic jerrycans from the back of his panel van and deftly sets up his field darkroom in the tent.

He brushes clean the plate and carefully pours the collodion mixture on it. Then he inserts it into a silver nitrate solution, which upon exposure would turn dark, with the collodion solidifying the forms to the plate. Kaprov

military vehicle and gate appear on the glass.

## Borderline disorder

The end product, a piece of glass roughly the size of A4 paper, doesn’t reveal the labor put into the process. “And now, a cigarette,” Kaprov sighs in relief as he pats his pockets for his rolling tobacco. The outdated technique is worth its remarkable hassle to Kaprov, who began a series of Israeli border images nearly 10 years ago using a regular digital camera, and around the year 2015 had something of an epiphany.

“I suddenly understood that I had to continue taking the pictures the same way the first images from the Holy Land were produced to create a dialogue between the past and future,” he says. He spent a year learning about the technique through books and internet tutorials, experimenting with potent chemicals and assembling the necessary equipment before he was ready to hit the road and resume work on what is now called the Borderline Personalities Disorder series.

Kaprov’s interest in borders is part of his own quest to define or understand his place in Israel, the country he



Edward Kaprov, an Israeli photographer, adjusts his large format camera, near Kibbutz Kissufim overlooking the northern Gaza border. — AFP photos

## Ancient novelty

Israel’s frontiers tend to be marked by ominous fences fending off the unknown dangers of the surrounding Arab states and entities. The absence of hikers, tourists and industry in much of those areas afforded him not only the raw images that could correspond with the old ones, but also much-needed peace of mind to focus on his art. “I escaped one utopia only to find myself in another,” he says of his move from Communist Russia to the Jewish state.

The slow pace of the wet plate technique, used by just a few other photographers professionally in Israel, necessitates a special focus not only from the artist but also from his human subjects, who “enter a meditative state-of-mind,” Kaprov says. And while using this method deprives most of the opportunity for spontaneity—one of modern photography’s key characteristics—its ancient novelty attracts attention.

The soldiers who were in the jeep on the Gaza border approached Kaprov by the tent to see what he was doing. A brief encounter led to the four paratroopers agreeing to pose for him on the same backdrop of their vehicle, accompanying him back to the tent again to see the outcome of the picture. “As much as I’m result-oriented, there’s no denying that the process is a very central part of the issue,” Kaprov says later. “It’s like magic taking place, to me and anyone around.”—AFP



Edward Kaprov prepares a glass plate in his field darkroom.



Edward Kaprov is pictured with his dog.

returns to the camera with the black magazine containing the wet glass. He inserts it, pulls out the magazine and leaves the glass in.

Covering himself with a blanket as he stoops over the camera, he opens the lens and counts out loud to three before retrieving the glass. Back in the tent the plate is carefully removed and treated before being taken out into the sun, still immersed in liquid—as the images of the

left his native Siberia for at 17. “I haven’t really found myself since leaving my homeland for my historic homeland. I’m still searching,” he says. With his cropped hair, short beard and trim physique, Kaprov looks every bit the outdoor man he is, spending days in the field seeking interesting frames in the company of his mixed border collie Robin. “Even my dog is borderline,” he says with a grin.



## Archaeologists discover Incan tomb in Peru

Peruvian archaeologists discovered an Incan tomb in the north of the country where an elite member of the pre-Columbian empire was buried, one of the investigators announced Friday. The discovery was made on the Mata Indio dig site in the northern Lambayeque region, archaeologist Luis Chero told state news agency Andina.

Archaeologists believe the tomb belonged to a noble Inca based on the presence of “spondylus,” a type of sea shell always present in the graves of important figures from the Incan period, which lasted from the 12th to the 16th centuries. The tomb had been broken into multiple times, possibly in search of treasure. But despite evidence of looting, archaeologists recovered items including vases.

The tomb also had unique architecture including hollows for the placement of idols. Chero said the findings “demonstrate the majesty and importance of this site,” located 1,000 kilometers (620 miles) north of the capital Lima, and 2,000 kilometers from Cusco-capital of the Inca empire which stretched from southern Colombia to central Chile.—AFP



Undated picture shows Andina of pottery and ornaments found in a recently discovered burial chamber belonging to the Inca period at the ‘Mata Indio’ archeological site in Lambayeque region, Peru. — AFP photos

## Ballet bad boy Polunin premieres new show in Moscow

In his Moscow dressing room, dancer Sergei Polunin pulls off his T-shirt to show the tattoo of President Vladimir Putin on his chest as the Ukrainian-born ballet star premieres his new show in the Russian capital. “I see a good energy in him,” he says of the Russian leader. “I think he’s actually building and trying to do something really good. And sometimes (the) press is not very honest about things.”

The 29-year-old, who has been acclaimed by critics a ballet great on the level of Mikhail Baryshnikov or Vaslav Nijinsky, has long been

dogged by the label of “the bad boy of ballet.” He has recently run into fresh controversy for his ardent pro-Putin views and also Instagram posts calling for the slapping of fat people and criticizing gay dancers for being too effeminate and “an embarrassment”.

He is embarking on his first tour of Russia since gaining a Russian passport late last year with his own dance project called “Sacred”. His tour comes after he last month lost a plum role in Swan Lake at the Paris Opera Ballet due to his Instagram posts, which the troupe’s artistic director Aurelie Dupont said were not in keeping with the company’s values. Britain’s The Telegraph suggested that Polunin’s career had plunged to an “unrecoverable nadir”.

But Polunin, who has continued to post similar content on Instagram, is unrepentant, saying that his posts are misunderstood and he should have the right to freedom of speech. “I never regret

anything and I do things as I feel,” says the dancer who speaks in an English that sounds both London and Russian-accented, adding: “I don’t really think about consequences.” “It just proves a little bit that we don’t really have freedom of speech,” he claims of the reaction to his posts. “In the West, you say one wrong thing it doesn’t matter how talented you are, they just destroy (you).”

## ‘I’m all about change’

He repeats the views he expressed in one of the posts that lost him his Swan Lake role. “I want man to be man and woman to be woman,” says the dancer who lists his heroes as “macho” actors such as Mickey Rourke and Johnny Depp. He denies he was denigrating gay dancers. “It’s not about being gay or straight it’s about feminine and masculine energy and men shouldn’t be weak,” he says, particularly in ballet where “nobody wants to see weakness on stage”.

## Zimbabwean legendary novelist Charles Mungoshi, dies at 71

Zimbabwean revered and internationally celebrated novelist and poet Charles Mungoshi has died aged 71, after a long illness, his family said on Saturday. “He had been ill for 10 years, from a neurological condition to which he succumbed this morning at Parirenyatwa Hospital (in Harare),” the family said in a statement. He published 18 books including “Coming of the Dry Season”, a 1972 collection of short stories which was banned under colonial rule in the then Rhodesia. His novel “Waiting for the Rain” 1975 won him the International PEN Award.

Twice he won the Commonwealth Writers’ Prize of Best Book in Africa and also received the Noma Award for Writing from Africa four times. His works included novels, plays, poetry and short story collections in English and his native Shona language. Some of his works have been translated into various languages including German, Russian and Japanese. His Shona novel “Ndiko Kupindana Kwamazuva”, loosely meaning how time passes, was translated into French.

In 2011, one of his poems was on permanent display at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation headquarters in Seattle. He was also a stage actor, literary editor and translator. “Zimbabwe has lost a great writer. He was a writer of integrity and sensitivity who understood the weight of words,” his publisher Irene Staunton of Weaver Press, said. Born in the southern rural farming region of Chivhu on December 2, 1947, Mungoshi is survived by his wife Jejesi and five children.—AFP



## Swiss actor Bruno Ganz dead at 77

Bruno Ganz, the Swiss actor who gave a masterful performance as Adolf Hitler in “Downfall”, has died aged 77, his agent said yesterday. Ganz, who died at his home in Zurich, had a distinguished career on screen and stage before his 2004 appearance in “Downfall”, which unfolds over the final, suffocating days inside Hitler’s bunker. For many critics his nuanced portrayal of the fascist tyrant that veers between explosive and sombre was unparalleled. Hitler is a figure that German-speaking actors had historically been reluctant to take on and the Zurich-born Ganz conceded that being Swiss provided a necessary buffer. “It helped me also that I am not German, because I could put my passport between Hitler and me,” Ganz told The Arts Desk website in 2005.—AFP



Ukrainian-born ballet dancer and actor Sergei Polunin, 29-years-old, shows his tattoos, the one depicting Russian President Vladimir Putin and the other featuring the Ukrainian national trident symbol, during an interview in Moscow. — AFP photos

# Classifieds

Sunday, February 17, 2019

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### Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

**BY NIGHT:** Cold with light to moderate variable wind to north westerly wind, with speed of 08 - 35 km/h and some high clouds will appear.

**BY DAY:** Fair and Partly cloudy with light to moderate freshening at times especially over coastal areas north westerly wind to north easterly wind, with speed of 15 - 45 km/h.

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings		
STATION	MAX. REC.	MIN. EXP.	SFC. CHART 16/02/2019 0000 UTC		
KUWAIT CITY	21 °C	15 °C			
KUWAIT AIRPORT	20 °C	14 °C			
ABDALY	22 °C	12 °C			
BUBYAN	--- °C	--- °C			
JAHRA	21 °C	13 °C			
FAILAKA ISLAND	20 °C	15 °C			
SALMIYAH	20 °C	15 °C			
AHMADI	19 °C	16 °C			
NUWAISIB	20 °C	17 °C			
WAFRA	20 °C	14 °C			
SALMY	19 °C	10 °C			

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Sunday	02/17	Fair	21 °C	09 °C	NW-VRB	08 - 28 km/h
Monday	02/18	Fair and Partly cloudy	21 °C	10 °C	NW-NE	10 - 30 km/h
Tuesday	02/19	Cool and Partly cloudy with a chance for rising dust	19 °C	11 °C	NW	15 - 45 km/h
Wednesday	02/20	Fair and some scattered clouds will appear	20 °C	10 °C	NW	15 - 38 km/h

TOMORROW PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	05:07
Sunrise	06:26
Zuhr	12:02
Asr	15:13
Sunset	17:37
Isha	18:55

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

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Turkish Airlines	1884918	Swiss Air	22421516
American Airlines	22087425	Saudia	22426306
	22087426	Middle East Airlines	22423073
Jet Airways	22924455	Lufthansa	22422493
FlyDubai	22414400	PIA	22421044
Qatar Airways	22423888	Bangladesh Airlines	22452977/8
KLM	22425747	Indian Airlines	22456700
Royal Jordanian	22418064/5/6	Oman Air	22958787
British Airways	22425635	Turkish Airlines	22453820/1
Air France	22430224	Aeroflot	22404838/9
Emirates	22921555		



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

**DIAL 161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION**

Arrival Flights on Sunday 17/2/2019				Departure Flights on Sunday 17/2/2019			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
JZR	254	Amman	00:05	JZR	213	Jeddah	12:00
JAI	572	Mumbai	00:15	JZR	221	Riyadh	12:00
KAC	504	Beirut	00:45	MEA	405	Beirut	12:55
KAC	102	London	00:50	QTR	1075	Doha	13:00
JZR	734	Cairo	00:50	KAC	702	Damascus	13:30
THY	772	Istanbul	00:50	JZR	113	Doha	13:30
PGT	858	Istanbul	01:00	JZR	123	Dubai	13:40
DLH	625	Dammam	01:25	MSR	611	Cairo	14:10
UAE	853	Dubai	01:45	UAE	872	Dubai	14:15
THY	764	Istanbul	01:50	AXB	394	Kozhikode	14:15
IGO	1757	Kochi	01:55	JZR	103	Bahrain	14:40
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	QTR	1079	Doha	15:00
JZR	722	Alexandria	02:15	FDB	060	Dubai	15:10
RBG	551	Alexandria	02:25	GFA	222	Bahrain	15:25
KLM	446	Bahrain	02:30	KAC	673	Jeddah	15:40
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30	SVA	501	Dubai	15:45
QTR	1086	Doha	02:40	KAC	775	Riyadh	15:50
OMA	643	Muscat	02:55	KNE	530	Jeddah	16:00
RJA	648	Amman	02:55	KAC	615	Bahrain	16:05
KKK	1268	Istanbul	03:05	KAC	619	Doha	16:10
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:05	KAC	563	Amman	16:10
PGT	860	Istanbul	03:10	ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	OMA	646	Muscat	16:35
JZR	1736	Cairo	03:30	KAC	785	Jeddah	16:40
KAC	414	Bangkok	04:00	KAC	785	Jeddah	16:40
QTR	1076	Doha	04:00	ABY	128	Sharjah	16:45
LMU	510	Cairo	04:00	SAW	706	Damascus	17:00
IGO	1751	Chennai	04:10	KAC	675	Dubai	17:05
KAC	418	Manila	04:25	KAC	503	Beirut	17:15
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:30	FDB	052	Dubai	17:40
JZR	406	Kochi	04:45	KAC	502	Dhaka	17:45
FDB	069	Dubai	05:00	UAE	858	Dubai	17:45
KAC	382	Delhi	05:05	QTR	1073	Doha	17:50
KAC	1544	Cairo	05:10	KAC	343	Chennai	18:00
THY	770	Istanbul	05:10	KAC	331	Trivandrum	18:00
JZR	404	Hyderabad	05:10	JZR	721	Alexandria	18:00
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:20	JZR	733	Cairo	18:10
JZR	112	Doha	05:25	JZR	733	Riyadh	18:15
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:40	SVA	511	Bahrain	18:20
KAC	344	Chennai	05:50	GFA	216	Doha	18:25
JZR	402	Mumbai	06:05	KAC	621	Doha	18:35
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:10	JZR	127	Dubai	18:35
KAC	302	Mumbai	06:25	JZR	403	Hyderabad	18:40
QTR	8511	Doha	06:40	JZR	501	Lahore	18:40
KAC	678	Dubai	06:55	KAC	381	Delhi	18:55
BAW	157	London	07:05	JZR	253	Amman	19:15
KAC	204	Lahore	07:10	FDB	064	Dubai	19:20
JZR	708	Luxor	07:15	UAE	876	Dubai	19:30
KAC	358	Kochi	07:35	MSR	621	Cairo	19:30
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	QTR	1081	Doha	19:55
KAC	384	Delhi	08:00	RJA	641	Amman	20:00
KAC	304	Mumbai	08:20	SYR	342	Damascus	20:00
UAE	855	Dubai	08:35	RB G	556	Alexandria	20:05
JZR	408	Ahmedabad	08:45	ABY	124	Sharjah	20:05
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	09:05	GFA	218	Bahrain	20:15
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:05	KAC	301	Mumbai	20:35
QTR	1070	Doha	09:30	FDB	058	Dubai	20:35
IRA	665	Shiraz	09:40	KAC	345	Ahmedabad	20:40
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	KAC	353	Bengaluru	20:55
IGO	1753	Ahmedabad	09:40	JZR	401	Mumbai	20:55
SVA	512	Riyadh	10:00	KAC	357	Kochi	21:00
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	OMA	648	Muscat	21:20
JZR	702	Asyut	11:05	DLH	624	Dammam	21:30
JZR	122	Dubai	11:10	DHX	171	Bahrain	21:50
JZR	116	Doha	11:10	QTR	1089	Doha	22:00
QTR	1074	Doha	11:35	KAC	1543	Cairo	22:15
JZR	216	Jeddah	11:45	KAC	203	Lahore	22:15
MEA	404	Beirut	11:55	MEA	403	Beirut	22:20
KAC	614	Bahrain	12:25	ALK	230	Colombo	22:25
SAW	701	Damascus	12:30	KAC	303	Mumbai	22:30
JZR	714	Sohag	12:35	KAC	383	Delhi	22:30
				GFA	220	Bahrain	22:30
				KAC	783	Jeddah	22:55
				KAC	411	Bangkok	23:00
				UAE	860	Dubai	23:00
				JAI	573	Mumbai	23:00
				ETD	310	Abu Dhabi	23:05
				QTR	1083	Doha	23:25

# Post-Gaddafi Libya sliding from crisis to crisis 8 yrs on

**TRIPOLI:** Eight years after the revolt in Libya against Muammar Gaddafi's authoritarian regime, a modern and democratic state remains a distant dream in a country which has been sliding from crisis to crisis. While no major celebrations are planned for the anniversary of the uprising which started February 17, 2011 in the thick of the Arab Spring, Libyans profess no great nostalgia for the Gaddafi days. "I cannot regret Gaddafi's time because what Libya is today is the product of 42 years of systematic destruction," said Marwan Jalal, a 43-year-old oil industry engineer, referring to the autocrat's four decades in power. "Sooner or later, Libyans will find peace but the journey seems long," he said.

Post-Gaddafi Libya has remained a battleground, both on the terrain and in politics, between a myriad of rival militias and political factions operating with impunity. "The political and military divides... are deepening and efforts to bring rival constituencies to the table have thus far failed," said Claudia Gazzini, an analyst with the International Crisis Group. "There is no quick recipe to solve Libya's multilayered crisis," Gazzini said. "Any effort to unite Libya requires an integrated strategy with a political, a security and an economic component complementing each other and working together towards a common objective."

In the latest emergency, military strongman General Khalifa Haftar has launched a military push in southern Libya which he says is aimed at rooting out "terrorists" and foreign fighters. The offensive has fuelled new tensions in a country already wracked by violence and torn between rival administrations since the overthrow and killing of dictator Gaddafi. The vacuum has been exploited by unscrupulous people traffickers taking full advantage of the migration crisis.

A power struggle between the UN-backed Government of National Accord (GNA) based in Tripoli and a parallel administration backed by Haftar's self-styled Libyan National Army (LNA) in the east has left the country's vast desert south a lawless no-man's land. The rugged territory bordering Algeria, Niger, Chad and Sudan has become a haven for jihadists and armed groups, including Chadian rebels. The LNA in mid-January announced the start of its offensive to "purge the south of terrorists and criminal groups".

The region also hosts a struggle between Libya's minority Tubu community and Arab tribes, particularly over control of lucrative cross-border smuggling routes. "An escalation has thus far been averted, in part because anti-Haftar forces in the north have refrained from jumping into the fight, but the risk of retaliatory violence is still in the air and alliances with local tribe-based armed groups could prove fragile," according to Gazzini. Tripoli militias have condemned Haftar's operation as a power grab, although the GNA itself has not been as explicit in its opposition.

Analysts warn that the LNA's assault could endanger UN-led efforts to convene a "national conference" aimed at organizing already long-delayed elections this year as a way out of the political impasse in Libya. But "the repeated delays and the vagueness surrounding the UN-backed event have alienated important constituencies who are now eyeing alternative strategies outside the UN framework in order to bolster their position," said Gazzini. Emad Badi, a Libyan analyst, warned that "current developments are conducive to escalation and actors' military confrontation rather than dialogue". — AFP



**TRIPOLI:** Libyans carry national flags as they gather in the capital's Martyrs Square to celebrate yesterday, a day ahead of the eighth anniversary of the Libyan revolution. — AFP

## 7 Sinai militants killed, 15 soldiers dead or wounded

**CAIRO:** Egypt's army said yesterday seven suspected militants were "eliminated" and 15 soldiers killed or wounded in an attack in the Sinai Peninsula, where troops are fighting the Islamic State group. Security forces responded to the attack on a checkpoint in restive North Sinai with an "exchange of fire", army spokesman Tamer El-Refai said in a statement. "An officer and 14 non-commissioned soldiers were killed or wounded," he added, without giving a precise number for the dead. Medical sources in North Sinai told AFP that 11 soldiers were killed in the attack.

Security forces would continue to pursue "the terrorist elements to eliminate them", Refai added.

Egypt often announces that militants have been killed in military operations, but statements that security forces have suffered significant losses are very rare. Since the army's overthrow of elected Islamist president Mohamed Morsi in 2013, hundreds of soldiers and police have been killed in attacks by extremist groups. Civilians have also been targeted in attacks, particularly members of Egypt's minority Coptic Christian community.

Egypt's army launched an offensive a year ago dubbed "Sinai 2018" on the orders of President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, after an attack in North Sinai killed more than 300 people at a mosque. The army says that more than 550 suspected militants have been killed in the offensive - which has also targeted militants elsewhere in Egypt - at the cost of more than 30 soldiers. But no independent statistics are available and the North Sinai is largely cut off to media and foreigners. — AFP

## Iranians cry for revenge at funeral...

Continued from Page 1

Jaish al-Adl was formed in 2012 as a successor to the Sunni extremist group Jundallah (Soldiers of God), which waged a deadly insurgency for a decade before it was severely weakened by the capture and execution of its leader Abdolmalek Rigi in 2010.

Jafari also blasted "the governments of Saudi Arabia and (the) Emirates" and said Iran will no longer tolerate their "hidden support for anti-Islam thugs and takfiri groups". He called on President Hassan Rouhani and the country's Supreme National Security Council to give the guards more freedom to carry out "retaliatory operations", but did not elaborate. Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has linked the perpetrators of Wednesday's attack to "the spying agencies of some regional and trans-regional countries".

Black flags attached to lamp-posts adorned Isfahan as the city prepared for the funeral and two days of mourning.

When the bodies of the troops arrived on the back of Toyota vans - the guards' signature vehicles - their comrades, women in black veils and young men in jeans were

there to greet them. Tens of thousands chanted "Down with America!" and "We will never submit!"

Iran's flag could be seen at half-mast in Bozorgmehr Square's southeastern side, and the crowd chanted "Allahu Akbar" each time the speaker read the names of the dead. The troops killed in the bombing belonged to the Guards' 14th Imam Hussein Division, which is based in Isfahan province, according to Tasnim news agency. Aged from 21 to 52, each will be buried in his hometown after the funeral.

A housekeeper originally from Khuzestan province, where a deadly attack killed 24 last year, told AFP of the thirst for revenge. "We demand that the blood of these troops be avenged," said Tayebbeh Rezaee, 34. "They cannot weaken the Islamic Republic in any way - not war, not economic attacks. So they have to stoop to such acts."

Sistan-Baluchistan has long been a flashpoint, where Pakistan-based Baluchi separatists and militants carry out cross-border raids. A Revolutionary Guard was killed and five wounded in a Feb 2 attack claimed by Jaish al-Adl on a base of the Basij militia in the town of Nikshahr, some way from the border. One of the wounded - Khodarahm Heidari, who was critically injured in that attack - died on Saturday, semi-official news agency ISNA reported.

On Jan 29 three members of an Iranian bomb squad sent to the scene of an explosion in the provincial capital Zahedan were wounded when a second device blew up as they were trying to defuse it, police said at the time. — AFP

country to normalize relations with Israel after the realization of a fair and comprehensive solution to the Palestine question and the establishment of a state of Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital, based on the relevant resolutions of the United Nations and the Arab peace initiative.

On the group picture, he said normalization of relations between countries has various forms that do not necessarily include taking group pictures at international conferences. Kuwait participated in the Warsaw conference alongside with other sisterly countries in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), whose participating delegations were of a higher level than that of Kuwait, Jarallah noted. The conference was similar to other numerous international gatherings in which Israel takes part, including forums held under the UN umbrella, he added. — KUNA

KD 330 remains for me to live on and pay rent, as the rest goes for the installments," he rued.

Yaqoub Al-Yaqoub took a loan of KD 50,000 to rebuild the house of his father in 2013, and after six years of repaying it, he still has to pay KD 47,000.

"I pay KD 350 every month for the loan, and only KD 480 remains for me to survive with my wife and two children," he said. Youssef Al-Ali also took a loan to rebuild the house of his father in 2017. "The bank cuts KD 350 from my salary every month, and only KD 300 remains for me, my wife and two kids. At least I'm lucky I don't have to pay rent, but it's difficult to survive on this meager amount," he explained.

Munif Al-Harbi is retired, but still has to pay KD 26,000 out of the KD 31,000 taken as a loan in 2011. "I have eight children and owe KD 4,800 to a furniture company besides the loan. I don't have a house so I have to pay rent as well. I only end up with KD 300," he told Kuwait Times.

## India's fastest new train hits...

Continued from Page 1

Since coming to office, Modi's nationalist party launched a crackdown on the slaughter of cows - considered sacred by many Hindus - which has led to crisis numbers of stray and unwanted cattle in the state.

India is struggling to upgrade its colonial-era railway system, which relies on creaking and outdated infrastructure to transport 23 million travellers each day. The

locally-made express train has a rated top speed of 180 km an hour, 20 percent quicker than the next fastest train in service. Railway authorities say the train is expected to reduce the 850-kilometre journey between the two cities from 14 to eight hours.

Yesterday's accident is the latest controversy for the express train - a pet project of Modi's government, which has vowed to debut India's first bullet train in 2022. Last week India's rail minister Piyush Goyal was left red-faced after he tweeted a digitally altered video of the train zipping by a station at lightning speed. He was later accused of altering the video to make the train appear faster, triggering widespread social media ridicule. — AFP

## Trump border wall 'emergency' faces...

Continued from Page 1

New York, California and the American Civil Liberties Union. "President Trump is manufacturing a crisis and declaring a made-up 'national emergency' in order to seize power and subvert the constitution," said California Governor Gavin Newsome. "California will see you in court."

Trump said he expected a legal fight and predicted he would prevail. "We will have a national emergency, and we will then be sued," Trump said Friday. "Then we will end up in the Supreme Court, and hopefully we will get a fair shake, and we'll win in the Supreme Court."

Trump invoked the 1976 National Emergencies Act after Congress refused to allocate his requested \$5.7 billion for a wall in a spending bill. The White House says the emergency order empowers it to pull around \$6.6 billion from other sources, mostly already-allocated funds in the Defense Department budget. Democrats accused the president of an unconstitutional power grab. "The president's actions clearly violate the Congress's exclusive power of the purse," Nancy Pelosi and Chuck Schumer, the Democratic leaders in Congress, said in a joint statement.

It is a precedent-setting move, said American University law professor Jennifer Daskal, adding that the National Emergencies Act had "never been used in that way, for good reason". Critics warn that Trump opened the door for future presidents to call on the act whenever they fail to get their way with Congress. A frustrated Democratic president might someday invoke it to get funds to fight ongoing "emergencies" of cli-

mate change and gun proliferation.

The White House dismissed this argument, underscoring how a court showdown might proceed. "This actually creates zero precedent. This is authority given to the president in law already," said acting White House chief of staff Mick Mulvaney. "It's not as if he just didn't get what he wanted, so he is waving a magic wand and taking a bunch of money."

Any legal battle will focus on the definition of "emergency". The emergencies act "does not provide any explicit limitations on what does and does not constitute a national emergency," Daskal told AFP. Previous governments have declared emergencies based on the act due to immediate threats such as the September 11, 2001 attacks and the 2009 outbreak of swine flu. Trump said the emergency now is the flow of drugs and violent criminals across the border.

In the abstract, he appears within his rights. However, said Bobby Chesney, the associate dean at the University of Texas School of Law, "litigation won't be in abstract". "The pretext issue looms large here," he said in a comment on Twitter. He was referring to the problem of Trump resorting to declaring the border issue an emergency after spending two years in a losing political battle for wall funding. Trump himself appeared to undermine his argument as he announced the emergency on Friday. "I didn't need to do this, but I'd rather do it much faster," he said.

Daskal expects border landowners also to sue to protect their property rights. "A lot of the land that's at issue is not federal land, it's private land," she said. Chesney points to a challenge over the use of military funds. Defense Department rules say that, even if diverted, construction funds must be for a project that "requires the use of the armed forces". The wall, however, has been cast from the outset as a civilian project. "That is the main point of litigation vulnerability," said Chesney. — AFP

## Kuwait against normalization...

Continued from Page 1

Our participation in the conference stemmed from keenness on defending these issues, not plundering them. We have made our point clear at all international forums, foremost among which is the UN Security Council through our non-permanent membership," he explained, adding that Kuwait's principled stance was highly appreciated by "the Palestinian brothers".

Jarallah reiterated that Kuwait will be the last

## Indebted Kuwaitis call on Amir to cancel...

Continued from Page 1

loan and my first wife and her four children get KD 430. Only KD 260 remains for me and my second wife and two kids. In fact, I'm not able to pay my rent - my family is supporting me," Jassem Al-Mousawi told Kuwait Times.

Mshabib Al-Shali complained about the unequal rights of citizens, which forced him to take a loan. "As the government refused to send my father for medical treatment abroad, I took a loan to pay for his treatment and to get married. After more than five years of paying the KD 50,000 loan, today I still have KD 48,000 to pay, as the bank's interest is almost the same value as the loan. Only

Many angry social media users elsewhere furiously demanded retribution, and several hawkish TV channels called for all-out war with Pakistan. "Please attack and annihilate Pakistan for a safe future for Indians. Now or never," wrote Twitter user Shantanu Munde. The attack has put Modi's Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on the back foot ahead of national elections due by May.

Modi's government in recent years has adopted a muscular policy in Kashmir and shelved dialogue with Pakistan to boost its popularity after accusing the previous government of being soft on militancy. "Revenge is the only word that comes to my mind," tweeted Babul Supriyo, a minister in Modi's government. A meeting of political parties in New Delhi yesterday extended full support to the government in "fighting terrorism, defending India's unity and integrity".

In 2016, New Delhi launched a "surgical strike" in Pakistan-administered Kashmir after militants attacked a military base, killing 19 soldiers. India said special commandos went several miles into the Pakistan-controlled side across the heavily-militarized Line of Control, the de facto border, killing and destroying militant facilities. Pakistan says the strikes never took place.

India has some 500,000 troops in the region, making it the most militarized zone in the world, after an armed rebellion began in 1989. Tens of thousands of people have died in the conflict with most casualties civilians. Last year was the deadliest in a decade with almost 600 killed. The separatist rebels are fighting for the independence of all of Kashmir, while some want it to become a part of Pakistan. — AFP



Sports

# Amir's eighth International Shooting Grand Prix concludes

Kuwait tops medal table with 4 gold, two silver and three bronze



Osaimi, Otaibi, Luciano Rossi with the winners.



Kuwait winning team on the podium.

By Abdellatif Sharaa

**KUWAIT:** HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah Eighth International Shooting Grand Prix concluded on Thursday with the skeet event, as Kuwait shooters dominated the qualifying rounds with five out of six entering the medals rounds. The final round saw Bahrain's Tammam Al-Awatt exiting first leaving the five Kuwaitis competing against each other, with Abdelaziz Al-Faihan exiting in fifth place then Faisal Theyab in fourth competition for the medals was tough before Mansour Al-Rashidi scoring a total of 52 targets, followed by Abdallah Al-Torqi who hit 47 targets and Saud Habib hitting 39 targets.

As for the women's competitions Eman Al-Shammaa won the gold medal followed by Qatar's Sarah Mohammad and the bronze medal went to Kazakhstan's Olga Panarina.

With the result, Kuwait tops the medals table with 4 gold, two silver and three bronze. Kuwait was followed by Serbia which secured four gold and two silver, Saudi Arabia with one gold and one silver, Oman also with one gold and one silver, Italy with one silver and one bronze, Armenia one silver, Bulgaria, Egypt, Bahrain and Qatar one bronze each. The closing ceremony was attended by President of Arab and Kuwait Shooting Federations, President of Italian Shooting Federation Luciano Rossi, Secretary General of Arab and Kuwait

Shooting Federations and other dignitaries. Secretary General of Arab and Kuwait Shooting Federations Obaid Al-Osaimi appreciated the unlimited support HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to Kuwait shooting and the tournaments that are hosted by Kuwait, as this plays the major role in the achievements and successes that are being achieved. Al-Osaimi conveyed thanks on behalf of the Chairman and Board Members to HH the Amir, HH the Crown Prince for supporting Kuwait shooting which had Kuwait flag flying high in all international arenas.

Al-Osaimi pointed to the success of HH the Amir 8th tournament, adding that all participating countries lauded the tournament's success, which increases Kuwait Shooting Federations responsibility in the tournaments to be organized later.

Al-Osaimi also lauded the achievements of Kuwait shooters in the tournament which means the sport is moving on the right path, to reach and make more achievements in the Tokyo 2020 Olympics.

Kuwait Shooting Sport Club Treasurer Essa Butaiban said HH the Amir Grand Prix achieved the success that was hoped for. He said Kuwait Shooting Federation always aim at being successful all the time, while having Kuwait shooters always at the ready through organizing and participating in major tournaments, which previously led to winning world championships and Olympic medals.

**All participating countries lauded tournament's success**

## Scott, Thomas lead at rain-hit Riviera

**LOS ANGELES:** Australia's Adam Scott and American Justin Thomas topped the leaderboard at 10-under par on Friday when darkness halted play in the second round of the weather-disrupted Genesis Open.

Scott and Thomas both posted five-under par 66s on Friday, and each was five-under for the second round when darkness fell on another rainy day at Riviera Country Club, where organizers were scrambling to get the tournament back on track for today's finish after a seven-hour weather delay on Thursday.

Tournament host Tiger Woods made little headway on the marathon day, struggling with the putter in a one-under first round and still one-under, tied for 55th, through 12 holes of the second.

"It was a tough day," Woods said. "I'm stiff right now. It got pretty chilly towards the end, the ball wasn't going very far." Woods strung together four birdies in a row in the middle of his first round, but his troubles on the greens kept him from building any momentum.

"I putted awful today," said Woods, whose 44-foot eagle putt at his 10th

hole in the second round was an anomaly on a day when he hit 17 of 18 greens in regulation in the first round but had four three-putt bogeys.

No sooner had the eagle enlivened his round than he had two straight bogeys before play ended. "I didn't hit it that bad, felt like I controlled it well enough and just a terrible day on the greens," he said.

Despite the long day in tough conditions, Woods noted that plenty of players—more than 70—were under par. "You have to go get it, and JT did it and I just wasn't able to do it," Woods said, lauding playing partner Thomas.

"He made tough conditions look easy," Woods said. Thomas totalled 14 birdies in his day's 30 holes—seven in the first round and seven through 12 holes in the second. "I'm just proud of myself the way I fought out there today," he said.

Thomas and Scott were one stroke clear of J.B. Holmes, who led after a first-round 63 highlighted by a hole in one at the par-three sixth. "It was awesome to see that," Holmes said of the ace, which landed past the hole and spun back some 20 feet. "I wanted to get it past the hole because I knew how much they were coming back. Hit it exactly how I wanted it and it went in." At nine-under with nine to play, Holmes was two strokes in front of Luke List, who was seven under with three to play, and American Jordan Spieth—who was seven-under and due to tee off in the second round on Saturday along with



**PACIFIC PALISADES:** Adam Scott of Australia hits a chip on the 12th hole during the second round of the Genesis Open at Riviera Country Club on Friday in Pacific Palisades, California. —AFP

half the field. Spieth added two more birdies to a bogey-free 64 as he played the last six holes of his first round on Friday morning before having the afternoon off. Scott, no stranger to disruptive weather at Riviera where he won the title in a 2005 edition shortened to 36 holes, said maintaining momentum amid the starts

and stops was tricky. He played 25 holes without a bogey before dropping a shot at his eighth hole of the second round—the 17th, but fired back-to-back birdies before play was halted. "I just got the momentum going and I kept it going," Scott said. "I wasn't really in much trouble, but I up-and-downed it when I had to." —AFP

## Swede Langfors grabs lead at European Tour's World Super 6

**PERTH:** Little-known Swede Per Langfors hit a stunning 64 to be the outright leader after 54 holes at the European Tour's World Super 6 in Perth yesterday. Langfors, playing in only his fifth event at his level,

compiled the round of the day, sinking seven birdies and an eagle, offset by a bogey on the 13th.

He was 10 under for the tournament which under its innovative rules has seen three days of stroke play, cutting the field, with only the top 24 players qualifying for today. They will now go head-to-head in six hole knockout matchplay to decide a winner at the Lake Karrinyup Country Club. A bonus for the top eight on the leaderboard was a bye into the second round on day four.

That means the remaining 16 players are split into eight matches, with half of them getting knocked out of the tournament in the first round. The winners are then paired against the eight players who enjoyed a bye.

"It feels really good, I'm excited for the matchplay," said Langfors, who played for four years on the Nordic

League in Sweden before coming through qualifying to make his European Tour debut last year.

"It's so fun, I mean I'm just enjoying every second of it." He topped Ireland's Paul Dunne, Norway's Kristoffer Reitan and Australian Brad Kennedy by a stroke, with a group of four players including Belgian World Cup winner Thomas Pieters a shot further back.

Like Langfors, Reitan was a big mover, carding a seven-under-par 65, while Dunne stroked a 66. "The main goal today was just get into the matchplay, so it was nice to have done that," said Dunne, who won the British Masters in 2017.

"I like the idea of the format. It's intense, which is good. I think I will be mentally sharp right from the get-go in the morning and just try and make as many putts as I can." —AFP

## Penalty tries save Crusaders as Foley miss costs Waratahs

**WELLINGTON:** The Canterbury Crusaders needed two penalty tries to launch their Super Rugby title defence with victory over the Blues yesterday, while Bernard Foley missed a last gasp penalty as the Waratahs fell to the Hurricanes.

The Blues, on home ground in Auckland, were twice forced into crucial errors during the tense encounter when their forwards were under pressure on their own line as they succumbed 24-22.

Debutant Harry Plummer missed chances to level or snatch victory for the Blues just before full-time when a conversion and penalty both went wide.

"We just had a little bit of luck there at the end, which you need sometimes," said relieved Crusaders skipper Matt Todd. "Both teams scored good tries when they got down in the opposition ends. So we just had to make sure we were the last one's to get points."

Canterbury led 12-3 at the break before an explosive second-half start saw the Blues score twice for a 17-12 lead. But they could not maintain the momentum. "We weren't clinical enough in certain areas," said a frustrated Blues captain Patrick Tuipulotu. "When we took our shot we came off second best."

The Blues, looking a much more polished outfit after their second-last finish last season, dominated possession in the first half. But even without senior All Blacks Kieran Read, Sam Whitelock and Codie Taylor, the Crusaders broke ahead early with two tries.

The first to right wing Manasa Mataele from a Bryn Hall cross kick and the second was a penalty try when the Blues collapsed a lineup drive. The Blues opened the second half with Akira Ioane finishing off a 60-metre counter-attack for their opening try. Ofa Tu'ungafasi crashed over minutes later in a wake-up call for the Crusaders.

A George Bridge break sent Mataele over for his second try and then a monster Crusaders scrum forced the home side to concede a second penalty try before replacement Blues scrum-half Augustine Pulu narrowed the gap.

In Sydney, the gutsy Hurricanes edged past the Wallaby-laden Waratahs 20-19. Foley overtook Matt Burke's all-time 959-point scoring record for the New South Wales team, but ended up the villain by missing a crucial penalty two minutes from time that would have won the game.

"We came up against a tough team," said Hurricanes skipper TJ Perenara. "But we were down the end of the field for a large part of that second half and we applied pressure and that's what got us there in the end." —AFP

## Sports

# Perera takes Sri Lanka to sensational win in S Africa

## Sri Lanka's second win in 14 Test matches in South Africa

### SCOREBOARD

Final scores on the fourth day of the first Test between South Africa and Sri Lanka at Kingsmead yesterday.

South Africa, first innings, 235

Sri Lanka, first innings, 191

South Africa, second innings, 259

Sri Lanka, second innings (overnight 83-3)

D. Karunaratne lbw b Philander	20
L. Thirimanne c Du Plessis b Rabada	21
O. Fernando c Du Plessis b Steyn	37
K. Mendis c De Kock b Olivier	0
K. Perera not out	153
N. Dickwella c and b Steyn	0
D. de Silva lbw b Maharaj	48
S. Lakmal c Du Plessis b Maharaj	0
L. Embuldeniya c Markram b Olivier	4
K. Rajitha lbw b Maharaj	1
V. Fernando not out	6
Extras (b2, lb11, w1)	14
Total (9 wkts, 85.3 overs)	304

Fall of wickets: 1-42 (Thirimanne), 2-42 (Karunaratne), 3-52 (Mendis), 4-110 (O. Fernando), 5-110 (Dickwella), 6-206 (De Silva), 7-206 (Lakmal), 8-215 (Embuldeniya), 9-226 (Rajitha)

Bowling: Steyn 18-1-71-2, Philander 8-3-13-1, Maharaj 20-1-71-3, Rabada 22.3-3-97-1 (1w), Olivier 16-3-35-2, Markram 1-0-4-0.

Result: Sri Lanka won by one wicket

Series: Sri Lanka lead the two-match series 1-0

**DURBAN:** Kusal Perera carried Sri Lanka to a sensational one-wicket win on the fourth day of the first Test against South Africa at Kingsmead yesterday as he hit a career-best 153 not out. Perera and Vishwa Fernando put on an unbeaten 78 in a last-wicket partnership to secure only Sri Lanka's second win in 14 Test matches in South Africa.

Victory seemed unlikely when the ninth wicket fell with the total on 226, with the tourists chasing a target of 304. But the left-handed Perera successfully farmed the strike, with South African captain Faf du Plessis persisting with wide-spread fields for the in-form batsman, while Fernando only had to face 27 balls during a 96-ball partnership.

Perera was on 86 when the ninth wicket fell but managed to keep most of the strike and to hit some telling blows in an innings of 200 balls which included 12 fours and five sixes. "It was a superman effort," said Du Plessis. "He (Perera) deserves all the accolades."



**'It was a superman effort,' said Du Plessis**

### LOW PREVIOUS AVERAGE

South Africa took the second new ball with the total on 263 but still kept most of their fielders on the boundary for Perera, who hit sixes off both Dale Steyn and Kagiso Rabada before slashing Rabada to third man for the winning boundary.

Perera, who came into the match with a career batting average below 30 and with his only previous century in 14 previous Tests having been made against Zimbabwe in Harare two seasons ago, shared three important partnerships.



**DURBAN:** Sri Lanka's Kusal Perera (R) celebrates the victory after hitting the winning runs with Vishwa Fernando (L) during the fourth day of the first Cricket Test between South Africa and Sri Lanka at the Kingsmead Stadium in Durban yesterday. — AFP

He put on 58 for the fourth wicket with debutant Oshado Fernando (37) and 96 for the sixth wicket with Dhananjaya de Silva (48) before his extraordinary association with Vishwa Fernando.

"I'm a little tired now, I don't know what to say," said Perera when he received the man of the match award. "I did my part but we are winning as a team."

The stand with Oshado Fernando was broken by Dale Steyn, who had Fernando caught at second slip by South African captain Faf du Plessis. Two balls later he caught Niroshan Dickwella off his own bowling.

Sri Lanka were still a distant 194 runs short of their target when Perera was joined by De Silva, Sri Lanka's

last recognised batsman.

South Africa, who were without opening bowler Vernon Philander because of a strained left hamstring, struggled for the next two hours as Perera and De Silva brought the target down to single figures.

Left-arm spinner Keshav Maharaj took two wickets off successive balls, dismissing De Silva leg before wicket and having Suranga Lakmal caught at slip.

The next two wickets fell quickly - but what seemed certain victory for South Africa turned into a triumph for the tourists, who are assured of at least a share of the honours in a two-match series. The second Test starts in Port Elizabeth on Thursday. — AFP

## Guptill runs flow sweeps N Zealand past Bangladesh

**CHRISTCHURCH:** A rejuvenated Martin Guptill wound back the clock with his second century in as many games as a clinical New Zealand clinched their one-day series against Bangladesh in Christchurch yesterday.

The long-serving opener, who had a disappointing recent series against India, rated his 118 as a more satisfying knock than the unbeaten 117 when he returned to form in the first match against Bangladesh.

"There was a lot of flow and rhythm in that one," he said after New Zealand comfortably knocked off their 227-run target for the loss of two wickets and with 13.5 overs to spare. "It felt like I got back to where I was a couple of years ago." Guptill cut, drove and pulled the Bangladesh attack apart as New Zealand cruised to victory and went 2-0 up in the three-

match series. With the World Cup looming, New Zealand skipper Kane Williamson was pleased to see his side had taken lessons from the 4-1 drubbing inflicted by India. "It was what we were wanting," he said. "That was a really tough series and (the) guys got taught some harsh lessons and it's important you learn from those." Today and in the last game there were a couple of nice performances obviously led by Martin Guptill. Against India's tight bowling, Guptill was restricted to a top score of 15. But against a less confining Bangladesh attack, he scored freely, with 14 fours and four sixes from the 88 deliveries he faced.

After rolling Bangladesh for 226, Guptill made a flying start in New Zealand's reply as they passed through 10 overs at 59 for one while Bangladesh were 32 for two at the same stage. Mustafizur Rahman claimed the early wicket of Henry Nicholls for 14, leaving Kane Williamson to partner Guptill in a 143-run stand for the second wicket.

When Guptill went in similar fashion to Nicholls, caught on the boundary by Liton Das off Mustafizur Rahman in the 29th over, New Zealand were 188 for two. Williamson and Ross Taylor then guided the home side to the finish

with Williamson not out 65 and Taylor on 21.

### SLOPPING FIELDING

After Williamson won the toss and opted to bowl under cloudy skies, the Bangladesh top order again failed to fire. They were in trouble at 93 for five after 21 overs before Mohammad Mithun and Sabbir Rahman provided some backbone for the innings, putting on 75 for the sixth wicket. Mithun again played the anchor role, as he did with his hard-fought 62 in the first match. In game two, he scored 57 off 69 deliveries before he was bowled by Todd Astle, while Sabbir contributed 43 off 65. New Zealand assisted the Bangladesh cause with 23 extras and some sloppy fielding while Rahman had fortune on his side when an edge off a Todd Astle delivery nicked the stumps but the bails stayed on.

Colin de Grandhomme had an eventful first over that lasted 11 deliveries, included five wides and also produced the wicket of Soumya Sarkar who was caught by Ross Taylor for 22. But Taylor dropped two catches in the following overs. Ferguson finished as the most successful New Zealand bowler with three for 43. The third and final ODI is in Dunedin next Wednesday, followed by three Test matches. — AFP

## Kaepernick agrees to confidential NFL settlement

**NEW YORK:** Colin Kaepernick, whose kneeling protests sparked a firestorm of controversy, has reached a settlement with the NFL over his collusion grievance against the league, his attorneys said Friday. But a confidentiality clause will keep details of the arrangement private, the deal being made ahead of a planned final arbitration hearing on the grievance that was to be heard later this month.

Kaepernick and former San Francisco 49ers teammate Eric Reid both filed a lawsuit against the NFL saying owners and officials colluded to keep them off NFL rosters for their decision to make a kneeling protest during the US anthem.

Reid signed a one-year deal as an injury replacement last season with the Carolina Panthers and on Thursday inked a new three-year contract with the same club but Kaepernick has been unemployed since opting out of his contract in March 2017, missing two full NFL campaigns.

Kaepernick, a 31-year-old signal caller who guided the 49ers to the 2013 Super Bowl, had said he was only interested in a settlement if it meant a solid financial deal was reached. But it could also mean that Kaepernick, who has signed a deal with Nike in the wake of being ignored by the NFL for two seasons, might yet return to the league.

NFL officials denied collusion claims by Kaepernick and Reid despite comments from US President Donald Trump that urged owners to fire any "son of a bitch" who knelt during the anthem after many NFL players followed Kaepernick's lead in 2017.

Kaepernick and Reid said they were

protesting racial inequality and social injustice. Trump claimed their actions were an insult to the flag, the nation and the military. In a statement released on the Twitter account of attorney Mark Geragos, the law firm dealing with Kaepernick's legal action against the NFL said the two sides have come to terms without indicating what those terms were.

"For the past several months, counsel for Mr. Kaepernick and Mr. Reid have engaged in an ongoing dialogue with representatives of the NFL," the Geragos and Geragos firm's statement said. "As a result of those discussions, the parties have decided to resolve the pending grievances. The resolution of this matter is subject to a confidentiality agreement so there will be no further comment by any party." Mark Geragos's past clients have included pop icon Michael Jackson and musician Chris Brown.

The NFL Players Association supported the decision by Kaepernick and Reid despite not knowing exact details of the settlement. "Today, we were informed by the NFL of the settlement of the Colin Kaepernick and Eric Reid collusion cases. We are not privy to the details of the settlement, but support the decision by the players and their counsel," the NFLPA said.

"We continuously supported Colin and Eric from the start of their protests, participated with their lawyers throughout their legal proceedings and were prepared to participate in the upcoming trial in pursuit of both truth and justice for what we believe the NFL and its clubs did to them."

"We are glad that Eric has earned a job and a new contract, and we continue to hope that Colin gets his opportunity as well." One of the most respected elder statesmen of American sport, NBA great Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, told CNBC on Friday that he was "happy" Kaepernick can now move forward.

"He should be playing in the NFL," said Abdul-Jabbar, who has long championed the quarterback's right to speak out. "I hope it is settled to his satisfaction. It's been too long." — AFP

## Uruguay's Indian cricketers searching for permanent home

**MONTEVIDEO:** Every Sunday, close to a statue of Indian independence hero Mahatma Gandhi, a group of Indian ex-pats take over a patch of land in Uruguay's capital Montevideo for a game of cricket.

Tucked in between the Rio de la Plata estuary and the long promenade known as the "rambla" that stretches from one side of Montevideo to the other, Avijit Mukherjee prepares to bat, watched eagerly by his Uruguayan girlfriend. "I played in my country but with a lot more infrastructure," said the 28-year-old Mukherjee, whose girlfriend Veronica is the main reason he has stayed in Uruguay. "There are stadiums and many places to play in India, whereas here we only have one." Although cricket was first played in Montevideo by British expat workers even before the foundation of the independent republic in 1828, its practice died out in the 1980s. But following an influx of Indian immigrants to Uruguay at the turn of the century, cricket steadily returned to Montevideo. First there were one-off matches. Then, the players organized their own league and even set up a Uruguayan national team.

At the end of last year, Uruguay, whose team was made up almost entirely of Indian expats, finished second in the South American championships in Colombia.

While the cricketers are now established on their little patch of land, their initial appearance was not entirely welcomed by local footballers playing on an adjacent pitch. "We came like spiders and rebuked them," recalls Daniel Mosco, a local resident who has been playing football in that field for 30 years. The issue was quickly resolved, though, and the cricketers agreed to start playing only once the football matches had



**MONTEVIDEO:** Indians living in Uruguay play a shot during a cricket match along Montevideo's seaside promenade on February 10, 2019. — AFP

finished. With no fixed cricket markings, players use flour to draw white lines. Now, bat can be heard crashing against ball until sunset.

Even though they've been here for years, the shouts of "howzat!" and "wait on" still elicit glances from locals making their way along the rambla. They make a curious spectacle for people little accustomed with either cricket or India. Mosco, for one, was surprised that the players speak to each other in English. And there's another surprise in the form of 29-year-old doctor Saied Muhammad Asif Raza: he's from Pakistan.

"Between the governments and in (professional) cricket there are always problems, but the people get on really well and within the team there are no problems whatsoever," said Asif. He left his home town of Multan, 10 hours from Islamabad, at 19 and moved to Cuba thanks to a Fidel Castro scholarship.

After returning home, he found he couldn't readapt to his own culture. "I didn't come here to find a better life economically, I had a better life in my country because in my family we didn't lack for anything," said Asif.

"The thing is that when you live many years away, nowhere is home, and cricket brings me close to it." Although now at home on their small patch, finding something more permanent is crucial to Montevideo's cricketers. "We're looking for a permanent ground," Beerbal Maniyattukudy, the Uruguayan cricket association's secretary, told AFP. "We have 120 players this year. On top of that we're starting some women's teams and for now we have 20 people interested. We also have plans for an under-15s league." The solution may lie with Uruguay's most popular football team: Penarol.

Penarol started life as the Central Uruguay Railway Cricket Club (CURCC), founded by British railway workers in 1891.

It was a multisport club-but just over 20 years later, its football section broke off and was absorbed by a newly created team, Penarol. The original club's cricket section disappeared as football became the main focus-but it was relaunched a week ago. And crucially, Penarol are planning to build a cricket pitch an hour outside Montevideo. — AFP



**NEW YORK:** In this file photo taken on September 08, 2018, a Nike ad featuring American football quarterback Colin Kaepernick is displayed in New York City. Colin Kaepernick and the NFL have reached a settlement agreement to the former quarterback's collusion grievance against the league, his attorneys said Friday. — AFP

## Sports

# Bayern fight back twice in Liverpool tune-up win

## Bayern Munich concede fastest own-goal in Bundesliga history

**BERLIN:** Bayern Munich conceded the fastest own-goal in Bundesliga history on Friday and twice had to equalise before securing a 3-2 win at Augsburg in their final tune-up before their Champions League tie at Liverpool.

Ahead of Tuesday's last 16, first-leg clash at Anfield, Liverpool boss Jurgen Klopp will have watched with interest how Augsburg, who sit just above the Bundesliga relegation places, caused Bayern a few problems.

The away league win means defending champions Bayern trimmed the gap to just two points behind leaders Borussia Dortmund, who are at bottom side Nuremberg tomorrow. With one eye on Anfield, Bayern goalkeeper Manuel Neuer returned after three games out with a thumb injury, but conceded two goals in the opening 24 minutes—the first after just 13 seconds. Leon Goretzka claimed an unwanted record for the Bundesliga's fastest own-goal when he turned the ball into his own net. "I can't remember a worst start from us," admitted Bayern coach Niko Kovac. "We have to play much better at Liverpool."

The win could have come at a price as Kingsley Coman, who scored Bayern's first-half goals, was injured in the dying stages. "We need to see how he is, but it doesn't look good," admitted Kovac. Coman twice equalised in the opening half, cancelling out the own-goal then levelling at the half-time break after South Korea international Ji Dong-won had restored Augsburg's lead.

David Alaba scored Bayern's winning goal early in the second half, but Bayern will need to improve to trouble

Liverpool. "The goals we conceded were crazy," said Bayern captain Neuer. "We had said we wanted to defend well and we didn't manage that."

"Liverpool are a strong, attacking team and we must do better, luckily we have a few days to improve."

Bibiana Steinhaus, the first female referee in Europe's top five leagues, had barely blown for kick-off when Augsburg winger Philipp Max put in a cross which flummoxed the Bayern defence.

Goretzka watched in horror as the ball ricocheted off his boot and into the net as the injury-hit hosts took a shock lead. It was short of the Bundesliga's record fastest goal, just nine seconds, shared by Kevin Volland, for Hoffenheim against Bayern in 2015/16, and Karim Bellarabi, for Leverkusen against Dortmund in 2014/15.

However, shell-shocked Bayern quickly regrouped. Serge Gnabry and Robert Lewandowski went close, then Bayern drew level on 17 minutes when a beautifully curling

Joshua Kimmich cross found Kingsley Coman, who tapped home at the far post.

Augsburg restored their lead with almost a copy of their first goal when Max again fired in a cross and Ji rifled an unstoppable shot past Neuer from 14 metres out on 24 minutes. Bayern still managed to go into the half-time break level when Coman claimed his second goal.

Goretzka made up for his earlier mistake with a pass to the French winger, who fired through the legs of Augsburg goalkeeper Gregor Kobel to make it 2-2 just before the



**AUGSBURG:** Bayern Munich's defender Niklas Suele (R) and Augsburg's Venezuelan midfielder Sergio Cordova vie for the ball during the German first division Bundesliga match between FC Augsburg and FC Bayern Munich in Augsburg, southern Germany, on Friday. — AFP

break. The winning goal arrived eight minutes into the second-half when Coman flicked the ball inside to Alaba and the 26-year-old fired a trademark low-shot inside the post

which gave Augsburg keeper Kobel no chance. Augsburg's Reece Oxford headed over with a brilliant effort with 26 minutes left, but Bayern held on for victory. — AFP

## Ronaldo on target as Juventus cruise

**MILAN:** Cristiano Ronaldo set up Paulo Dybala to score early and added one himself with defender Leonardo Bonucci also on target as Juventus surged 14 points clear in Serie A on Friday with a 3-0 win over lowly Frosinone.

Coach Massimiliano Allegri was taking no chances, even against a side sitting second bottom of the table, ahead of next week's Champions League last 16, first-leg tie at Atletico Madrid.

The seven-time reigning Serie A champions are also building towards a top-of-the-table clash against Napoli in the San Paolo Stadium on March 3.

Allegri's side continued their unbeaten run against their outclassed rivals from outside Rome to move 14 points clear of Napoli who host Torino today.

"A great series of matches commence, coming thick and fast," warned Allegri as he included Ronaldo alongside Dybala and Mario Mandzukic on the front line.

Defender Bonucci returned from an ankle injury along with captain Giorgio Chiellini who had limped off during their shock Coppa Italia exit to Atalanta on January 30.

Ronaldo set up Dybala to fire in the first goal after just six minutes in Turin as the Argentina forward, who has been overshadowed since the arrival of the former Real Madrid player, scored his first league goal since

November 3.

Ten minutes later Bonucci broke through after a desperate goalmouth scramble. Frosinone goalkeeper Marco Sportiello denied Mandzukic's diving header with defender Bonucci in place to turn the rebound into goal. Ronaldo slotted in his 19th Serie A goal and 21st in all competitions on 62 minutes with Rodrigo Bentancur crossing for Mandzukic who provided the assist for the Portuguese striker.

Ronaldo was then replaced by Federico Bernardeschi with the tie against Atletico in mind.

AC Milan, in fourth, travel to Atalanta, one place below in fifth, in a battle for Champions League football next season. Napoli host Torino on Sunday, with Inter Milan, in third, hosting ninth-placed Sampdoria.

Roma play relegation threatened Bologna tomorrow after winning their Champions League last 16, first-leg tie against Porto 2-1. —AFP

## Argentines pay tribute to Sala

**PROGRESO:** Grieving Argentines paid tribute to footballer Emiliano Sala yesterday at a special memorial in his home region of Santa Fe. The body of the 28-year-old Sala, who died in a plane crash last month, was laid out in a gymnasium in the town where he grew up so friends and family could pay their last respects.

A single-engine plane carrying Sala from French club Nantes to his new team Cardiff City crashed on Jan. 21 in the English Channel, before he made his debut for the Premier League side who bought him for a club record 15 million pounds (\$19.34 million).

Wreckage was found on Feb. 3 following a privately-funded underwater search and a body recovered three days later. Sala's body was flown back to Argentina and arrived in Buenos Aires on Friday morning before being driven the 538 km (334 miles) to Progreso, where he grew up.

The gymnasium of the Atletico y

Social San Martin de Progreso club hosted boys' teams where Sala played as a child. Residents in the town of around 2,500 people, many wearing the red and black shirt of the local side with the name EMI on the back, began arriving at about 7am on Saturday to see the body and pay their last respects. Outside, fans draped a banner saying, 'Emi, nunca caminaras solo' or 'Emi, You'll Never Walk Alone.' "It's as if he was a member of my family," said a sobbing Lucia Torres, who lives nearby. "It's something I can't understand nor accept because it hurts so much. The town has been in darkness since Jan. 21."

Sala's body will be taken to the nearby city of Santa Fe for cremation later in the evening but his family did not give details of what would happen to his ashes. Cardiff manager Neil Warnock along with the Welsh club's chief executive Ken Choo and president Mehmet Dalman are among those attending the ceremony, as is Sala's former Nantes team mate Nicolas Pallois. "I would like to find a responsible person... someone who says to me, 'This happened', but, well, it seems this was just an accident," said Sala's aunt, Mirta Taffarel. — Reuters



**CARDIFF:** File photo released by Cardiff City FC via Noticias Argentinas taken on January 20, 2019 showing Argentine footballer Emiliano Sala posing with Cardiff's jersey after signing for the club, in Cardiff, UK. — AFP

## Ethiopia's Tefera breaks Guerrouj's 1500m indoor record

**BIRMINGHAM:** Ethiopia's Samuel Tefera set a new 1500 metres indoor world record in Birmingham yesterday as he broke a mark that had stood for more than 20 years. Tefera upstaged compatriot Yomif Kejelcha to stop the clock in a time of 3min 31.04sec, shaving 0.14sec off the previous record set by Moroccan middle-distance great Hicham El Guerrouj in 1997.

Kejelcha, who came within 0.01sec of the world indoor mile record last week, had announced his intention to break the 1500m mark ahead of yesterday's World Indoor Tour meeting in Birmingham.

And with pacemakers taking the field through 800m in 1:52.70 and 2:49.28 at the 1200m mark, Kejelcha was on course for a record. But Tefera, the world indoor champion at the distance, was tucked in on his shoulder and, as the bell sounded for the final lap, he kicked past his countryman and charged towards the line. Kejelcha came second in an outright personal best of 3:31.58. — AFP



**BIRMINGHAM:** Ethiopia's Samuel Tefera poses with his world record time after competing win the men's 1500m final at the Indoor athletics Grand Prix at Arena Birmingham in Birmingham yesterday. — AFP



### Matches on TV

(Local Timings)

SPANISH LEAGUE		
Real Madrid CF v Girona	beIN SPORTS HD 3	14:00
Valencia CF v RCD Espanyol	beIN SPORTS HD 3	18:15
Villarreal CF v Sevilla FC	beIN SPORTS HD 3	20:30
Real Betis v Deportivo Alaves	beIN SPORTS HD 3	22:45
ITALIAN CALCIO LEAGUE		
Spal v ACF Fiorentina	beIN SPORTS	14:30
Udinese Calcio v AC Chievo Verona	beIN SPORTS	17:00
Genoa CFC v SS Lazio	beIN SPORTS	17:00
Empoli v US Sassuolo Calcio	beIN SPORTS	17:00
Internazionale Milano v UC Sampdoria	beIN SPORTS	20:00
SSC Napoli v Torino FC	beIN SPORTS	22:30
GERMAN BUNDESLIGA		
Eintracht Frankfurt v Borussia Monchengladbach	beIN SPORTS	17:30
Bayer 04 Leverkusen v Fortuna D, Sseldorf	beIN SPORTS	20:00
FRENCH LEAGUE		
LOSC Lille v Montpellier HSC	beIN SPORTS	17:00
Caen v RC Strasbourg	beIN SPORTS	17:00
FC Girondins de Bordeaux v Toulouse FC	beIN SPORTS	17:00
Stade Reims v Stade Rennais	beIN SPORTS	19:00
Saint Etienne v Paris Saint-Germain	beIN SPORTS	23:00

## Lyon ready for 'game of season' with Barcelona

**PARIS:** Lyon edged rock-bottom Guingamp 2-1 in Ligue 1 on Friday with a fabulous winner from captain Nabil Fekir, just days ahead of Barcelona's visit for a Champions League clash. Lyon consolidated third place in Ligue 1 while resting a couple of key players and even taking their foot off the gas with Barcelona in mind.

"It's our game of the year, it'll be a big match, but we often do well in them," Lyon president Jean Michel Aulas told French TV. "Bruno (Genesio the Lyon coach) takes tactical risks and we have surprised (Manchester) City before, and this stadium was built for matches like this," he added on their 60,000-capacity home.

"Many of the players had Tuesday on their minds but with Barcelona coming that's normal," said Genesio, mastermind of the four points Lyon took off City in the group phase to squeeze into the last-16. "We have some doubts still about who is playing on Tuesday, but you'll have to wait until Monday to find out," Genesio added.

Ahead of their today's game with Saint Etienne, PSG still lead Ligue 1 on 59 points with Lille second on 49 and Lyon third on 46. Martin Terrier put Lyon ahead after a scramble on 15 minutes before defender Leo Dubois was then overpowered five minutes later by Guingamp's Cameroonian midfielder Felix Eboa Eboa, who rushed in for a header at the far post shouldering the defender out of the way to make it 1-1. But then on 35 minutes Fekir controlled the ball on his chest, took a quick touch to set himself up for the shot and curled a fabulous left-foot shot into the top corner from outside the box.

Fekir, however, will miss the game against Barcelona through suspension. "I'll be in the stadium supporting my teammates from the stands and I'll believe in them all the way," said French international Fekir.

One other worry for Lyon was the loss of lively striker Moussa Dembele, who was replaced late on by Dutch forward Memphis Depay. Earlier Friday, Nimes secured top flight survival with a 2-0 win over Dijon. — AFP

**25** Amir's eighth International Shooting Grand Prix concludes

**26** Uruguay's Indian cricketers searching for permanent home

**27** Ethiopia's Tefera breaks Guerrouj's 1500m indoor record



## Kuzma leads Team USA past Team World

Kyle scores game-high 35 points, named MVP of the game



CHARLOTTE: Kyle Kuzma #0 of the US Team receives the MVP award after the 2019 Mtn Dew ICE Rising Stars Game on Friday at the Spectrum Center in Charlotte, North Carolina.— AFP

CHARLOTTE: Offense ruled the day and Team USA won the Rising Stars game over Team World, 161-144, Friday night at Spectrum Center in the opening competition of All-Star Weekend. Lakers guard Kyle Kuzma was named MVP of the game played at a dizzying speed, the 24-second shot clock rarely ticking to 16 before the ball went up.

Kuzma scored a game-high 35 points and had six rebounds, while Celtics forward Jayson Tatum added 30 for Team USA. Kuzma was 15 of 27 from the field in 22 minutes. "I played in this game last year and was really lackadaisical. I didn't want to

do that again," Kuzma said.

His teammates were impressed. "He definitely showed out tonight. Without his 35 we probably lose," Hawks guard Trae Young said. The annual exhibition game features players in their first and second seasons in the league.

Team USA went up on the World team 132-121 with 7:35 left on Young's second 3-pointer in as many possessions, and Knicks rookie Kevin Knox flushed a two-handed jam off a Young behind-the-back dish 13 seconds later to build a 134-121 edge.

Timberwolves forward Josh Okogie's three-point

play for the World made it a two-possession game with 6:17 to go. The breakneck, video-game pace might have been blinding for basketball purists, with a turntable active for all 40 minutes and a modest level of defense applied—even by All-Star Weekend standards. No free throws were attempted in the first half.

"As you can see, not much defense, guys just want to get up and play," World guard Ben Simmons said. "It's good to get out there and just get up and down with guys you don't normally go up and down with."

Simmons led the World with 28 points, hitting 14 of his 17 shots. Jazz forward Donovan Mitchell made the

game's first free throw with 2:30 left in the third quarter to complete the and-1 play.

Only one serious defensive challenge at the rim was made and it was an emphatic rejection by Brooklyn Nets forward Jarrett Allen of the US squad when Ben Simmons attacked in the paint.

Team USA led 83-71 at halftime, shooting 62.1 percent from the field. "It's tough in these types of games and environments to manage how to have fun and compete," Young said, noting Team USA was driven to snap a two-game losing streak to Team World. Kuzma and Tatum combined for 39 points in the first half.— Reuters

## Shiffrin wins fourth successive world slalom gold

ARE: American Mikaela Shiffrin became the first Alpine skier to win the same event at four successive world championships with a thrilling victory in the slalom yesterday. Shiffrin, 23, was only third after the first run but produced an electrifying second leg to claim victory by 0.58 seconds from Swede Anna Swenn Larsson.

She ended the championships with two golds, having won the Super-G, and a bronze from the giant slalom. Her victory was all the more impressive as she said she had been battling a lung infection and "run out of oxygen" towards the end of her surge for victory.

"It was tough to breathe without coughing, I was just fighting to stay in the course, it was tough today," she said. "My skiing, especially in the second run was really good, I was pushing really hard."

Shiffrin joins Belgian-born German Christl Cranz, who dominated skiing in the 1930s, as the only Alpine skier to have won a specific event at four world championships. Shiffrin's victory made her only the third American woman to win two golds at the same world championships, after Lindsey Vonn

(2009) and Andrea Mead Lawrence (1952).

### BIG MISTAKE

Slovakia's Petra Vlhova, who beat Shiffrin to gold in the giant slalom, was a full second back in third place. "When I crossed the finish I couldn't believe that I had a chance of a medal because I took risks and made mistakes," Vlhova, Slovakia's first Alpine skiing world champion, said.

Swiss Wendy Holdener, who had clocked the fastest time in a rain-hit first leg, saw her chances of a third gold medal vanish as she made a big mistake early in the last run of the day. Austria's Katharina Liensberger was fourth, meaning the Alpine powerhouse nation ended the championships without a medal from the women's races for the first time since 1982.

Rain, poor visibility and a rutted course proved too much for most of the skiers in the morning run, leaving the battle for gold between the fastest six who were separated by only 0.56 seconds heading into the decisive action.

With the sun finally making an appearance, slalom queen Shiffrin found the perfect rhythm as she powered through the gates, hardly putting a ski out of place. When she crossed the line more than a second clear of Vlhova she looked completely spent, laying in the snow to catch her breath before climbing to her feet to watch the last two runs.

Larsson's advantage quickly disappeared on the split times but the Swede, roared on by the home crowd, held her run together and celebrated wildly as she



ARE: (L to R) Second placed Sweden's Anna Swenn Larsson, winner US' Mikaela Shiffrin and third placed Slovakia's Petra Vlhova celebrate during the flower ceremony of the women's slalom event at the 2019 FIS Alpine Ski World Championships at the National Arena in Are, Sweden, yesterday.— AFP

crossed the line with a medal guaranteed, even if it was not the gold she craved.

It was left to Holdener, bidding for a third gold from the championships, to deny Shiffrin, but she missed a

gate early in her run and slipped down to 17th overall. Austria have one more chance to claim a gold medal from the championships when Marcel Hirscher starts as favourite in the men's slalom race today.— Reuters