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# Ghanem defends position of Kuwait on Palestinian issue

MP says debt gathering a message to government

## Kharafi eyes added value for bourse

KUWAIT: Bader Al-Kharafi, representative of the Al-Kharafi-Al-Bahar consortium that won an equity stake of 44 percent in Boursa Kuwait, said many ideas and steps need to be taken to develop the bourse. Speaking during an exclusive interview with CNBC Arabia, Kharafi said the ideas proposed include boosting tools such as derivatives, option markets, long-term trading, adding a bond market, real estate portfolio market and investment hedging along with observing transparency standards and systems that would attract international corporations. "We

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need to reconsider automation and connection with brokerage firms to facilitate and encourage trading," he underlined.

Kharafi also highlighted the need to encourage family businesses to get listed, noting that it has been observed through the years that third generations in these businesses usually face some challenges in running the business. "If we manage to convince them to get listed, this will facilitate things for them as well as for future generations, and thus we will achieve an added value for the market," he said.

Kharafi said the bourse should offer more opportunities to the youth and entrepreneurs, as some of them would want to surrender part of their equities to fund expansions. "The



KUWAIT: (From left) Finance Minister Nayef Al-Hajraf, representative of the Al-Kharafi-Al-Bahar consortium Bader Al-Kharafi and CEO of Capital Markets Authority Ahmad Al-Melhem attend a press conference yesterday. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

bourse must enable them to do this," he said, expressing a desire to cooperate with the National Fund for Small and Medium Enterprises' Development. He said government companies will follow in the footsteps of similar regional firms in getting listed in the bourse through privatization opportunities in fields such as post and electricity.

Responding to a question about the price of

237 fils per share offered by the consortium, Kharafi stressed that the price was set after thorough studies had been done based on the bourse's development after being run by the private sector rather than the current situation. "We do not look forward to increasing revenues by imposing huge fees on companies, but through achieving added value for Boursa Kuwait," he concluded.

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem yesterday strongly defended Kuwait's position on the Palestinian issue and lashed out at statements by some opposition groups that strongly criticized the government on this issue. Ghanem was commenting on reactions by MPs, activists and political groups that strongly criticized the presence of deputy foreign minister Khaled Al-Jarallah in a group picture in which the Israeli prime minister was present at a Warsaw conference last week.

The speaker said that he personally wishes not to see any Arab or Muslim official being pictured with the Israeli premier. He said that the picture does not take away anything from Kuwait's relentless and unwavering support for the Palestinian cause and reiterated what HH the Amir has always said - that Kuwait will be the last Arab country to normalize ties with Israel.

But Ghanem strongly blasted certain groups "that no longer have any popular following" and which have strongly criticized Jarallah's action and the government's position. He said that such groups have no right to comment on the Kuwaiti position in this unacceptable way. The speaker also said that the assembly foreign relations committee - in coordination with him - will invite Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-

Khaled Al-Sabah for a debate on this issue next week.

In another development, MP Thamer Al-Sumait said yesterday that a gathering held on Saturday by hundreds of Kuwaiti citizens calling to write off their debts is a clear message to the government. The lawmaker said that the gathering also reflects the sufferings of more than 429,000 Kuwaiti debtors and the need to forgive their loans. He urged all MPs to support a move to force the government to forgive the loans. He said that the living conditions of Kuwaiti citizens must occupy the top of priorities of lawmakers and that the government must carefully understand the message of the Kuwaiti people.

Hundreds of citizens gathered outside the National Assembly on Saturday to demand that the Assembly should press the government to scrap all bank loans of Kuwaiti citizens. A large number of lawmakers have said they will support such a move when it comes up for debate in the Assembly, while the government insists it will not scrap the loans.

Meanwhile, head of the central government agency for stateless people or bedoons Saleh Al-Fadhalah yesterday received a delegation from Human Rights Watch to discuss the issue of bedoons. Fadhalah said the agency's doors are wide open for human rights organizations regarding the situation of stateless residents.

## News in brief

### UAE to build US military hospital

ABU DHABI: A US military hospital funded by the United Arab Emirates will be built in Abu Dhabi to treat Emirati soldiers and regionally based American troops, a US army official said yesterday. Lt Gen Charles Hooper, director of the Defense Security Cooperation Agency, said the US would deploy medical military personnel in support of a facility "very similar" to the one in Landstuhl, Germany - the biggest American hospital outside the US. "We are going to put that right here in Abu Dhabi," he told reporters on the sidelines of the International Defense Exhibition in the UAE capital. "When completed, this facility, which is funded by the UAE, will provide much-needed emergency medical support to both Emirati forces and to regionally based US forces," he said. — AFP

### Saudi inks naval deal with French firm

ABU DHABI: Saudi Arabia's state arms producer and a French government-majority firm signed an agreement yesterday on a joint venture to boost the kingdom's navy. The memorandum of understanding between Saudi Arabian Military Industries (SAMI) and France's Naval Group is aimed at providing the Gulf state's navy with "state-of-the-art systems", a statement said. "Through design, construction, and maintenance activities, the joint venture will contribute significantly to further enhancing the capabilities and readiness of our Royal Saudi Naval Forces," SAMI boss Andreas Schwer said. — AFP

### Riyadh defends mobile app

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia yesterday defended a mobile app that allows men in the kingdom to track female relatives after rights groups and a US lawmaker criticized tech giants for offering it. The Absher app provides services for "all members of the society... including women, the elderly, and people with special needs", the interior ministry said. The free app is available on Android and Apple smartphones and allows users to renew passports, visas and eases a variety of other electronic services. The ministry criticized what it called a "systematic campaign aimed at questioning the purpose of the services". It rejected what it described as "attempts to politicize" the tool. — AFP

## Saudi Arabia inks deals to invest \$20bn in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman yesterday kicked off his tour of South Asia and China with a high-profile visit to Pakistan, signing joint agreements worth \$20 billion, according to Saudi-owned Arabiya TV. Prime Minister Imran Khan and Pakistan's army chief Qamar Javed Bajwa welcomed the crown prince on the red carpet of a military airport in the garrison city of Rawalpindi, near the capital Islamabad. As part of a grandiose welcome for the Saudi delegation, Pakistan also sent fighter jets to guide the incoming plane of Prince Mohammed.

Prince Mohammed had also planned to visit Indonesia and Malaysia during the tour, but those trips have been postponed, according to Malaysian and Indonesian officials. The crown prince will, however, visit India. "This visit, God willing, will start a new chapter in Pakistan and Saudi Arabia's relations," Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi told state-run PTV channel. "We're going to start a strategic economic partnership."

Cash-strapped and in need of friends, Pakistan is welcoming the crown prince with open arms for a visit during which

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ISLAMABAD: Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan greets Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman upon his arrival at the Nur Khan air force base yesterday. — AFP

## Iran urges better Gulf ties; launches new armed sub

DUBAI: Iran is ready to work with all of its neighbors to secure peace in the Middle East in the face of US and Israeli aggression, President Hassan Rouhani said yesterday, in his latest attempt to weaken ties between regional rival Saudi Arabia and America. Iran and Saudi

Arabia have been fighting proxy wars for years, backing opposing sides in conflicts in Syria and Yemen. But pressure is building on Tehran after President Donald Trump pulled the United States out of a 2015 nuclear deal with six world powers and reimposed sanctions. Saudi Arabia welcomed the move.

"Iran is ready to work with regional states to preserve security in the Middle East," Rouhani said in a public speech in the southern Hormozgan province, broadcast live on state TV. "We want to establish brotherly ties with all countries of the region... Iran has never started any aggression in the region."

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## Lebanese women hail first female Arab interior minister

BEIRUT: Lebanon has appointed the Arab world's first female interior minister in its new government, prising open a wider foothold for women in its overwhelmingly male political scene. Raya Al-Hassan is one of four women to take cabinet jobs in the new coalition, more than ever before in Lebanon and three more than in the last government, in which even the minister for women was a man. Though Hassan has already held top jobs - including finance minister in 2009-2011 - her appointment to a portfolio managing security was hailed as a step forward for women in Lebanese politics.

"This is a point of pride for all women and all the people who believe in women's capabilities," Hassan said. "There are a lot of female interior and defense ministers in the world and they have proved their efficiency. It might be a new phenomenon for Lebanon and Arab countries, but hopefully it will be repeated and not be unique," she added. The three other women in the 30-strong cabinet are in charge of energy, administrative development and the economic empowerment of women and young people.

Though Lebanon is widely held to be liberal by regional standards, with women playing a prominent

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BANDAR ABBAS: Iranian President Hassan Rouhani unveils Iran's first semi-heavy submarine named Fateh at the Bandar Abbas naval base yesterday. — AFP

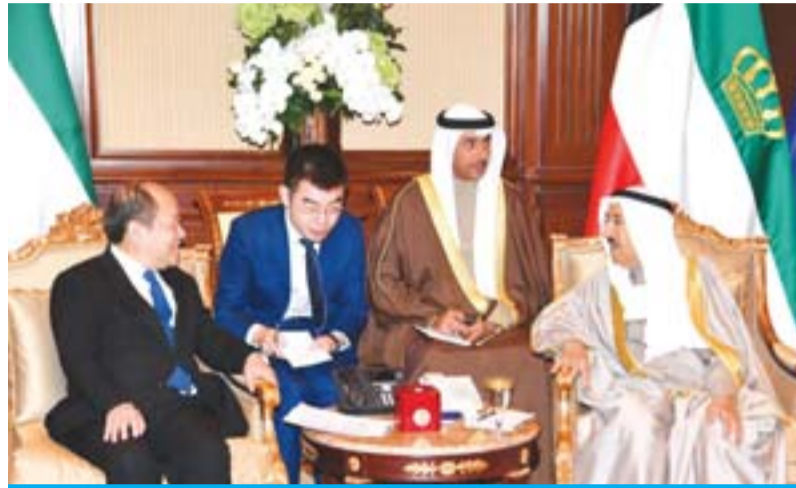
## Local

# Amir meets state officials, Chinese national development executive

## Amir patronizes, attends police cadets graduation today



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



**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Vice Chairman of China's National Development and Reform Commission Ning Jizhe.



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

**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday at Bayan Palace His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem. His Highness the Amir also welcomed His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and Kuwait's Chief Justice Yousef Al-Mutawaa. His Highness the Amir's meeting spree included encounters with First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and Vice Chairman of China's National Development and Reform Commission Ning Jizhe. Amid the talks, attended by the Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Al-Sabah and Faisal Al-Medlej, the supervisor of Kuwait's 'Silk City' project, the Chinese official conveyed President Xi Jinping's warmest greetings to His Highness the Amir, to which he reciprocated the warm sentiments.

Speaker Ghanem also met with the visiting Chinese delegation, as they discussed economic relations between the two countries and ways of enhancing them. Dostour news network said in a press statement. They exchanged views on several projects that will be implemented within the 'New Kuwait 2035' vision, it added. The meeting was attended by MP Mubarak Al-Harees, head of the apparatus for developing Silk City and Boubyan Island Faisal Al-Medlej, Kuwait's Ambassador to China Samih Hayat and Chinese ambassador to Kuwait Li Minggang.

The ongoing visit of the Chinese delegation to Kuwait is part of a previous joint MoU aiming at setting out mechanisms for developing Silk City and Boubyan Island project, Medlej said. The Chinese delegation comprises 35 senior offi-

cialled by Vice Chairman of the Chinese National Development and Reform Commission Ning Jizhe, CEO of the Apparatus for Developing Silk City and Boubyan Island Medlej said in a press statement. Reflecting His Highness the Amir's instructions for turning Kuwait into an international financial, trade and cultural hub, the project would enable Kuwait to regain its regional economic role, he added. He said he and the Chinese guests had a helicopter flight over the site to see the project on the ground.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince received Speaker Ghanem, His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak, Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh. In other news, His Highness the Amir and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is set to attend and patronize today the graduation ceremony of the 45th batch of police cadets at the Saad Al-Abdullah Academy For Security Sciences.

### Condolences

In the meantime, His Highness the Amir sent a cable to Egyptian President AbdelFatah Al-Sisi on Saturday to express sincere condolences for the victims of the terrorist attack on a security post in North Sinai. On behalf of Kuwait, His Highness the Amir expressed strong denunciation of all forms of terrorism that target innocent lives and aim to destabilize sisterly Egypt. He reaffirmed Kuwait's solidarity with Egypt in all measures it might take to protect its security and stability.

His Highness the Prime Minister, the Government and the people of the State of Kuwait, on the auspicious occasion of the National Day and Liberation Day of the State of Kuwait, wishing the friendly people of Kuwait to be blessed with peace, prosperity and happiness under the wise leadership of His Highness Amir of the State of Kuwait and His Highness Crown Prince.

The Ambassador greatly appreciates the strong historical ties as well as long-lasting friendship between the State of Kuwait and Mexico, and hopes they will be further enhanced and become ever stronger for the mutual benefit of the two friendly nations.

## Mexican ambassador greets Kuwait on National Days

**KUWAIT:** The Ambassador of Mexico to Kuwait Miguel Angel Isidro has the honor to extend his sincere felicitation and best wishes to His Highness Amir of the State of Kuwait, His Highness the Crown Prince, His



**National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem receives a memento from the visiting Vice Chairman of the Chinese National Development and Reform Commission Ning Jizhe.**

His Highness also voiced condolences to the families of the military martyrs and wishes those injured a quick recovery. His Highness the Crown Prince and His Highness the Prime Minister sent similar cables to President Sisi, while Speaker Ghanem sent a cable to Speaker of the Egyptian House of Representatives Ali Abdel Aal.

An official source in the Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign

Affairs said in a press release that Kuwait strongly denounced the terrorist attack on a security post in North Sinai, Egypt, which left several military casualties on Saturday. Kuwait stands by sisterly Egypt and fully supports all measures it might take to protect its security and stability, said the source who expressed sincere condolences for the families of the martyrs and wished those injured a quick recovery. — KUNA

## Amir sponsors Kuwaiti-Egyptian horse show

**KUWAIT:** Under auspices of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, All Nations Cup - Straight Egyptians was held at the Arabian Horse Center, Bait Al-Arab, Kuwait State Stud, on Saturday. Deputy Minister of the Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah represented His Highness the Amir at the event, held as part of Kuwait International Arabian Horse Festival 2019. His Highness the Amir's Representative, accompanied by Chairman of the Arabian Horse Center Alaa Hamad Al-Romi, was briefed by the jury on the results of the international

Egyptian event before handing out the awards to the winners. Speaking to reporters after the award ceremony, Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah expressed pride for representing His Highness the Amir at the All Nations Cup - Straight Egyptians for the beauty of Arabian horses.

He commended the participants in the event, notably the horse breeders from Kuwait and other GCC member states, appreciating their efforts to use global bloodlines to further their program. The minister thanked the organizing committee chaired by Sheikh Sara Al-Fahad Al-Sabah and including Romi. The Kuwait-Egyptian horse show was under the banner of the Kuwait Straight Egyptian Arabian Horse Days.

Meanwhile, Sheikh Sara expressed gratitude for His Highness the Amir for patronizing the festival, which contributed to its success. She said the award distribution system guaranteed equality among all participants. More than 160 Arabian horses from in and outside Kuwait participated in the All Nations Cup for Egyptian Horses. — KUNA



**KUWAIT:** A group photo with one of the winners at the conclusion of the event. — Amiri Diwan photo

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- A highly effective communicator who demonstrates the ability to work positively with the PYP Leadership Team.
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Local

# Cyber security integral part of national security plans

## First Kuwait Cyber Security Conference underway

By Faten Omar

**KUWAIT:** Cyber security forms an integral component of national security plans, a senior government official said yesterday. Salim Al-Othaina, chief of the Communication and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA), made that statement in a speech delivered at the inauguration of the first Kuwait Cyber Security Conference kicked off yesterday at the Millennium Hotel. The conference is organized by Kuwait Hackers under the auspices of the Central Agency for Information Technology (CAIT) and in cooperation with Ministry of State for Youth Affairs and CITRA.

The conference is an opportunity for participants to get acquainted with the most serious cyber threats, Othaina said. "We are keen to follow the approach of cooperation between all sectors, all operating under one umbrella of government to achieve our vision. We want to develop a system of exchanging information between



**KUWAIT:** Chief of the Communication and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA) Salim Al-Othaina speaks during the conference. — Photos by Joseph Shagra



**Director General of the Central Agency for Information Technology Haya Al-Wadani delivers a speech.**



**Director of Kuwait Hackers Dr Basil Al-Othman.**

local and international institutions, and a mechanism for reporting hacker attacks and cybercrime to spread national awareness of cyber security to all sectors of society and institutions. We also want to build national cadres capable of dealing with cyber security issues through the establishment of a

specialized academy for this field," he said.

### Young Kuwaiti experts

Director General of CAIT Haya Al-Wadani expressed her happiness to see young Kuwaiti experts participating in the workshops. "It is good to see young

Kuwaiti experts in such an important skill and expertise, especially in our modern era of technology," she said. She pointed out that protection from intrusions is a priority for CAIT, so the agency has prepared a comprehensive plan for the safety of networks and immediate response in case of

emergency. "It also conducts the necessary tests and spreads awareness among employees," Wadani said.

Director of Kuwait Hackers Basil Al-Othman said for the first time, a group of young Kuwaiti hackers participated in the sessions of the conference, pointing out that these experts will reveal hacking techniques through live demonstrations of breakthroughs and explain how individuals or institutions can protect themselves from hacking.

He noted that the initiative of the Kuwaiti youth comes in response to the challenges faced by vital bodies in the country in the form of electronic threats and attempts to penetrate the information, services, economic, security and military infrastructure, which constitute the vital artery of the ministries and institutions of the state, as well as in response to the harassment of young people on social networks and hacking of smartphones. He stressed the importance of forming national cadres capable of dealing with cyber security issues.

## KISR launches first Kuwait Energy Outlook

By Ben Garcia and Agencies

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) has launched the first edition of the Kuwait Energy Outlook (KEO) - an annual, evidence-based review of Kuwait's energy production, usage and demand. The report includes recommendations to create a more sustainable, energy-efficient and diversified economy and society in Kuwait.

Director General of KISR Dr Samira Omar said the launch of the KEO will serve as a platform and guiding tool for monitoring and forecasting for many decades to come. "We want to ensure energy sustainability in order to support the Kuwait vision, where 15 percent of its energy demand will be covered by renewable energy by 2035," she said in her opening remarks.

According to Omar, KISR is playing a big role in developing an energy strategy to utilize and leverage science to serve Kuwait and other countries. "In the past 50 years, KISR has been at the forefront of energy research in Kuwait, and today's launch of KEO symbolizes the next step in Kuwait's energy planning. We are looking forward to further discussing our findings and recommendations with policymakers in order to move towards a diversified, sustainable and energy-efficient society and economy," she said.

For the first edition, KISR's Energy and Building Research Center (EBRC) collaborated with the General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development (GSSCPD) and United Nations Development Program (UNDP). This year's outlook highlights and analyzes three main challenges Kuwait is facing in sustaining its prosperity - the need to diversify its oil-dependent economy, stimulate efficient usage of energy, and further develop the country's potential renewable energy sources.

In addition, the report calls for improved collaboration between Kuwait's key energy players across the public and private sector, to better facilitate the collection and analysis of energy data in Kuwait. Investing in these changes will benefit not only Kuwait's environment, but will also have a positive impact on its economy and society, ensuring prosperity for generations to come.



**KUWAIT:** Secretary General of the GSSCPD Dr Khaled Mahdi (left) and Director General of KISR Dr Samira Omar attend the event. — Photos by Joseph Shagra



**A general view of the audience.**

Dr Khaled Mahdi, Secretary General of the GSSCPD, commented: "GSSCPD is proud to support the launch of the first Kuwait Energy Outlook - the first of its kind in the GCC and an important project for our nation's future as we work towards the goals of Kuwait's 2035 vision."

Dr Edward Christow, UNDP Resident Representative, underscored the importance of the first outlook, saying: "In line with the UNDP's mission to support the people of Kuwait in their realization of the Sustainable Development Goals, we are delighted to see KEO assume the role of a catalyst for Kuwait's economic diversification and

encourage cooperation between key energy stakeholders in Kuwait."

The EBRC at KISR based its thorough data analysis on a specific Long Range Energy Alternatives Planning (LEAP) model, developed by the KISR team in collaboration with the Stockholm Environment Institute in the United States. This model will serve as a foundation for examining energy efficiency and renewable energy policies in Kuwait going forward. Following the publication of the first outlook, KISR has established the Kuwait Energy Policy Center, which has been tasked with the creation of future editions of the annual report.

## Dhaman hires staff to operate primary clinics

By A Saleh

**KUWAIT:** The Health Assurance Hospitals Company (Dhaman) is currently recruiting various staff needed to operate the company's primary healthcare clinics and hospitals and medical departments and technical and backup service staff needed for IT and administrative affairs. Notably, Dhaman has already completed preparing and equipping primary care clinics, which are currently being operated on a trial basis to check their readiness to provide medical services. Dhaman was established as a public-private-partnership (PPP) entity to build hospitals and clinics that provide medical services for Kuwait's expatriate community, and that as part of a major plan that would also see public medical facilities allocated exclusively for Kuwaiti citizens.

### Property owned

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled stressed that the total value of property owned by the ministry is KD 630 million including KD 574 million in property owned overseas and KD 56 million in Kuwait. He added that the total value of rent paid in seven foreign cities is KD 17.8 million.

Responding to a parliamentary inquiry by MP Thamer Al-Suwait, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled explained that the ministry owns property worth KD 269 million in Europe and America, KD 139 million in Asia and Africa and KD 108 million in the Arab world. He also explained that locally, the ministry owns four buildings in Sharq, Shuwaikh and Salmiya, in addition to the Foreign Diplomatic Institute with a total value of KD 55 million.

Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled said that the ministry is currently working on assessing its budget according to actual contracts and that the proposed budget for 2017-2018 is KD 16,055,000, while the finance ministry only approved KD 14 million. In addition, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled stressed that the project to reinforce Kuwait's efforts in human rights has been adopted within the ministry's five-year developmental plan through holding seminars and workshops to help spread the culture of human rights in Kuwait.

### 94,713 applications

The Public Authority for Housing Welfare currently executing 38 projects with a total value of KD 1.3 billion, deputy director for execution affairs Ali Al-Hubail said, adding that total housing applications have retreated to only 94,713. Hubail further indicated that law number 113/2014 helped overcome all hurdles, with land allocation on top, as enough land had been provided to build over 225,000 units in five gigantic residential cities including Mutlaa and Southern Sabah Al-Ahmad. Hubail said rocky terrain was one of the obstacles faced in the Mutlaa project and that 12,000 tons of explosives had to be used in digging for the foundations. Separately, Kuwait Municipality's deputy director for Capital and Jahra governorate affairs Faisal Al-Jumaa has completed preparing a proposal to amend the conditions of construction and specifications of residential complexes outside and within Kuwait City. The proposed conditions include building commercial service facilities in a residential complex to overlook inside streets and not expressways or highways.

### Exams' rescheduling

Some of subject supervisors at the Education Ministry have informed concerned heads of departments in primary schools to have all curriculums completed by April 18 instead of April 25, said informed sources. The sources added that supervisors want to finish all lessons on this date just in case the Education Ministry reschedules the final exams and holds them a week earlier, which is likely to happen for grades 5 to 11 to avoid coinciding with those of grade 12. The sources added said primary schools have already started changing their plans to meet the deadline set by the supervisors, noting that this will cut the actual schooling time left in the second term to around two months.

### Wedding halls

The Ministry of Social Affairs' community development manager Nadia Al-Azmi said a memo had been made to interconnect the ministry to various ministries concerned with wedding halls with the aim of facilitating and accelerating transactions. Azmi said the department runs 22 community centers in various governorates, including the latest in Mangaf, which provides women with special training in various crafts. She added that new centers are planned to open in new cities. Azmi denied any plans to increase the fees collected for booking wedding halls at the time being.

## Defense Ministry comments on 'forged citizenship' report

**KUWAIT:** The Defense Ministry issued a statement yesterday commenting on a local newspaper report about a high-ranking officer who is suspected of forging his Kuwaiti nationality. The concerned person was referred to investigations due to doubts over his nationality file, which is being investigated. The statement added that the defense ministry affirms it cooperates and coordinates with the interior ministry in the field of exchanging security information about military men of all ranks, and no one is accepted to serve in the Kuwaiti military until after making sure about their documents.

### Bedoons' rights discussed in meeting

**KUWAIT:** Executive Director of the Illegal Residents Affairs' Apparatus Saleh Al-Fadalah met yesterday with Deputy Director of the Middle East and North Africa Division at Human Rights Watch Michael Page and his accompanying delegation, on illegal residents' status in Kuwait. Fadalalah stated in a press release that the central apparatus is following a clear policy dealing with international organizations about 'Bedoons' or stateless residents. He said he had briefed them on services offered to Bedoons in the country. The meeting was attended by a number of officials of the agency. — KUNA

## National Guard delegation attends int'l defense exhibition

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

**KUWAIT:** A Kuwait National Guard delegation accompanied Kuwaiti Army Chief of Staff Lt Gen Mohammad Al-Khedr and Kuwait National Guard Secretary Lt Gen Hashem Al-Refae in their visit to the international defense exhibition IDEX 2019 in Abu Dhabi. The visit comes out of keenness of Chairman of the National Guard HH Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah and National Guard Deputy Chairman Sheikh Mishal Al-Jaber Al-Ahmad to be at par with technological developments in the military field.

### Government mall

The government mall (Qurain exchange) in Mubarak Al-Kabeer governorate was opened yesterday under the patronage and presence of Minister of Commerce and Industry and State Minister for Service Affairs Khalid Al-Roudhan, Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governor Lt Gen Ahmad Al-Rujaib and Interior Ministry Assistant Undersecretary for Residency Affairs Maj Gen Talal Maarafi.

### Live ammunition training

The coastguard will carry out live ammunition training in territorial waters on Feb 18 and 19 from 8:00 am until 2:00 pm in the following areas: Qaruh and Um Al-Maradem Islands (28.55.0 N - 048.37.5.E, 28.46.8.N - 048.30.2.E).

## Deportee returns with different passport

**KUWAIT:** A Bangladeshi man who was previously deported tried to return to Kuwait by using a passport that belongs to someone else. He confessed to buying the passport using all his savings. The man presented a passport to the officer, but he was referred to the forgery department, where he insisted the passport was his despite the difference in the picture. He later confessed he had bought the passport, because he cannot use his original passport after he was deported. He will be deported again.

### Fatal fall

An Indian man fell from a high place

to his death at the Mutlaa City project. His body was recovered by the coroner. Investigations are ongoing to find out the reason of the accident.

### Prostitutes arrested

Vice detectives arrested two Ukrainian women for practicing prostitution. The two contacted their clients through pornographic sites and charged KD 100 per hour. Legal action is being taken against them prior to their deportation.

### Search for thief

Criminal detectives are looking for a man who attempted to rob the cashier of Sulabiya Co-op Society and injured him in the process. The suspect has a criminal record and was arrested over several offenses, most notably possession of an unlicensed firearm. The thief escaped after the attack, but was identified through cameras, as he is well known to police. — Translated by Kuwait Times from Al-Rai

## Local

# Extreme adrenaline: Profound shock of fatality sets up death-defying actions

## Most powerful hormone that intensifies strength in face of danger

**KUWAIT:** With firefighters saving people from eminent danger, and extreme athletes doing stunts that seemingly go against the rules of gravity, adrenaline becomes an essential hormone that electrifies muscle memory and enhances the senses. Adrenaline is the most powerful hormone rushing through the bloodstream intensifying strength of people when they face dangerous alarming situations, entering the thin line between life and death. In this focus: extreme sports athletes, a psychologist and a fireman all acknowledged that when the adrenal glands pump out adrenaline out of stress, fright, rage or a situation involving powerful emotions: blood rushes through the body, intensifying the actions of individuals releasing an adrenaline rush reinforcing them to overcome danger.

### Brain's reaction

The brain is obscured in the differentiation between danger and euphorically low danger, whether the "fight-or-flight" response is generated from a reaction, exhilaration, facing fire or stunts: the brain reacts the same way and releases this rush," said Dr Juliet Dinkha, a Psychologist Professor at American University of Kuwait (AUK). Nonetheless, different types of fear result in either extreme short-lasting rush or average adrenaline. An entertaining thrill releases endorphins that interacts with the brain's receptors which diminishes



Dr Juliet Dinkha

extreme pain and stress, causing less fear, whereas pure fear could help one not succumb to death, she added.

Biologically, adrenaline causes contracted blood vessels, lungs expansion, racing heart rate and hypervigilance leading to better concentration and a razor-sharp memory. Dr Dinkha - also a licensed clinical psychologist - stated that conversely, the rush could cause high blood pressure and lack of sleep. "If you do not get a rush, you are not challenging yourself," said the doctor, in regards to those who are too familiar with getting into danger. The psychologist warned not to get used to an adrenaline rush because "the rush is a learned behavior; once you get it you would want it some more." The brain's memory evokes the first rush felt into chasing it which adds up to becoming an addiction risk. She went on to explain different types of people who are after an adrenaline rush, which are either genetically or personality based. "Thrill-seeking individuals are prone to being more into risk-taking," said the psychologist, pointing out that said individuals do stunts leading the brain into a state of emergency.

### A requirement

Having an adrenaline rush is sometimes a requirement while carrying out tasks aimed at saving people's lives, especially for firefighters on duty. "Hard to describe, but it feels like you have tripled your strength," said Kuwaiti Firefighter Salman Qassem, who became a firefighter because he was saved by one, adding that adrenaline can save lives. When faced with danger, firefighters go beyond what they are normally capable of to save lives, said Qassem, pointing out that "anyone can be a firefighter depending on how determined they are."



KUWAIT: Martin Koren FMX stunts at Kuwait Towers. — KUNA



A backflip stunt performed by Martin Koren near Kuwait Towers.

Just pure adrenaline, the mind can be tricked into what Qassem considered "suicidal thoughts if it does not contain endorphins," which is counterproductive to firefighters. On the other side of the spectrum, constantly chasing

similar because we both face dangerous situations," he replied, when asked about the similarities between his job and extreme sports.

### Calculated risks

Speaking of danger, Czech Rider and FMX4Ever Team Leader Martin Koren said that extreme athletes in freestyle motocross (FMX) always take 'calculated risks' when doing dangerous stunts mid-air. At the age of three, he rode a kid motorcycle, eventually practicing daily to become a professional stuntman. Dangerous tricks such as the Tsunami Back Flip are practiced on a foam pit, disciplining himself into controlling his mind and emotions, except it is more challenging to control the body, which lead to, "broken femur, tibia, fibula, wrists, fingers, shoulder, ribs, spine and knee."

Despite being a long-term professional with a high pain threshold, Koren acknowledged that even when he abstains from stunts "for a long time, it is always scary," pushing his heart rate to the max and having a "feeling of absolute life," while being alert with fast reflexes, covered in protective equipment. On the flipside, he said that FMX challenged him to push his limits because the sport has "many styles of riding depending on the terrain," exclaiming that anyone with passion and will can be an FMX rider.

Koren's teammate and compatriot FMX4Ever Rider Radek Bilek began learning stunts because he "spent a lot of time riding in the circus" where he met friends who drove him to "work with my body and understand how it works," adding that he still has far-off skills to acquire. Step by step, he kept practicing tricks in his "own park where there is a 21 meter long ramp with a landing." Handstands, techniques, agility, flexibility dexterities and BMX skills are all coordinated into the execution of "tricks that look easy and smooth, like everyone can do it," said Bilek. In mid-air for 2-3 seconds, right before performing stunts, it is "hard to explain, a little bit nervous but pumped to ride, especially in a good place with a really good crowd" nightmarishly energized, he is "scared for sure."

Fear is generally deemed as a weakness even though adrenaline activates out of it. People will use their survival skills even if it results in self-harm to be death escapers. What scares them intensifies their strength's awareness into adrenaline episodes enabling them to cross boundaries, eventually with ease, then the rush's adaptability pushes the limits further into a higher adrenaline rush threshold. Through the brain's decipherment, the rush alternates then galvanizes the body's imperceptible skills. — KUNA

“ Adrenaline can save lives ”

endorphins can become an impulsive behavior heading towards self-destructive situations, perishing to pure adrenaline. "Broken arm, dislocated shoulder, fractured ribs, and cracked pelvis." Qassem listed his injuries that intensified after the adrenaline rush faded. The rush of an extreme sports risk-taker and a firefighter are "kind of

## KIB sponsors 15th annual design exhibition for KASA

**KUWAIT:** In a continuation of its efforts to support student and youth-based activities, Kuwait International Bank (KIB) recently sponsored the 15th Kuwait Architecture Student Association (KASA) annual design exhibition which took place at Arraya Center. This sponsorship stemmed from the bank's strong belief in the important role the youth segment plays in the nation's future development.

In its latest edition, the annual exhibition aimed at supporting architecture and design students at Kuwait University (KU) by showcasing the graduating work of students of the Department of Architecture. This exhibition is one of the most important events for KASA, bringing together students, practitioners, and academic staff. It provides an opportunity for the local community to review the work of graduating architecture students in an atmosphere of celebration, opening doors for talented youth and marking students' first step as

they embark on the next stage of their architectural careers.

On this occasion, Senior Manager Corporate Communication Unit at KIB, Nawaf Najia, said: "As part of our leading social responsibility program, we remain committed to supporting and sponsoring a number of student-based initiatives. We continue to place great importance on this segment in the community. Our sponsorship of KASA and its various activities comes in line with our ongoing commitment to the local community, reflecting the vital role we play in supporting students and youth."

Najia added that this exhibition served as an excellent opportunity for local youth to showcase their work, underscoring the creative power of architecture in aspiring generations. Additionally, the exhibition acted as a forum for the industry to gain insight into the exceptional talents of graduating students, as well as promoting architecture and design to the general public.

As part of its youth empowerment pillar, KIB remains adamant on sponsoring the innovative ideas of ambitious youth, believing that they are key players in the nation's development across various areas. Accordingly, the bank continues to invest in supporting students' ideas, as it considers them to be a key element that will ensure a bigger and brighter future for the nation.

## ABK sponsors school's national day celebrations

**KUWAIT:** In a move to foster national sentiments amongst Kuwaiti youth ahead of the National Day celebrations, Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) sponsored the Al-Bayan Bilingual School (BBS) Carnival, which was held at the school's Hawally campus on Saturday 16th February. The annual carnival was organized by the school's Parents Teachers Association (PTA), to help fund the school's activities and programs for the new academic year.

Conscious of the role that schools play in shaping the views of students today, the PTA initiated the carnival to reinforce the feeling of unity among students and their families, and reaffirm their commitment towards the country. ABK believes that instilling a sense of community spirit in the students is very important as it promotes better integration in the society.

During the carnival, students and their families participated in a number of fun activities, and had



the chance to attend various shows including a traditional music band, neon entertainment show, bubble show, magic show, juggler and unicyclist

show. The funds collected from the carnival will also support the Maker Space initiative, STEM projects and Green Screens projects.

## Kuwait, Malaysia discuss investment cooperation

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Kuwaiti Ambassador to Malaysia Saad Al-Asousi and Malaysia's Ministry of Entrepreneur Development discussed cooperation in investment and trade, especially wood and food exports to Kuwait. In a statement yesterday, Asousi said that he was briefed on the industries and products produced by the Terengganu state during his visit. He added that he met with the ministry's senior officials and discussed the export of more Malaysian products to the Kuwaiti market. They also discussed organizing a visit by members of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Malaysia and boosting cooperation between the two countries' businessmen, the ambassador said. — KUNA



KUALA LUMPUR: Kuwaiti Ambassador to Malaysia Saad Al-Asousi and Malaysia's Ministry of Entrepreneur Development officials pose for a group photo on the sidelines of the international conference in the state of Terengganu. — KUNA



Local

# Zain celebrated 'All Zainers are Winners' campaign with customers at Marina Mall

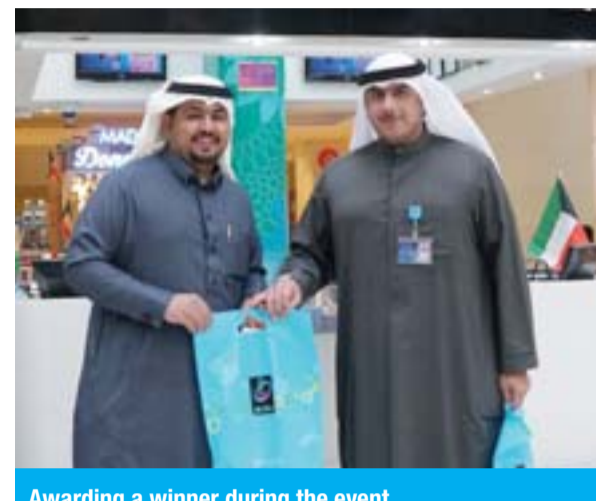
Company hosted Marina FM stars and offered prizes to listeners and crowds



KUWAIT: From All Zainers Are Winners event at Marina Mall.



One of the campaign's five Range Rover Evoque 2019 mega prizes.



Awarding a winner during the event.

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, celebrated its latest promotional campaign 'All Zainers are Winners' with its customers during the special event held on Friday 15 February throughout four consecutive hours at Marina Mall. During the event, Zain hosted a LIVE special episode with Marina FM stars and offered valuable prizes to both listeners and the attending crowds.

Zain organized this special event to promote the recently launched 'All Zainers are Winners' campaign that aims at sharing the joys of Kuwait's national festivities during February of every year with all its customers. At this celebrated time of year, the company is always committed to launching unique promotional campaigns refreshed with the most wonderful offerings to celebrate this much cherished occasion with its customer base, considered the biggest in Kuwait.

The special event at Marina Mall featured the Range Rover Evoque 2019,

which is one of five mega prizes that will go out to five lucky winners during the final draw at the end of the campaign. 'All Zainers are Winners' continues until the 28th of February, and offers valuable instant prizes to all Zain prepaid and postpaid customers during the entire campaign period.

During the event, Zain hosted a special LIVE episode that featured Marina FM 90.4 stars Ali Najem and Abdullah Albkoor, where many exciting competitions and activities centered around the campaign were organized for Marina FM listeners and the attending crowds. Winners who participated in the event's activities were awarded with valuable prizes and smart devices while enjoying a wonderful national atmosphere. The event also witnessed the talented Arabiska band that thrilled the audience with a unique music performance throughout the event.

'All Zainers are Winners' continues until the 28th of February, and offers valuable instant prizes to all prepaid and

postpaid customers, including free minutes, free Internet GBs, free bonus credit, and many more. To be eligible for one of the instant prizes, prepaid customers can simply recharge their lines with KD 5 or more, while postpaid customers can simply pay their bills through one of Zain's digital channels (Zain's website, Zain app, or Zain Connect portal) with KD 5 or more. Customers will receive their gift instantly as soon as they pay/recharge.

All Zain prepaid and postpaid customers have a chance to win one of five Range Rover Evoque 2019 mega prizes during the final draw to be held at the end of the campaign. Every customer will receive one point for each KD 1 paid/recharged during the campaign period, and they can simply check their current accumulated points/chances balance by dialing \*2526#. The more points a customer has, the more chances they will have for winning one of the mega prizes.

Zain has long considered itself a key partner of the Kuwaiti society, especially

in such national celebrations. The company launched this exciting campaign to show its commitment in sharing the joys of Kuwait as a leading national company, and will spare no efforts in being an integral part of the many occasions that are of interest to the local community. By launching this exciting limited time promotional campaign, Zain continues to reinforce its leadership position and its pledge in offering the best services and offers to meet customers' professional and personal telecommunications needs.

Zain always aspires to new levels of excellence in all services it offers to its customers. Through the launch of this new campaign, Zain affirms its continuous efforts in meeting customers' needs and aspirations, and deliver its promise to offering the best services and latest technologies. The company constantly looks at ways to improve the experience of its customers, including providing them with the latest solutions to better serve their needs through the biggest and most advanced network in Kuwait.



Marina FM stars with Zain officials.



One of the interactive activities with the audience.

## Kuwait supports IFAD

ROME: Kuwaiti official at the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) Marwan Al-Ghanem stressed yesterday that his country will continue to support the fund's mission to stimulate the role of the private sector. Ghanem, also representative of Kuwait at the IFAD's Council of Governors, said in an interview that the council, which approved the Eleventh Replenishment of IFAD's Resources, has created an innovative fund to expand the rural private sector in developing countries. Kuwait is committed to continue to support the international agency through contributions so far exceeding \$200 million, he added.

Ghanem noted that the main challenges facing the Arab region are food security due to the suffering of the region and the Middle East with a great shortage of water resources, pointing to a European-Arab initiative to conduct a study to assess the importance of water management.—KUNA



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PROUDLY MOVING FORWARD



Indian priest jailed for raping a minor

## UK teen who joined IS has given birth in Syria

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DEIR EZ-ZOR: Arab fighters of the US-backed Kurdish-Arab coalition of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) take part in a training exercise near the Omar oil field in the eastern Syrian Deir Ezzor province. —AFP

# Take back jihadists, Trump tells Europe

## In Syria, IS in last stand to defend dying 'caliphate'

WASHINGTON: European nations must take back hundreds of Islamic State group fighters captured in Syria, President Donald Trump said late Saturday, after a delay in announcing what he said would be the end of the "caliphate." Trump shocked allies in December by declaring the pullout of roughly 2,000 US troops who had been assisting local forces in Syria against IS, whose sole remaining territory is half a square kilometer in eastern Syria. The pending US pullout set off a countdown for governments whose citizens, having joined IS, were captured by the US-backed, Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF).

"The United States is asking Britain, France, Germany and other European allies to take back over 800 ISIS fighters that we captured in Syria and put them on trial," Trump said in a tweet, using another acronym for IS. "The Caliphate is ready to fall. The alternative is not a good one in that we will be forced to release them. The US does not want to watch as these ISIS fighters permeate Europe, which is where they are expected to go." Once the US-led coalition declares it has taken all IS territories, the White House is expected to withdraw American troops. When that happens, the risk is high that "foreign terrorist fighters" will escape SDF control, posing a new threat.

For about two weeks, the Trump administration has been pushing its allies to take their citizens home, and the US said it was ready to help in the repatriation, but time has been running out. Several countries, including France, that have chosen to leave the jihadists in SDF detention now confront a diplomatic, legal, political and logistical puzzle. "We do so much, and spend so much - Time for others to step up and do the job that they are so capable of doing. We are pulling back after 100% Caliphate victory!" Trump said in his late-Saturday tweets. On Friday he said announcements on the fall of the caliphate would be made "over the next 24 hours," but that deadline came and went.

## Indian govt ends police protection for Kashmir leaders after bombing

SRINAGAR: Indian authorities withdrew police protection for five separatist leaders in Kashmir yesterday amid mounting fallout from a suicide bombing that killed 41 soldiers in the disputed region. New Delhi has vowed to retaliate after a van packed with explosives ripped through a convoy transporting 2,500 soldiers across the Indian-administered territory on Thursday, the deadliest-ever attack in a 30-year-old armed conflict. Indian officials said police protection had been withdrawn for Muslim cleric Mirwaiz Umar Farooq and four other leaders. "We have decided to withdraw the security of separatist leaders in the wake of the attack on security forces," home affairs ministry spokesman A. Bharat Bhushan Babu said.

Babu said the decision followed a call by the government for a review of security for those "taking money from Pakistan." Until yesterday, Indian police had provided security details for the five men out of fears that an attack on Kashmiri political leaders could lead to an outbreak of violence in the Himalayan territory. Mirwaiz—who has received police protection since the 1990 assassination of his religious leader father-heads the Hurriyat Conference, a coalition of local political parties that seeks independence for Kashmir or its merger with neighboring Pakistan.

A Hurriyat spokesman dismissed the significance of the government's decision. "It has no bearing, neither can it change the reality of the lingering Kashmir dispute or the situation on the ground," he said. Kashmir has been split between India and Pakistan since both countries gained independence from Britain in 1947. Both claim the whole region and have fought three wars over the territory. India accuses Pakistan of training and arming militants in Kashmir, while Islamabad says it only provides diplomatic and moral support for Kashmiris' right to self-determination.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government, which faces a national election in the coming months, has adopted an aggressive posture in Kashmir and shelved dialogue with Pakistan after accusing the previous government of being soft on militants. It withdrew trade privileges for Pakistan and imposed a 200 percent customs duty on all imports from its neighbor within hours of Thursday's attack, which was claimed by the Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) militant group. Pakistan has denied any involvement in the attack and dismissed Delhi's accusations, calling them "well-rehearsed tactics from (the) Indian playbook after such incidents in the past".

### Deep transatlantic rift

An SDF commander said his US-backed forces slowed 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 but a tiny patch of territory near the Iraqi border. Trump's Syria pullout has highlighted the deep trans-Atlantic rift that emerged under his presidency, and the differing views of the two sides were on display Saturday at a security conference in Munich. A French government source criticized the Trump administration's approach as "we're leaving, you're staying" and added: "They're trying to manage the consequences of a hasty decision and making us carry the responsibility."

Diehard jihadists have blocked roads out of the last scrap of their Islamic State group "caliphate" in Syria, US-backed forces fighting them said yesterday, preventing hundreds of civilians from fleeing, posing a new threat. A victory declaration expected within days and a subsequent US military pullout, US President Donald Trump called on his European allies to take back hundreds of alleged jihadists captured in Syria. The jihadists declared a "caliphate" across large parts of Syria and neighboring Iraq in 2014, implementing their brutal interpretation of Islam on millions.

But several offensives have expelled them from all of it, except a tiny patch of less than half a kilometer square on the banks of the Euphrates river near the Iraqi border. Thousands of people have streamed out of the so-called "Baghouz pocket" in recent weeks, but hundreds of civilians—including IS family members—are

believed to still be inside. At a collection point for new arrivals outside Baghouz yesterday, dozens of tents and a few trucks sat empty. Earlier in the week, the area had been thronging with people—women and children, but also suspected jihadists led to one side. "It's been two days since anyone came out," an SDF fighter said. SDF spokesman Mustafa Bali said IS had blocked roads out of its holdout, preventing those remaining from escaping to safety. "Daesh has sealed off all the streets" but up to 2,000 civilians could still be inside, he said, using the Arabic acronym for IS. The jihadists are confined to "a few hundred meters square in... Baghouz with a number of civilians they hold hostage and refuse to release", he said on Twitter Saturday.

### 'Human shields'

A spokesman for the US-led coalition, which has been backing the SDF with its air power and some troops, said IS was using these women and children as "human shields". "Civilians who have escaped are reporting IS is using them as human shields and killing innocent civilians in order to intimidate others from trying to leave," Sean Ryan said. The Kurdish-led SDF launched the offensive to expel IS from the eastern banks of the Euphrates in September. Trump on Friday promised announcements linked to "the eradication of the caliphate" within 24 hours, but a top SDF commander then warned the battle would take a few more days. The US president in December shocked allies when he announced he would withdraw all 2,000 US troops from Syria because IS had been "beaten". That plan is set to be accelerated after a victo-

ry announcement. Since 2015, the SDF have been battling IS with backing from the international coalition, retaking one major town after another until reaching Baghouz. They have detained hundreds of foreigners accused of fighting for IS and repeatedly called on their countries to repatriate them, but Western nations have been reluctant. Trump yesterday called on his European allies to bring their nationals home. "The Caliphate is ready to fall," he said on Twitter. "The United States is asking Britain, France, Germany and other European allies to take back over 800 ISIS fighters that we captured in Syria and put them on trial," he said, using an alternative acronym for IS.

### 'Sleepers cells'

"The alternative is not a good one in that we will be forced to release them," Trump said. "The US does not want to watch as these ISIS fighters permeate Europe, which is where they are expected to go." 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 claimed deadly attacks in SDF-held territory. The US Department of Defense has warned that without sustained counterterrorism pressure, IS could resurge within months. "IS is still using sleeper cells," spokesman Bali said yesterday. "Over the past month, more than one foreign sleeper cell was arrested in multiple areas in Syria." Acting Pentagon chief Patrick Shanahan has struggled to convince sceptical allies in the international coalition to help secure Syria once US soldiers pull out. Any withdrawal would leave Syria's Kurds exposed to a long-threatened attack by neighboring Turkey, which views Kurdish fighters as "terrorists". 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 the conflict that has killed more than 360,000 people, President Bashar al-Assad's government controls nearly two-thirds of the country. —Agencies



The Caliphate is ready to fall



KASHMIR: Indian protesters shout slogans against Pakistan next to burning vehicles during a protest in Jammu after an attack on a paramilitary Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) convoy in the Lethpora area of Kashmir. —AFP

### Widespread anger

Thursday's bombing has caused widespread anger across India, with some demonstrations and TV news channels demanding military action against Pakistan. More street protests were held across India yesterday. Protesters in New Delhi burned effigies of Pakistani and JeM leaders while attacks on Kashmiris were reported in different cities. The home ministry said Saturday it had ordered increased safety measures for Kashmiri civilians following reports of mob attacks. A man believed to be Kashmiri was beaten by a crowd in New Delhi that accused him of chanting anti-India slogans, witnesses said. He was rescued by police. Media reports said about a dozen people, including Kashmiris, had been arrested for making "derogatory" statements about the attack on social media.

A round-the-clock curfew remained in place in Jammu city, the Hindu-majority region of Kashmir, after mobs vandalized and torched properties belonging to Kashmiris. Internet services were cut across the state. A shutdown was observed in Muslim-majority districts of Kashmir, including the main city Srinagar, following Thursday's attacks. Kashmir is the world's most militarized zone with some 500,000 Indian troops deployed to fight a rebellion that broke out in 1989. Scores of armed groups are now involved. Tens of thousands of people, mainly civilians, have died in the conflict. Last year was the deadliest in a decade with almost 600 killed. —AFP

## In Syria's Baghouz, dying palms and a wilting IS caliphate

BAGHOUZ: The wilted palms and pomegranate trees at the entrance to Baghouz were struggling to survive, much like diehard Islamic State group fighters in the Syrian village. Pinned down in a patch less than half a square kilometer, the jihadists faced intermittent air strikes by the US-led coalition backing the Syrian Democratic Forces. On a press tour Saturday organized by the US-backed forces, the street ahead was punched through by massive craters and sprinkled with charred lorries. "The SDF were here," read a spray-painted Arabic message on a one-storey house.

Atop a building captured by the SDF, a fighter peered out at columns of smoke from fresh bombardment. "They fire at us at night, then clashes start before they run away again," said Hamza Shaddadi, his rifle slung over his shoulder and a walkie-talkie in his hand. "But we don't get any closer because of the civilians," he told AFP. SDF officials say they have IS surrounded in a tiny part of Baghouz but are holding off on an assault because civilians—including families of IS fighters—are still thought to be inside. But the town would be cleared "in just a few days", said Shaddadi, who seemed visibly impatient.

Even in areas already captured from the jihadists, SDF units combed through rubble and ruined houses used as IS bases in search of secret tunnels, sleeper cells, or unexploded ordnance. SDF fighters, their heads covered in traditional flowered Kurdish scarves, barely flinched at the sound of gunfire further ahead,

which was quickly followed by the roar of airplanes and two booming air strikes. There were no civilians in the homes or in the muddy streets at the entrance to Baghouz, only armored cars zipping sharply around corners in the crushed town. It was not the first time the SDF had battled for these neighborhoods. After launching their latest offensive against IS in September, their units took Baghouz easily, but IS recaptured it a few weeks later during a storm and dug in.

Diaa Hasakeh was back for the second round, but told AFP the town was now in much worse shape. "When we took it a few months ago, we'd climb up on the rooftops and pick dates and pomegranates," said Diaa Hasakeh, a bespectacled fighter who fought in the first round and is back for the final battle. He pointed to the shriveled pomegranate trees whose red fruit had rotted on the branch, near yellowed palm trees some of which had nothing left but their trunks. "Today, their area of control has shrunk so they're being more ferocious in their fighting," said of the jihadists. "In the past, they wouldn't resist a lot as they had other places to withdraw to." SDF commanders say their fighters have faced explosives-laden motorcycles, suicide bombers, and ambushes from behind the front line in recent days. On Saturday, top SDF commander Jia Furat said victory was nigh.

"In a very short time, not longer than a few days, we will officially announce the end of IS's existence," he said. The jihadists once controlled a territory that sprawled across Syria and Iraq that was home to millions. But the "caliphate" their elusive chief Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi declared more than four years ago in Iraq's Mosul is about to collapse on the shores of the Euphrates River. —AFP

International

# Iran summons Pakistan envoy over deadly suicide bombing

## Iran takes aim at 'hateful' Pence comments

### Body in Croatian freezer might be missing woman

**ZAGREB:** The mystery of a Croatian student who disappeared 18 years ago might have been solved with the discovery of a body in a freezer, press reports said yesterday. The freezer was in a home in Mala Subotica, northern Croatia, belonging to the sister of Jasmina Dominic, who was 23 when she went missing in 2000, they added. Dominic was studying in Zagreb at the time, and her family informed police that she was gone only five years later, the daily Vecernji List said. Late Saturday, a 45-year-old woman was arrested in Mala Subotica in connection with the investigation, regional police spokesman Nenad Risak told AFP.

"We suppose that the body found in the freezer is that of a woman born in 1977 and whose disappearance was reported on August 16, 2005," he said. Police believe the person was murdered but are still awaiting autopsy results, the spokesman added. He declined to identify the woman who had been arrested, but local media said it was the victim's sister. The website eMedijimurj reported that the body had been found in a house where the sister lived with her husband and three children. Dominic's father, who died a few years ago, said in 2011 that his daughter told him in 2000 that she was going to work on a cruise ship and that she also intended to live in Paris. —AFP

**TEHRAN:** Iran's foreign ministry yesterday summoned the Pakistani ambassador after Tehran accused Islamabad of harboring a jihadist group behind a deadly suicide attack on security forces. "The Islamic Republic of Iran expects Pakistan's government and army to seriously confront ... the terrorist groups active on its border with Iran," the foreign ministry said in a statement. An Iranian official at the ministry called on Pakistan to quickly take the necessary steps for the identification and arrest of the attack's perpetrators.

The suicide bombing on Wednesday killed 27 members of Iran's Revolutionary Guards travelling on a bus in the volatile southeastern province of Sistan-Baluchistan, which straddles the border with Pakistan. The attack was claimed by the jihadist outfit Jaish al-Adl ("Army of Justice"). It 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.

Iran Revolutionary Guards commander Major General Mohammad Ali Jafari on Saturday blamed Pakistan's army and Inter-Services Intelligence agency for sheltering the jihadists. "The government of Pakistan must pay the price of harboring these terrorist groups and this price will undoubtedly be very high," Jafari told mourners gathered at funerals for the dead in the city of Isfahan. Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has also linked the perpetrators of Wednesday's attack to "the spying agencies of some regional and trans-regional countries".

#### 'Hateful' comments

Meanwhile, Iran's foreign minister yesterday launched a blistering attack on US Vice President Mike Pence, saying his allegations that Tehran was plotting a "new Holocaust" were "hateful" and "ignorant". Mohammad Javad Zarif told the Munich Security Conference that Pence's demands for the EU to follow the US in abandoning the 2015 Iran nuclear deal amounted to asking Europe to undermine its own security. And Zarif piled fresh pressure on the EU,



**ISFAHAN:** Iranian mourners gather around the coffins of Revolutionary Guards who were killed in a suicide attack, during their funeral in southeastern city of Isfahan. —AFP

telling Brussels that a trade mechanism to bypass US sanctions on Iran was inadequate and it needed to do more if it wanted to save the accord.

US President Donald Trump tore up the nuclear deal last year, branding it a failure, and Washington has slapped swingeing sanctions back on Tehran. Pence used a diplomatic tour of Europe this week to demand repeatedly that EU countries stop trying to preserve the deal, which curbed Tehran's nuclear ambitions in return for sanctions relief. Zarif slammed the vice president, saying he had "arrogantly demanded that Europe must join the US in undermining its own security and breaking its obligations"

to the treaty under international law.

"His hateful accusations against Iran including his ignorant allegations of anti-semitism (...) are both ridiculous but at the same time very very dangerous," Zarif said. Away from the fiery rhetoric, Zarif's criticism of INSTEX—the payment mechanism created by European countries to try to continue trade with Iran—will cause concern in Brussels. The creation of INSTEX by Britain, France and Germany—the so-called E3 European signatories to the nuclear deal—was a complex, drawn-out process that has infuriated the Trump administration, exacerbating transatlantic tensions. —Agencies

### In Iraq visit, US general eyes longer-term IS threat

**BAGHDAD:** The general overseeing US forces in the Middle East flew into Iraq yesterday for talks with US and Iraqi officials expected to focus on ensuring that Islamic State cannot stage a resurgence after US troops withdraw from neighboring Syria. US Army General Joseph Votel, head of the US Central Command, made no remarks to reporters upon landing in Iraq, where he was expected to get battlefield briefings on the final push to retake the remnants of Islamic State's once vast territory in Syria. Votel was also expected to discuss with officials in Baghdad what impact the US withdrawal might have on Iraq, where Islamic State has already shifted to guerrilla hit-and-run tactics after losing all its territory.

Votel has said he does not expect President Donald Trump's withdrawal of more than 2,000 troops from Syria to significantly alter US troop levels in Iraq, where the United States has more than 5,000 forces. Those force numbers would stay "more or less steady," he said. "We will want to make sure that we get the right capabilities on the ground to support the Iraqis going forward," Votel told reporters traveling with him last week. "But I don't necessarily think that will result in an expanded footprint by the United States or by the coalition forces."

#### Threat of resurgence

Trump's surprise decision in December to withdraw U.S. troops from Syria confounded his national security team and led to the resignation of his defense secretary, Jim Mattis. It also shocked U.S. allies and sent generals like Votel scrambling to carry out the pullout in a way that best preserves as many gains as possible. Islamic State still poses a threat in Iraq and some U.S. officials believe that the group's leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, may be hiding in Iraq. Baghdadi has led the group since 2010, when it was still an underground al Qaeda offshoot in Iraq.

The Pentagon's Inspector General said in a report Islamic State remained an active insurgent group and was regenerating functions and capabilities more quickly in Iraq than Syria. "Absent sustained (counter-terrorism) pressure, ISIS could likely resurge in Syria within six to twelve months and regain limited territory," the report said, using an acronym for Islamic State. In an interview on Friday, Votel told Reuters he would recommend continued arms and aid to the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) as needed, provided the Kurdish-led fighters keep the pressure on Islamic State and help prevent its resurgence.

Votel has said Islamic State may still count tens of thousands of fighters, dispersed throughout Iraq and Syria, with enough leaders and resources to present a menacing insurgency in the months ahead. Iraq's military has already shifted how it combats the group, moving away from major combat operations to what Votel calls "wide-area" operations. The US military has also modified the way that it supports Iraqi security forces. "We've adjusted our footprint as well, and where we go and where we are best located to continue to advise and assist them with their operations," Votel said last week. "We've made some changes in terms of where we are so we can be in the best locations." —Reuters

**Directorate General of Civil Aviation  
Incheon International Airport Corporation - South Korea  
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The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) is delighted to announce the Tender (Tender No.24 -T4-2018/2019) of **'Travel Agency Business (TA01) at Kuwait International Airport Terminal 4.**

Tender documents can be purchased from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation – Financial Affairs Department, Tenders and Contracts Section at Kuwait International Airport , please refer to the information detailed below;

Announcement Date	Closing Date	Price of Tender Documents	The Preliminary meeting will be held on
17/2/2019	11/3/2019	500 K.D	Sunday, March 3, 2019 at 10 AM (Location: Directorate General of Civil Aviation - Financial Affairs Department)

- ⇒ The above amount should be paid by K-Net.
- ⇒ The Bank Guarantee (Bid Bond) should not be less than (150,000 KD, one hundred and fifty thousand Kuwaiti Dinar only) in the form of certified Cheque or a Letter of Guarantee issued by one of the banks accredited to the State of Kuwait.
- ⇒ The documents should be filled and returned with an envelope sealed with red wax and the location of submission is the Directorate General of Civil Aviation – Financial Affairs Department – Tenders and Contracts Section.
- ⇒ The deadline (closing date) of submission is on, Monday, March 11, 2019 at 1 PM.

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The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) is delighted to announce the Tender (Tender No.23 -T4-2018/2019) of **'Money Exchange Business (ME02) at Kuwait International Airport Terminal 4.**

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Announcement Date	Closing Date	Price of Tender Documents	The Preliminary meeting will be held on
17/2/2019	13/3/2019	500 K.D	Tuesday , March 5, 2019 at 10 AM (Location: Directorate General of Civil Aviation - Financial Affairs Department)

- ⇒ The above amount should be paid by K-Net.
- ⇒ The Bank Guarantee (Bid Bond) should not be less than (150,000 KD, one hundred and fifty thousand Kuwaiti Dinar only) in the form of certified Cheque or a Letter of Guarantee issued by one of the banks accredited to the State of Kuwait.
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- ⇒ The deadline (closing date) of submission is on, Wednesday, March 13, 2019 at 1 PM.

**Directorate General of Civil Aviation  
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ANNOUNCEMENT**

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) is delighted to announce the Tender (Tender No.25 -T4-2018/2019) of **'Travel Agency Business (TA02) at Kuwait International Airport Terminal 4.**

Tender documents can be purchased from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation – Financial Affairs Department, Tenders and Contracts Section at Kuwait International Airport , please refer to the information detailed below;

Announcement Date	Closing Date	Price of Tender Documents	The Preliminary meeting will be held on
17/2/2019	12/3/2019	500 K.D	Monday , March 4, 2019 at 10 AM (Location: Directorate General of Civil Aviation - Financial Affairs Department)

- ⇒ The above amount should be paid by K-Net.
- ⇒ The Bank Guarantee (Bid Bond) should not be less than (150,000 KD, one hundred and fifty thousand Kuwaiti Dinar only) in the form of certified Cheque or a Letter of Guarantee issued by one of the banks accredited to the State of Kuwait.
- ⇒ The documents should be filled and returned with an envelope sealed with red wax and the location of submission is the Directorate General of Civil Aviation – Financial Affairs Department – Tenders and Contracts Section.
- ⇒ The deadline (closing date) of submission is on, Tuesday, March 12, 2019 at 1 PM.

**Directorate General of Civil Aviation  
Incheon International Airport Corporation - South Korea  
ANNOUNCEMENT**

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) is delighted to announce the Tender (Tender No.21 -T4-2018/2019) of **'Provide Limousine Service at Kuwait International Airport Terminal 4.**

Tender documents can be purchased from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation – Financial Affairs Department, Tenders and Contracts Section at Kuwait International Airport , please refer to the information detailed below;

Announcement Date	Closing Date	Price of Tender Documents	The Preliminary meeting will be held on
17/2/2019	14/3/2019	500 K.D	Wednesday , March 6, 2019 at 10 AM (Location: Directorate General of Civil Aviation - Financial Affairs Department)

- ⇒ The above amount should be paid by K-Net.
- ⇒ The Bank Guarantee (Bid Bond) should not be less than (150,000 KD, one hundred and fifty thousand Kuwaiti Dinar only) in the form of certified Cheque or a Letter of Guarantee issued by one of the banks accredited to the State of Kuwait.
- ⇒ The documents should be filled and returned with an envelope sealed with red wax and the location of submission is the Directorate General of Civil Aviation – Financial Affairs Department – Tenders and Contracts Section.
- ⇒ The deadline (closing date) of submission is on, Thursday, March 14, 2019 at 1 PM.

## International

# Ex-Fox News host ends bid to be next US ambassador to UN

## Nauert criticized for not having gravitas for top job

WASHINGTON: Former Fox News anchor and State Department spokeswoman Heather Nauert on Saturday withdrew from consideration to be the US ambassador to the United Nations amid criticism that she lacked the gravitas for one of the top diplomatic posts. "The past two months have been grueling for my family and therefore it is in the best interest of my family that I withdraw," Nauert said in a statement.

The announcement came after weeks of often mocking criticism over President Donald Trump's nomination of Nauert, who had no foreign policy experience until two years ago when she was named State Department spokeswoman. Leading Democrats questioned whether Nauert, despite her poise at the podium, had the skills to negotiate on complex international issues or go head-to-head with seasoned diplomats from adversaries such as Russia.

But with Trump's Republican Party in control of the Senate, her nomination did not seem to be in serious jeopardy, raising questions on why she announced her withdrawal abruptly in the evening on a holiday weekend. Bloomberg News, quoting anonymous sources, said that a White House background check had discovered that Nauert employed a nanny who was legally in the United States but not authorized to work. Trump, whose tough line on immigration is his signature issue, started looking Saturday for a new nominee, the report said.

### Latest Trump vacancy

Trump, an avid viewer of conservative-leaning Fox News where Nauert was once an anchor on morning show "Fox and Friends," told reporters in December that

he wanted her as UN ambassador. Her nomination, however, was never formally submitted to the Senate and she has vanished for over two months as she prepared for a confirmation hearing—and, eventually, the job. The UN post has been vacant since the start of the year after Nikki Haley, a former South Carolina governor and rising star in Republican politics, decided to leave. State Department deputy spokesman Robert Palladino said that Trump would put forward a new name "soon."

Trump is notorious for the turbulence in his cabinet with top players including secretary of state, secretary of defense, chief of staff and attorney general all quitting or being pushed out in only the first two years of the administration. In an administration that regularly denounces the media, Nauert enjoyed comparatively smooth relations with reporters as State Department spokeswoman, a position that does not require Senate confirmation. She generally avoided gaffes, other than a befuddling remark last year when

she cited D-Day—the Allied assault in 1944 on the coast of Nazi-occupied France—as evidence of strong US-German relations.

### Growing scrutiny

But as she prepared for Senate confirmation, liberal activists and media outlets pored over her output at Fox News, including an episode in which she gave a platform to conspiracy theories about Islamic sharia law taking root in the United States. Nauert, 49, suggested in the statement that she was leaving government entirely, saying: "Serving in the administration for the past two years has been one of the highest honors



US State Department spokesperson Heather Nauert

of my life." Nauert, whose family remained in New York during her tenure, did not return a message asking to confirm that she would leave as State Department spokeswoman.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo praised Nauert in a statement, saying that he had "great respect" for her "personal" decision to withdraw. Representing the United States at the United Nations is no easy job under Trump, who is open about his low esteem for the global

body and has pulled out of broadly supported accords including the Paris climate agreement. Martin Edwards, an associate professor in the School of Diplomacy and International Relations at Seton Hall University, said that Trump appeared set on sending fresh faces to the United Nations. "Given his penchant for real outsiders (as with Nikki Haley), it's clear that other countries, who send trained career diplomats to the UN, will continue to outflank and outfox us there," he said. —AFP

## Nigeria counts cost of postponed poll

LAGOS: Nigerians who were surprised when the country's presidential election was postponed Saturday might suffer a second shock when they learn the cost, some economists and business leaders say. "The cost to the economy of the postponement of the election is horrendous," said Muda Yusuf, general director of the Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry who advanced an estimate of \$1.5 billion. "The economy was on partial shutdown the day before, and total shut down on Saturday for the elections" that did not take place, he explained.

The streets of Lagos were still empty early Sunday as the sprawling economic capital of 20 million people recovered from the disappointment and anger provoked by a last minute, one-week delay blamed on logistical issues. The Independent Electoral Commission announced the delay just hours before polls to elect the head of Africa's most populous nation and members of parliament were to open. The INEC cited problems in the distribution of ballot papers and results sheets, as well as sabotage, after three fires at its offices in two weeks.

The leading candidates, incumbent President Muhammadu Buhari and challenger Abubakar Atiku, both called for calm, but a population of 190 million people facing unemployment and extreme poverty took a real financial hit from the decision. For many, the cost of leaving cities where they work to go home and vote in their native regions is substantial. Social media was used meanwhile to organise collections for street vendors who had bought perishable items to sell to voters that often wait in long lines. The amount ultimately raised was unlikely to make much difference to tens of millions of people who live on less than \$1.9 a day, but it did highlight solidarity not always widespread in the country. —AFP

## Sex abuse survivors spell out Catholic Church challenge

VATICAN CITY: As the Vatican prepares to host a global child abuse summit on the protection of minors, victims' associations are calling for concrete steps from the Catholic Church to end paedophilia. While Pope Francis has sought to play down expectations from the summit, here are the main demands from victim groups:

### Oust abusers or their protectors

Zero tolerance for sexual abuse by clerics should be "written into universal church law by the end of the summit," says Ending Clerical Abuse (ECA). The organization, which brings together activists and survivors from more than 17 countries, said any cleric found to have abused a child or covered up abuse—regardless of how long ago the crime took place—should be defrocked. The Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests (SNAP) wants the Vatican to "fire any and all bishops or cardinals who have had a hand in clergy sex abuse cover-ups".

### Define child sexual abuse

Expert Marie Collins, who resigned in protest from a Vatican committee she said was failing to adequately tackle paedophilia, insists the Church should "agree on a clear definition of what constitutes the sexual abuse of a minor". "There is currently no clear definition... to guide leaders in their handling of abuse," says Collins, herself a child victim. Canon law refers to it as "delicts against the sixth commandment of the Decalogue", an obscure reference which also fails to specify whether it covers indirect abuse such as a cleric exposing himself or looking at pornographic images of children. —AFP

## Illinois factory gunman obtained firearm permit despite felony conviction

AURORA: The gunman who killed five co-workers and wounded five policemen at an Illinois factory was a violent felon who nevertheless obtained a state permit to buy a firearm despite being legally barred from owning one, authorities said on Saturday. Gary Martin, 45, who carried his pistol to work on Friday apparently suspecting he faced dismissal from his job, opened fire after being told of his termination in a meeting at the Henry Pratt Company plant in Aurora, Illinois, about 40 miles (64 km) west of Chicago, police said.

The dead included the plant manager, a human resources supervisor, a human resources intern and two other workers. A sixth employee and five police officers responding to the scene were wounded, and the gunman himself was slain about 90 minutes later in a gunfight with police who stormed the building. Martin had purchased the murder weapon, a .40-caliber Smith & Wesson handgun with a laser sight, in March 2014 from a local gun dealer. Aurora Police Chief Kristen Ziman told reporters on Saturday.

Despite his criminal history, the weapon was lawfully sold to Martin two months after he was issued a state Firearm Owners Identification, or FOID card, a document used to designate people eligible to own and buy guns. To apply, Illinois residents need only furnish a valid driver's license, a recent photo and \$10 fee. State police then have 30 days to approve or deny the application. Ziman said Martin's 1995 conviction for aggravated assault in Mississippi, which reportedly involved the bludgeoning and stabbing of a girlfriend, "would not necessarily have shown up on a criminal background check conducted for the FOID card."

The conviction came to light only after his gun purchase, when Martin applied for a concealed-carry permit requiring him to undergo fingerprinting in a more extensive screening process. Ziman said. "The fact remains that some disgruntled person walked in and had access to a firearm that he shouldn't have had access to," she said at the news conference. "I don't want to make it political. This is a human issue."

Police are seeking to learn why Martin was not forced to surrender his gun once his felony conviction was revealed. Ziman said disclosure of his conviction should have triggered a



AURORA: This video grab shows police officers guarding the area where a gunman opened fire in an industrial area in Aurora, Illinois. —AFP

revocation of his FOID card, generating a letter instructing him to relinquish his weapon and permit to law enforcement. The chief said records indicate such a letter was sent, and "we're looking into whether we followed up on that." In addition to the 1995 assault conviction, Martin had several prior arrests in Illinois, including for suspicion of domestic violence and criminal damage to property.

### 90-minute siege

The apparent background check lapse was likely to draw renewed scrutiny to a system that allowed a gun merchant to sell a weapon to a convicted felon who was legally barred from possessing one. Friday's bloodshed marked the latest spasm of gun violence in a nation where mass shootings have become almost commonplace, and came a day after the first anniversary of the massacre of 17 people by a gunman at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida. The siege in Illinois unfolded over an hour and a half, although the gunman's victims, including the wounded policemen, were struck by gunfire in the first several minutes, police said. Officers eventually found Martin in a machine shop at the back of the 30,000-square foot (2,800-square meter) building, and he died after a short gunfight.

The plant, which manufactures water distribution products

and operates as a factory and warehouse, employs about 200 workers in a working-class district of Aurora, the second-largest city in Illinois. Scott Hall, president of Henry Pratt's corporate parent Mueller Water Products, told a separate news conference on Saturday that Martin was a 15 year veteran of the company. Hall said Martin had been subject to disciplinary actions and that he was ultimately fired for a "culmination of workplace violations." He declined to elaborate. Among the victims were Trevor Wehner, a human resources intern who was spending his first day at the company when he was fatally shot, police and a family friend said.

Authorities identified the other workers killed as Josh Pinkard, the plant manager; Clayton Parks, the human resources manager; Russell Beyer, a mold operator and union chairman; and Vicente Juarez, a stock room attendant and fork lift operator. Their ages were not given. A sixth employee wounded in the shooting was expected to survive, as were the five policemen struck by gunfire. At least two of them remained hospitalized on Saturday in stable condition, Ziman said. Neighbors of Martin, who lived in an apartment in Aurora, described him as a quiet man whom they often saw operating a remote control car and a drone. "He looked very normal," said neighbor Gildardo Bravo, a 43-year-old cleaning company supervisor. —Reuters

## British teen who joined IS gives birth in Syria

LONDON: A runaway teenager who has divided British opinion after joining the Islamic State group in Syria but now wants to return home, has given birth, her family said yesterday. Shamima Begum, whose fate has prompted British soul-searching since she and two friends stirred controversy by fleeing to the terror network in 2015, gave birth to a boy, according to family lawyer Mohammed Akunjee. "We, the family of Shamima Begum, have been informed that Shamima has given birth to her child," a statement he released on Twitter said.

"We understand that both she and the baby are in good health. As yet we have not had direct contact with Shamima, we are hoping to establish communications with her soon so that we can verify the above." Akunjee told AFP the family had learned about the birth from a translator in an eastern Syria refugee camp where Begum is currently staying. Begum had

previously given birth to two other children, but both died during her time in Syria, she told The Times earlier this week.

Her case has highlighted the challenge for Western governments of dealing with returning jihadist supporters, after she told the newspaper that she wanted to raise her new baby in Britain. The 19-year-old has expressed no regrets about joining the group and leading politicians, including interior minister Sajid Javid, have said they will try to stop her return. Akunjee said Sunday Javid was "misunderstanding the law" and that Britain had a responsibility towards Begum and her newborn child. "A parent has responsibility and so does Britain," he added.

### Mixed response

The fresh focus on the case came as Britain's government appeared divided on how to respond to demands from US President Donald Trump that European nations take back hundreds of Islamic State group fighters captured in Syria. Trump said late Saturday that the United States was asking Britain and other European allies "to take back over 800 ISIS fighters that we captured in Syria and put them on trial."

The demand came as he prepared to declare the end of the group's so-called "caliphate", with US-led Arab and Kurdish forces close to capturing its last territorial holdout in Syria, ahead of a pull-out of American troops. The prospect has increased concerns about experienced militants and foreign fighters escaping and forming new cells in Syria or beyond, with US allies grappling for weeks with how to respond. Britain's Culture Secretary Jeremy Wright, a former attorney general—the country's chief legal adviser—told the BBC Sunday that it was "obliged, at some stage at least, to take them back".

Noting it was "a matter of international law and domestic law", he said: "It doesn't mean either that we can't seek to hold them to account for their behavior thus far." However, writing in The Sunday Times—under the headline "if you run away to join ISIS, I will use all my power to stop you coming back"—Javid insisted the government should strip "dangerous individuals of their British citizenship". He noted Britain had already exercised this power more than 100 times. "In considering what actions need to be taken now, I have to think about the safety and security of children living in our country," he wrote. —AFP



GATWICK AIRPORT: File handout photo shows Shamima Begum passing through security barriers at Gatwick Airport, south of London. —AFP



International

# Kashmir Muslims evicted, threatened after deadly attack on Indian forces

## India warns against rising communal tensions

**SRINAGAR:** India has warned against rising communal tensions across the country as Kashmiris living outside their state faced property evictions, job suspensions and attacks on social media after a suicide bomber killed 44 policemen in the region. The car bomb attack on a security convoy on Thursday, claimed by Pakistan-based Islamist militant group Jaish-e-Mohammad and carried out by a 20-year-old Kashmiri man, was the worst in decades of insurgency in the disputed area, which is claimed in full by both the nuclear-armed neighbors but ruled in part. As the bodies of the paramilitary policemen who died in the attack were returned to families across India this weekend, passionate crowds waving the Indian flag gathered in the streets to honor them and shouted demands for revenge. Pakistan has denied any role in the killings.

Kashmiri Muslims, meanwhile, are facing a backlash in Hindu-majority India, mainly in the northern states of Haryana and Uttarakhand, forcing the federal interior ministry to issue an advisory to all states to "ensure their safety and security and maintain communal harmony". Aqib Ahmad, a Kashmiri student in Uttarakhand capital Dehradun, said the owner of the house he was staying in had asked him to move out fearing an attack on his property. Rates for air tickets to Kashmir have sky-rocketed as tensions escalate, he said. Two other students in Dehradun said they also had been asked to vacate their rooms immediately. "Where are we supposed to go?" Waseem Akram told Reuters, demanding

authorities to ensure safety of all Kashmiri students.

Local media reported that some Kashmiri students were assaulted by members of Hindu right-wing groups in Uttarakhand, while a Kashmiri man had been booked by the police in the southern city of Bengaluru under a colonial-era sedition law for a post allegedly backing the militants. Reuters was not able to independently verify the reports. Police in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) state said they were providing temporary accommodation to people returning to Kashmir. The police urged Kashmiris to contact their hotline for "speedy assistance in case they face any difficulties/harassment".

### 'Traitor'

Fear has engulfed Kashmiri students in Haryana's Ambala district after a video on social media showed a village headman asking people to evict

Kashmiri students in the area. "In case it is not done, the person in whose residence such students are living will be considered as a traitor," the man says in the video, whose authenticity Reuters has not been able to independently verify. Police said they were investigating the matter.

Since the video surfaced on social media on Saturday, at least half a dozen Kashmiri students have been shifted to the hostel of a university campus in Ambala. A Facebook user named Anshul Saxena, meanwhile, has claimed credit for getting people fired or suspended for posts he calls "anti-national". Saxena uploaded a screengrab of a suspension letter handed out to a Kashmiri employee of a pharmaceutical compa-



PAMPORE: Indian security forces stand guard along the Jammu-Srinagar highway in Lethpora area in the town of Pampore, some 30 kms South of Srinagar. — AFP

ny who had allegedly written in favor of the attack. The attack on India's paramilitary police follows the deadliest year in Kashmir for security personnel since Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party came to power nearly five years ago.

Government data shows 91 officers lost their lives in Kashmir last year, about 14 percent more than 2017. Thousands of people, including militants and civilians, have died since the insurgency began in late 1980s.

Political leaders from Kashmir appealed to the government to ensure security of Kashmiris across India, while many people on Twitter said their homes were open to Kashmiris seeking shelter. "Understand the pain and anguish," Mehbooba Mufti, former chief minister of J&K, said in a tweet. "But we must not allow such mischievous elements to use this as an excuse to persecute/harass people from J&K. Why should they suffer for somebody else's action?" — Reuters



### Worst attack in decades in the disputed area

## Surveillance firm tracking millions in Xinjiang

**BEIJING:** A Chinese surveillance firm is tracking the movements of more than 2.5 million people in the far-western Xinjiang region, according to a data leak flagged by a Dutch internet expert. An online database containing names, ID card numbers, birth dates and location data was left unprotected for months by Shenzhen-based facial-recognition technology company SenseNets Technology Ltd, according to Victor Gevers, co-founder of non-profit organization GDI.

Foundation, who first noted the vulnerability in a series of social media posts last week. Exposed data also showed about 6.7 million location data points linked to the people which were gathered within 24 hours, tagged with descriptions such as "mosque", "hotel," "internet cafe" and other places where surveillance cameras

were likely to be found.

"It was fully open and anyone without authentication had full administrative rights. You could go in the database and create, read, update and delete anything," said Gevers. China has faced an outcry from activists, scholars, foreign governments and UN rights experts over what they call mass detentions and strict surveillance of the mostly Muslim Uighur minority and other Muslim groups who call Xinjiang home. (https://tinyurl.com/y9zouss) According to its website, SenseNets works with China's police across several cities. Its Shenzhen-listed parent company NetPosa Technologies Ltd has offices in a majority of Chinese provinces and regions, including Xinjiang.

SenseNets and NetPosa, as well as the Xinjiang regional government, did not immediately respond to requests for comment on Sunday. The Chinese government has ramped up personal surveillance in Xinjiang over recent years, including the construction of an extensive video surveillance system and smartphone monitoring technology. Gevers said the foundation directly alerted SenseNets to the vulnerability, in line with GDI's Foundation protocol. He said SenseNets did not respond, but that it has since taken steps to secure the database. — Reuters

## Fire sweeps through slum in Bangladesh

**CHITTAGONG:** A fire tore through a slum in southern Bangladesh yesterday killing at least 9 people and destroying hundreds of shanty homes, police said. The blaze broke out in the port city of Chittagong at about 3.30am and raced through the district of bamboo, tin and tarpaulin homes, said local police chief Pranab Chowdhury.

"At least 470 shanties were destroyed by the fire. So far 9 people have died. They included four members of a family," fire brigade official Hefazatul Islam said. Fires regularly break out in Bangladesh's slums, where millions live in squalid living conditions. Rights groups have in the past alleged some shanty town blazes were deliberate acts of sabotage by developers seeking to free up property to construct multi-storey buildings. "We have seen fires are used as a weapon to evict poor slum dwellers and squatters from government or private property," rights activist Nur Khan Liton said. — AFP

## Indian priest jailed for raping a minor

**KOCHI:** An Indian court has convicted a senior Catholic priest of raping a minor and sentenced him to 20 years in jail, the latest sexual assault scandal involving the Church in southern Kerala state. Robin Vadakkumchery was found guilty on Saturday of raping a 16-year-old schoolgirl, with the crime only coming to light after the victim gave birth to a baby in a surprise delivery in February 2017. Citing a lack of evidence, the court acquitted four nuns, a priest and an orphanage employee who had been accused of trying to cover up the crime and shield the influential Vadakkumchery.

After a child rights charity reported the secret delivery to the police, leading to the priest's arrest at Kochi airport as he attempted to board a plane to Canada, many of the main witnesses in the case turned hostile. "Almost all the independent witnesses proved non-cooperative, making it difficult for us to provide substantive evidence against all that the defence threw at us," Inspector Sunil Kumar, who investigated the

case said. Even the father of the victim testified that he, and not the priest, had raped the girl, while his daughter told the court that the relationship was consensual and said she had been an adult at the time.

Sex - whether consensual or otherwise - with a person below 18 years of age is considered rape under India's stringent child protection laws. Only the doctor's official record of when the baby was born could prove that the girl had been a minor at the time of delivery, said Kumar. "Luckily for us, the doctor who delivered the baby... stood his ground, so we could prove without doubt that the victim was a minor at the time," he said. The victim had been a student at a Church-run school which came under Vadakkumchery's jurisdiction.

Saturday's verdict followed a raft of allegations against senior Church figures in Kerala, including a bishop, Franco Mulakkal, who is accused of raping a nun 13 times over two years. He denies the charges. Sister Lucy Kalappurakkal, who has faced disciplinary action for supporting protests demanding action against Mulakkal, lauded the verdict. "It will work as a deterrent against such offenders. Rather than covering up such heinous crimes, (the) Church should expose such elements," she told the Hindustan Times. Sexual abuse by clergy and the failure of officials to take action has mired the Catholic Church in scandal across the world in recent years. — AFP

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## Washington Watch

## After deadly clashes, Ivorian farmers and herders try dialogue

Gathered under the spreading baobab tree in Danoa town square, farmers and herders in a remote corner of Ivory Coast are finally talking about a dispute that has poisoned relations and destroyed lives. Nearly three years ago, the northeast region of Bouna plunged into violence between crop growers and nomadic cattle raisers from the Fulani community, leaving 33 people dead and prompting 2,500 to flee their homes.

The scenario is tragically familiar in many parts of Africa, where sedentary farmers and herders share water and land - and tensions at times of stress may swiftly spiral into ethnic violence. Thousands have died in clashes in Chad, the Central African Republic, Mali and Nigeria in recent years. But in Bouna, a pilot project-part of a scheme to protect the coveted Como National Park - has nurtured hopes of a dialogue that will head off future bloodshed. "After what happened, I was frightened. Everyone was frightened," said Awa Ouattara, who heads a women's group of smallholders. "I hope the plan will work. When everyone is in agreement, it's better for all of us."

Supported by German sustainable development agency GIZ, village chiefs, farmers and cattle breeders are creating designated cattle routes to prevent herds from grazing in the park and on to farming land. GIZ is investing \$1.2 million (\$1.4 million) over four years to support communities around the park. The forum in Danoa brought together Koulango, mostly landowners, and the Lobi, mostly tenants, as well as Fulani. "Just getting people around a table and having a discussion is already an achievement," said Sanogo Issoufou from GIZ. "Everyone will benefit economically from sharing management of resources between community members. We hope to create a virtuous circle."

## Wildlife haven

Como national park is a world heritage site and one of West Africa's largest protected areas, known for its plant and animal diversity. Fed by the Como river, it is home to shrub savannas and thick rainforest usually found much farther south. "Our mission is to protect the park," said D'Angouss Kissi from the Ivorian Parks and Reserves Authority. "We realized that surveillance alone wasn't enough to stop cattle entering it illegally. We needed to find grazing land and water outside the park, whilst also easing tensions and avoiding new conflict."

The project also aims to share management of water points between local committees including herders, landowners, renting crop farmers and local businesses or teachers. Travelling herders pay a higher rate for water access - 15,000 CFA (A23) per month per herd, compared to locals, who are charged 2,000 CFA francs (three euros).

## Cooperation

Landowners say they are happy to provide land for crossing routes. "We explained to the community that it was for the common good," said chief landowner Amadou Ouattara. "It's better for everyone if we avoid conflict." Herder Barry Bounangui agrees. "Before, there were arguments every day about water, grass or routes for the animals, so to avoid any conflict, we went to the park," he said. "Now, farmers and herders are talking. It's a good thing. The crossing routes help us a lot, but we need the (leaking) dam to be repaired too."

Crop farmers are happier too. "There's less damage now," said Kambou Tchourite. Problems are being aired but anger remains and the pathway to enduring peace may be long. "The cows come on to our fields and destroy everything," a farmer said at the Danoa meeting. "I told the herder to stop but he just keeps coming back again and again. We can't go on like this!" Separately, a herder told AFP: "The crop farmers want everything. They set fire to the fields so that not even a blade of grass is left." — AFP



A Paul livestock farmer guides cattle in a transhumance corridor near the Danoa dam in northeastern Ivory Coast on Jan 21, 2019. — AFP



Iraqis sit at "The Station", Baghdad's incubator for would-be entrepreneurs, on Nov 17, 2018. — AFP

## Iraqi youth planting startup seeds

## After IS, innovation reigns

When IS declared Mosul its seat of power in Iraq back in 2014, resident Saleh Mahmud was forced to shutter the city's incubator for would-be entrepreneurs. With Mosul now cautiously rebuilding after the jihadists were ousted in 2017, Mahmud is back in business. "Around 600-700 youth have already passed by Mosul Space" to attend a seminar or seek out resources as they start their own ventures, said the 23-

their venture. A similar service, Miswag, was set-up in the capital Baghdad in 2014 and last year reported hundreds of thousands of dollars in profits.

## Banks and big dreams

On an autumn day, some 70 young Iraqi innovators converged for a three-day workshop in Baghdad on founding startups. They flitted among round tables planning projects, their Arabic conversations sprinkled with English terms. "What we're doing is showing youth what entrepreneurship is - not necessarily so they succeed, but so they at least try," said organizer Ibrahim al-Zarari. He said attendees should understand two things: First, that the public sector is saturated. And second, that oil isn't the only resource on which Iraq - OPEC's second-largest producer - should capitalize.

More than 65 percent of Iraq's GDP and nearly 90 percent of state revenues hail from the oil sector. Many youth turn to it for work, but it only employs one percent of the workforce. Widespread corruption and bureaucracy also weaken Iraq's appeal for private investors. The World Bank ranks it 168th out of 190 for states with a good business environment. Under current legislation, private sector employees are not offered the same labor protections or social benefits as those in the public sector.

And Iraq's stuttering banking industry appears too cautious to dive in, said Tamara Raad, 26, who researches startups. "The banks have a role to play. They must make loans without interest and help young entrepreneurs," she said. Banks or no banks, Mahmud in Mosul is already planning how he'll grow his business in 2019. "We will open a new, larger space for new gatherings," he said excitedly, to bring together returning designers, developers and other inventors. — AFP



## Bid to fight off unemployment

year-old. He was inspired after watching fellow Mosul University graduates hopelessly "try to hunt down a connection to get a job in the public sphere". "A university education isn't something that gets you a fulfilling job," he said.

Another start-up, Dakkakena, is capitalizing on Mosul's rebuilding spirit, too. The online shopping service delivers a lorry-full of home goods every day to at least a dozen families refurbishing after the war. "On the web, we can sell things for cheaper than stores because we have fewer costs, like no showrooms," said founder Yussef Al-Noaime, 27. Noaime fled IS to the Netherlands, where he was introduced to e-commerce. When he returned home, the computer engineer partnered with another local to found

## European Union flags come down in Brexit Britain

At a flag-making workshop in northern England, orders for Union Jacks are flying off the production line while the EU's blue-and-yellow standard is proving less and less popular. Flying Colors, which makes flags for Britain's royal palaces, has seen EU flag orders drop by 90 percent since the country voted to leave the bloc in 2016. "We've certainly seen a fall," Andy Ormrod, director of the factory in North Knarborough in Yorkshire said.

"Times have changed, our attitudes have changed... The demand isn't there," he said. Britain's union flag is proving more popular than ever, with orders up roughly 75 percent since last summer. "People are getting a little bit more passionate. I personally think, in being British," said Ormrod, who voted for Brexit because he is "sick and tired" of Brussels. "I have a feeling that we are wanting more of our identity within the UK," the flag-maker added.

## 'Standoffish' about flags

Britain has a long and complicated history with flags, according to Graham Bartram, chief vexillologist at the Flag Institute, a research centre in London. Until the last decade, the country has been reticent about displaying even its own national flag, he said. The union flag is currently only flown from government buildings on 21 days each year, including royal birthdays and anniversaries and saints' days. Bartram puts the trend down to various factors, including Britons wanting to downplay latent displays of patriotism and the country's imperial past.

"We were standoffish about all flags," he said, noting this extended to the European flag. "It's not a flag you would tend to see around Britain." In fact, prior to 2007, it was technically illegal to fly the EU and other national flags in Britain without planning permission, because they were considered advertising. Following a change in the law, the bloc's flag began to be seen more, flying outside the Scottish parliament, the Welsh and London assemblies and some other civic sites. Hotels,



An employee arranges a British flag on an EU flag in the factory of Flying Colours Flagmakers Ltd in Knarborough, northern England on Feb 7, 2019. — AFP

organizations that have received significant funding from the bloc and EU member states' embassies are also among those to fly the European flag.

## Symbol of resistance?

A petition lodged with parliament in the aftermath of the 2016 referendum - signed by nearly 20,000 people - called for all EU "flags, emblems and logos" to be removed immediately from public buildings in Britain. The government dismissed the calls, noting that "while the UK is a member of the EU it is in order for EU flags and symbols to be used in UK government buildings". All that could change once Britain has left the EU. A spokesperson for the mayor of London

said the emblem would be taken down from outside City Hall. However, spokespeople for the Welsh Assembly and Scottish Parliament, said no decisions have been taken. "We'll take stock when the time is appropriate," said the spokesman in Scotland, where voters overwhelmingly backed remaining in the bloc in the 2016 referendum. The European flag was first created by the Council of Europe and only later adopted by the EU. Bartram said its continued use by the Council, which Britain will remain a member of after Brexit, could provide cover for those who want to keep flying it after March 29. Could it become a symbol of Brexit resistance? "Possibly," he added. "And that would be interesting." — AFP

## Business

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2019

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## Boursa Kuwait privatization a historic event

NIC, Razan Financing and Investment Company, First Investment Company and Bursa Athena win bid



KUWAIT: A group photo during the event.— Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

By Nawara Fattahova

**KUWAIT:** The privatization of Boursa Kuwait was yesterday hailed as a historic event. Finance Minister Nayef Al-Hajraf said that this successful privatization came after many professional steps taken by the Capital Markets Authority since 2010. "It's very impressive that the team working on this project is a professional technical team that worked hard, and the project wasn't affected by the changing of directors or even ministers. This is the real challenge," he noted during a press conference held yesterday.

Minister of Commerce and Industry Khaled Al-Roudhan stressed that privatizing the bourse is a means to reach more achievements. "The stock market is a reflection of the economic situation. Many people thought that privatizing the bourse is a dream, but it came true and was realized. We believe in the role of the private sector," he affirmed. The public subscription of shares will take place within a year and will be free of charge.

"It represents the great success of the privatization process of public projects in Kuwait. It's related to one of the most important economic institutions (Kuwait Stock Exchange)," said CEO of Capital Markets

Authority Ahmad Al-Melhem. Thursday saw the pre-conclusion phase of privatizing Boursa Kuwait by announcing the winners of the public bidding, held according to international standards. "The winner of the bid for 44 percent of Boursa Kuwait was the alliance of National Investments Company, Razan Financing and Investment Company, First Investment Company and Bursa Athena, while six percent will be owned by the Public Institution for Social Security," he added.

"According to Article 33 of the Capital Markets Authority founding law no. 7/2010, the bourse's license was to be given to a shareholding company that would replace the Kuwait Stock Exchange. It also set the privatization percentages and categories of this company, including a percentage between 26 and 44 percent for underwriting by companies registered at the stock market, along with an international market operator," explained Melhem.

This privatization represents a great economic success. "It supports the financial reforms in the country. It also strengthens the role of the private sector in the local economy. This will provide an investment environment of international standards, as well as attract foreign investments and retain local investment. This privatization is part of Kuwait's 2035 vision," he added.



KUWAIT: Minister of Finance Nayef Al-Hajraf (left) and Minister of Commerce and Industry Khaled Al-Roudhan attend the event.

## Russia's Gazprombank freezes accounts of Venezuela's PDVSA

**MOSCOW:** Russian lender Gazprombank has decided to freeze the accounts of Venezuelan state oil company PDVSA and halted transactions with the firm to reduce the risk of the bank falling under US sanctions, a Gazprombank source told Reuters yesterday.

While many foreign firms have been cutting their exposure to PDVSA since the sanctions were imposed, the fact that a lender closely aligned with the Russian state is following suit is significant because the Kremlin has been among Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro's staunchest supporters.

"PDVSA's accounts are currently frozen. As you'll understand, operations cannot be carried out," the source said. Gazprombank did not reply to a Reuters request for a comment. Reuters reported this month that PDVSA was telling customers of its joint ventures to deposit oil sales proceeds in its Gazprombank accounts, according to sources and an internal document, in a move to try to sideline fresh US sanctions on PDVSA.

Washington says the sanctions, imposed on Jan. 28, are aimed at blocking Maduro's access to the country's oil revenue after opposition leader Juan Guaido proclaimed himself interim president and received widespread Western support. Gazprombank is Russia's third biggest lender by assets and includes among its shareholders Russian state gas company Gazprom.

The bank has held PDVSA accounts for several years. In 2013, PDVSA said it signed a deal with Gazprombank for \$1 billion in financing for the Petrozamor company. The source said that Petrozamor accounts were frozen, too.

Russian officials have said they stand by Maduro and have condemned opposition actions as a US-inspired ploy to usurp power in Caracas. But Russian firms find themselves in a quandary, caught between a desire to endorse the Kremlin line and back Maduro, and the fear that by doing so they could expose themselves to secondary US sanctions which would harm their businesses. — Reuters



KUWAIT: The Capital Market Authority holds a press conference

NBK Money Markets Report

# US dollar surges on Congress approval, economic data frail

## British growth slowest since summer of 2016

**KUWAIT:** The US dollar was among the best performers in the FX market last week despite disappointing data from retail sales and consumer inflation. The dollar's positive trajectory is mainly due to optimism towards averting another government shutdown and weaknesses in global economic activities. In Congress last week, the spending bill passed the Senate by a vote of 83-16 and by 300-128 in the House of Representatives. President Trump is expected to sign the spending bill as his tone towards another government shutdown has dissipated.

Trump said that he's not 'happy' or 'thrilled' with the compromise border security deal, but he did not say he would veto it and claimed he does not expect another shutdown. The agreement between Democrats and Republicans gives President Trump \$1.375 billion versus his demand for \$5.7 billion. However, the President has stated that he plans to announce a national emergency to sidestep Congress and secure funds for his border wall.

In the FX market, the USD gained further support as economic data from the EU, UK and China came in extremely frail. The US dollar index appreciated to a 2-month high last week and gained 0.22% in the last five trading sessions, YTD. The DXY is up around 0.90%.

### Weak US retail sales

Sales statistics for the month of December disappointed market expectations after retail sales tumbled by the largest amount in nine years and core retail sales also plummeted by the biggest drop since 2001. On a monthly basis, retail sales fell -1.2 percent and -1.8 percent for the core figure. The weak report has led the Commerce Department to slash Q4 growth to below 2.0 percent from 2.7 percent and at the same time the Atlanta Fed cut its GDP growth estimate for Q4 2018 by 1.2 percent to 1.5 percent. US retail sales accounts to around 65 percent of GDP and therefore the recent figure may pressure growth to come in much lower than previously anticipated.

Looking at the labor market, the 4-week moving average for unemployment benefits is currently at a one-year high. Headline consumer inflation is subdued at 1.6 percent y/y and producer price growth has fallen in the past two months. Up until the sales data was released, US monetary officials were hesitant to hike rates and based their hesitancy on risks originating from global growth. So, the recent weakness in retail sales further adds cautiousness to the FED's action plan on monetary tightening. US economic data have been delayed due to the longest government shutdown in US history. The delayed reports compiled by the commerce department, including housing starts, new home sales, factory orders and the Q4 GDP are expected to be released next week (25-Feb to 1-March).

### US price growth

US consumer inflation disappointed to the downside for the month of January as the annual rate declined to the lowest level since summer of 2017. The CPI rate fell from 1.9 percent y/y to 1.6 percent y/y, which may allow the FED to hold the overnight rate at its current level of 2.25-2.50 percent. On the other hand, the core data remained unchanged for the past three readings at 2.2 percent. Consumer inflation has been in a sliding state since summer and the CPI has

fallen from around 3 percent to 1.6 percent, largely subdued by lower energy prices. The price of fuel has fallen by 15.5 percent over the past three months, including a 5.5 percent drop in January.

Moderate inflationary pressures have led US monetary officials to remain in a cautious state towards interest rates. Lately, FED officials have indicated a suspension to rate rises, with the Fed chairman stating that the global economic outlook warrants a "wait and see" approach. Price growth has remained tepid despite a robust labor market. It seems that slowing economic growth in China and Europe is pressuring oil prices and causing headline inflation to remain in a moderate stance. Looking at the FED's preferred data on inflation, the core PCE is currently at 1.9 percent, which is below the Bank's target of 2 percent. Hence, if the negative momentum lingers on, then the central bank has an additional reason not to increase the overnight interest rate.

### Growth in the single economy diminishes

The euro-zone economy grew at a slower pace in the last quarter of 2018, pressured by static growth in Europe's largest economy, while Italy slipped into a recession. The 19 countries sharing the single currency expanded by 1.2 percent y/y in Q4 2018, down from 1.6 percent seen in the previous quarter. The German economy contracted in the third quarter by -0.2 percent and remained still in the last quarter as growth came in at 0 percent. Technically, the German powerhouse has avoided a recession by an extremely thin margin, because a recession is defined as two successive quarters of contraction. Looking at the main economies in the euro-zone, Italy contracted by -0.2 percent q/q, France at 0.3 percent q/q and growth in Spain held up better at 0.7 percent q/q. Industrial production in the single economy, which accounts to 25 percent of GDP is currently in a recession, having contracted in Q3 and Q4 last year.

Economic figures have been consistently poor out of the single economy, while geopolitical tensions in Europe are mounting and growth has diminished around the globe. Moreover, inflation in the euro-zone has been decelerating and weaker demand may further subdue inflation prospects. Therefore, the recent trend in data suggests that the European Central Bank could retain its current monetary strategy and an interest rate hike seems far-fetched.

Looking at the euro, the currency has been under selling pressure over the past week largely driven by heightened concerns over the health of the euro-zone economy. The latest data flow has surprised significantly to the downside. The slowdown during the second half of last year seems to have prolonged into early this year. The perseverance of economic feebleness has challenged the view that growth was being held back by temporary factors. It leaves the euro-zone economy more vulnerable to further negative shocks. The euro declined to almost a three-month low to 1.1231 and lost 0.24 percent of its value to the US dollar. YTD, the EUR/USD is down by 1.21 percent.

### UK growth rate

The deterioration of economic data out of the UK has become more evident as the economy in 2018 grew at the slowest pace since 2012. Forward looking indicators are also suggesting that growth has

remained frail or even weakened at the start of the year. On a quarterly basis, the economy expanded by a mere 0.2 percent in Q4 2018 from 0.6 percent seen in Q3 2018. It is clear that the Brexit theme is the main culprit for the poor reading. Business investment tumbled in every quarter of 2018, and declined by an annual rate of -3.7 percent in Q4. Industrial production contracted by -0.5 percent m/m while manufacturing output came in at -0.7 percent m/m.

The uninspiring data at the end of last year puts the economy in a tough start for Q1 2019 and suggests the UK needs to see greater monthly increases to boost the quarterly growth rate. Therefore, it poses a downside risk for the economy and the Bank of England lowered its prospects to 0.2 percent for the current quarter. Moreover, the Bank also predicted that the British economy has a 25 percent chance of entering into a recession by the summer. Overall, Brexit continues to be a drag on the economy and if the uncertainty surrounding Brexit persists, then firms and investors are likely to further refrain from investing.

### UK consumer Inflation

Britain's price growth momentum has been on a downward trajectory for the past three readings and January's consumer inflation data has fallen below the 2 percent mark for the first time in two years. The annual CPI rate disinflated by 0.3 percent to 1.8 percent, while the core CPI that excludes volatile swings from energy and food related products remained unchanged at 1.9 percent. Hence, it is evident that the lower headline inflation is mainly due to a fall in gas, electricity and petrol prices. The Office of Gas and Electricity has initiated a cap on energy related products and services since the start of the year.

The continuous decline in inflation supports the BoE's policy of maintaining a wait and see approach on interest rates and the outlook on interest rates is largely dependent on Brexit negotiations. As for the Bank of England's projection, the Bank expects consumer price growth to remain just below the 2 percent target for the first quarter of the year. Therefore, if wage growth remains stagnant at the pace registered in November, the fall in January's price growth would push real pay growth up to 1.4 percent, the fastest since 2016. This may assist the economy as household consumption increases.

The Sterling pound has been trading in a negative manner pressured by mounting Brexit uncertainties and the 29 March deadline is right around the corner. Moreover, economic data fails to bolster confidence in the economy. Last week, PM May suffered another loss as her Brexit Plan B was crushed in Parliament by 303 to 258. The Prime Minister barely has time to reach a Brexit settlement with the EU, win MPs' support and implement legislation in parliament, so that Brexit can take place as scheduled on March 29. There is obviously a threat that a No Deal Brexit could intensify in the weeks ahead as time is quickly running out before the end of the Article 50 period. Hence, the GBP may endure further volatility until clarity towards Brexit emerges. The GBP lost 41 basis points to the US dollar last week and closed on Friday at 1.2888.

### Disinflation in China

Consumer prices in China disinflated to more than a 1-year low and at the same time producer inflation

has fallen for the seventh consecutive reading. The CPI rate for the month of January came in at 1.7 percent y/y, down from 1.9 percent y/y. As for the PPI, producer price growth is currently at the lowest level since 2016 at 0.1 percent y/y. The inflation figures suggest that demand has remained relatively weak at the start of the year and is a concern for the profitability of the industrial sector as there is a high correlation between inflation and profitability. Hence, China could further ease monetary and fiscal policies to support the economy, especially with weaker growth in China and around the world.

### Japan's GDP

Japan's economy recovered from a contraction in the fourth quarter of 2018 as the economy expanded at an annualized rate from -2.5 percent in Q3 to 1.4 percent in Q4. The GDP data has recovered, however Japan is still an economy that is losing momentum. The economy grew at a pace of 0.7 percent in 2018, compared to 1.9 percent in 2017. The central strain on Japan's economy is coming from overseas demand, with economic weakness in Europe and a slowdown in China negatively impacting Japan's export sector. The trade war theme between the two largest economies is also seen as a

major burden for Japan's exports of cars, electronics, and heavy machinery to China.

On the inflation front, core price growth has remained extremely muted in Japan especially with falling oil prices globally. The latest core CPI rate is at 0.7 percent, the lowest level since May 2018. As for the BoJ's preferred measure of price momentum, the rate is at 0.3 percent, failing to register any acceleration since August 2018. That being said, the central bank is likely to maintain its loose monetary strategy with GDP neither strong enough to encourage monetary tightening, nor frail enough to create pressure for further stimulus.

The safe haven Japanese yen weakened versus the USD as the US government averts a shutdown and trade tensions are easing. Trump's aggressive tone towards China is receding and both countries seem to be working in collaboration to avoid further tariffs on each other. The USD rose by 0.53 percent against the JPY in the past five trading sessions.

### Kuwait

Kuwaiti dinar USD/KWD opened at 0.30365 yesterday morning.

## Bayt.com launches a new era for candidate evaluation with Evalufy

**KUWAIT:** Bayt.com, the Middle East's leading jobsite, announced the launch of "Evalufy," an all-new video assessment platform. With the release of this platform, companies across the world can now streamline various stages of the recruitment and candidate screening processes through customizable, video-based assessments, all while reducing time and cost of hiring.

Instead of screening candidates through assessment centers, screening phone calls, or other traditional methods, organizations that are seeking to hire have the option of using groundbreaking video assessments with Evalufy. The new platform dispatches assessments to a large number of candidates, auto-tracked and graded by multiple evaluators.

Upon completing the assigned assessment, candidates' report cards are automatically plotted on a benchmark, based on the desired hiring criteria. These score cards are then used by employers to identify and understand the true potential of candidates.

"The recruitment and interviewing process is challenging. Especially with limited resources and time, employers are sometimes forced to make subpar hiring decisions, ultimately ending up with a talent mismatch," said Muhammad Younas, Business Product Director, Bayt.com. "This is why we're excited about Evalufy: it will help employers take talent acquisition to the next level and leave the costly and time-consuming traditional interviewing and screening methods behind. At Bayt.com, we strive to provide organizations in the Middle East and the world with groundbreaking AI-powered tools & technologies."

Over 40,000 companies currently use Bayt.com to access a database of over 35 million CV's. Evalufy affords such companies the ability to quickly screen and select a hire based on competency-driven assessments. Evalufy is also compatible with Talentera, Bayt.com's Applicant Tracking System, allowing companies to integrate their various talent acquisition and management systems and streamline all of their activities.

### CONSUMER PROTECTION DEPARTMENT

#### RECALL INFORMATION

**Model Name: LEXUS LS 500**  
**Model Year: 2018**  
**No. of Vehicles: 177 units**  
**VIN: From JTH85LFF3J5000200 to JTH851FF8J5004554**

<b>RECALL REASON</b>	Inspect & reprogram Engine ECU
<b>REMEDY</b>	AI Sayer will contact the involved vehicle customers and inform them to bring to our service centers as the necessary parts are available. You are also kindly requested to contact 1830030. All the repairs will be free of charge for both Parts and Labor
<b>CONTACT</b>	Please contact <b>MOHAMED NASER ALSAYER &amp; SONS EST.COWLL</b> Starting 10/2/2019 For your convenience. please call to book an appointment Tel: 1830030

This Recall is run pursuant to articles (42, 43, 44, 45, 46 and 47) of no. 27/2017 Issuing the executive bylaws of law no. 39/2014 on Consumer Protection

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## EXCHANGE RATES

Al-Muzaini Exchange Co.			Bahrain Exchange Company WLL		
<b>EUROPEAN &amp; AMERICAN COUNTRIES</b>			<b>CURRENCY BUY SELL</b>		
US Dollar Transfer	304.650		<b>Europe</b>		
Euro	347.430		British Pound	0.386313	0.400213
Sterling Pound	396.150		Czech Korune	0.005381	0.014681
Canadian dollar	231.910		Danish Krone	0.042040	0.047040
Turkish lira	58.900		Euro	0.337145	0.350845
Swiss Franc	306.180		Georgian Lari	0.132087	0.132087
US Dollar Buying	297.350		Hungarian 0.001148	0.001338	
<b>ASIAN COUNTRIES</b>			Norwegian Krone	0.031214	0.036414
Japanese Yen	2.756		Romanian Leu	0.065258	0.082108
Indian Rupees	4.278		Russian ruble	0.004586	0.004586
Pakistani Rupees	2.222		Slovakia	0.009104	0.019104
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.701		Swedish Krona	0.028802	0.033802
Nepali Rupees	2.666		Swiss Franc	0.296891	0.0307891
Singapore Dollar	226.230		<b>Australasia</b>		
Hongkong Dollar	38.802		Australian Dollar	0.209825	0.221825
Bangladesh Taka	3.573		New Zealand Dollar	0.203166	0.212666
Philippine Peso	5.810		<b>America</b>		
Thai Baht	9.754		Canadian Dollar	0.224803	0.233803
Malaysian ringgit	77.877		US Dollars	0.300400	0.305700
<b>GCC COUNTRIES</b>			US Dollars Mint	0.300900	0.305700
Saudi Riyal	81.294		<b>Asia</b>		
Qatari Riyal	83.688		Bangladesh Taka	0.003054	0.003855
Omani Riyal	791.423		<b>Arab</b>		
Bahraini Dinar	809.090		Bahraini Dinar	0.793122	0.809622
UAE Dirham	82.959		Egyptian Pound	0.017124	0.019724
<b>ARAB COUNTRIES</b>			Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000088
Egyptian Pound - Cash	19.700		Iraqi Dinar	0.000211	0.000271
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	17.323		Jordanian Dinar	0.425181	0.434181
			Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
			Lebanese Pound	0.000157	0.000267
			Moroccan Dirhams	0.022135	0.046135
			Omani Riyal	0.784591	0.790271
			Qatar Riyal	0.079349	0.084289
			audi Riyal	0.080113	0.081413
			Syrian Pound	0.001291	0.001511
			Tunisian Dinar	0.095018	0.103018
			Turkish Lira	0.051088	0.062588
			UAE Dirhams	0.081479	0.083178
			Yemeni Riyal	0.000990	0.001070

## Business



Yousef Al-Khan and Aly El-Zayat during the press conference. — Photos by Joseph Shagra



# Bahrain Tourism and Exhibitions Authority launches its representative office in Kuwait

## Office launch prior to much-anticipated Formula 1 Gulf Air Bahrain Grand Prix

**KUWAIT:** In line with its efforts to attract tourists from across the world to the Kingdom of Bahrain, the Bahrain Tourism and Exhibitions Authority (BTEA) officially inaugurated its latest representative office in Kuwait, which was announced during a press conference held at the Four Seasons Hotel, Kuwait, on 14 February 2019.

Launching the office prior to the much-anticipated Formula 1 Gulf Air Bahrain Grand Prix comes in line with the BTEA's efforts to attract large tourist groups to the Kingdom of Bahrain. For the first time, the event will be held over a period of four days, featuring superstar DJ and record producer, Martin Garrix in addition to world-renowned producer, songwriter and DJ, Kygo.

"The BTEA strives to promote the Kingdom of Bahrain's tourism, leisure and hospitality sectors; providing a fertile ground for foreign investment. Through the inauguration of our representative office in Kuwait, we aim to establish relationships with Kuwaiti tour operators and travel agencies in order to promote the Kingdom of Bahrain as a leading tourist destination that continuously hosts various events and festivals that are suitable for all age groups," said the CEO of BTEA,

Shaikh Khaled bin Humood Al-Khalifa.

"We will be working closely with BTEA's representative office in Kuwait to increase the number of visitors to the Kingdom of Bahrain, further reaffirming its position as a tourism destination of choice with a number of new hotels, retail and leisure developments that are currently underway. We look forward to strengthening ties between Bahrain and Kuwait with an aim to increase the tourism influx which will contribute to the growth and development of the tourism sector and the overall national economy," said the Director of Tourism Marketing and Promotions at BTEA, Yousef Al-Khan.

A meeting was also held on Wednesday, 13 February 2019, between Kuwaiti tour operators and their Bahraini counterparts, including representatives from a number of leading hotels, to discuss opportunities for cooperation in order to achieve their joint tourism related goals.

Bahrain has welcomed 328,850 visitors from Kuwait in 2018 with 247,959 tourists accessing the Kingdom through the King Fahad Causeway, 80,822 through the Bahrain International Airport and 69 through the Khalifa Bin Salman Port. Other than Kuwait, the BTEA has also launched representative offices in the Kingdom



of Saudi Arabia, India, France, Germany, Russia and the United Kingdom.

The launch of the representative office comes in line with the BTEA's strategic outreach program to promote the tourism brand 'Ours Yours' aimed at showcasing the

Kingdom of Bahrain as the ideal tourism destination to the regional and international markets and further promote the Kingdom's touristic offering as a main contributor to the overall economic growth in line with the Economic Vision 2030.

## US millennials a popular but elusive target for brands

**NEW YORK:** American millennials—the generation of people aged 17-35 — are a popular target for advertisers and brands, but companies risk missing out by approaching them as one homogenous population. From Gillette razors to McDonald's and American Express, every major American company is touting its efforts to attract these young people, considered the workforce of tomorrow and the new generation of consumers.

ExxonMobil and Chevron no longer hesitate to highlight their late and forced conversion to the fight against climate change, a subject important to millennials, who will suffer its most serious consequences. "I think it's a good idea to focus on millennials in the sense that it's a huge market," said Ajay Kohli, a professor at Georgia Tech University. "But I don't think it makes sense to play millennials as a homogenous group of people who want the same products or same services, or believe in the same values, or are equally price sensitive or equally responsive to give a message," Kohli said. — AFP

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

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

**The results of the draw were as follows:**

1- Al-Najma weekly account - the prize of KD 5000 and was for the share Mohammad Adnan Al-Ghouthani

2- The campaign "Salary & Cash on Top" the prize KD 1000 and was a share, Abdulrahman Mraif Al-Bathali

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

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

As regarding "Salary & Cash on Top" campaign designated for Kuwaiti and expatriate employees as well as the retirees and which is valid until 31 December 2019 and the mechanism of joining this campaign for availing its benefits, the Bank explained that Kuwaiti employees with a salary of KD 500 and above whether newly recruited or in service can transfer their salary to the Bank and avail the benefits of this campaign by getting instant cash gift of KD 250 or an interest free loan 5 times the salary up to KD 10,000, add to this they will automatically enter the weekly draw on KD 1,000. As for the expatriate customers categorized under Premier Banking Account with a salary KD of 1,700 and above, they will get instant cash gift.

The retirees with pension KD 1,000 & above will also get an instant cash gift of KD 150 when transferring their pension to the Bank and automatically enter the weekly draw on a prize of KD 1,000 and avail the benefits of this campaign designated for Kuwaiti and expatriate employees working in private and public sector as well as the retirees. Further, the campaign provides customers with the opportunity to get additional benefits and take advantage of the advanced & unrivalled services & products the Bank provides to its customers to meet their needs and expectations.

## Wall Street Week Ahead

### Profit estimates may be adding in too much cost risk

**NEW YORK:** As Wall Street braces for the first quarterly decline in earnings in nearly three years, some investors are wondering if the market is factoring in a bigger erosion in profit margins than will actually come to pass. Forecasts for US earnings, after a big boost from corporate tax cuts in 2018, are falling sharply in 2019. But revenue forecasts remain relatively robust, leaving an expected spike in costs as the main reason for profitability to weaken.

But some strategists say there is little evidence yet of such cost pressures and that margins may hold up better than expected.

"Companies since the 2008 trauma have made it a top priority to maintain and increase, if possible, their profit margins," said Ed Yardeni, president and chief investment strategist of Yardeni Research.

"We don't expect that labor compensation and other costs will squeeze margins. Nor do we expect that an increase in those costs will boost prices," he added. "Rather, we are betting on improving productivity." Besides the tightening labor market, the trade war between the United States and China and the stronger US dollar are among the biggest potential risks to corporate margins this year.

For the first quarter, analysts are forecasting a year-over-year S&P 500 earnings decline of 0.5 percent, according to IBES data from Refinitiv. Second-quarter earnings are still expected to grow 3.5 percent, though that estimate also is down sharply from the start of the year.

The drop in forecasts has led to talk of a profit recession, defined as at least two consecutive quarters of year-over-year earnings declines. The last US profit recession ran from July 2015 through June of 2016. Projected revenue for S&P 500 companies has been more resilient, with first-quarter revenue growth estimated at 5.3 percent, based on Refinitiv's data.

Credit Suisse strategists said profit margins are holding up better than the estimates suggest, at least for the majority of S&P 500 companies.

They said profit margins are eroding sharply for several heavily weighted companies, including Apple, Exxon Mobil and chipmakers like Micron Technology, which are skewing data for the entire S&P benchmark index.

A recent drop in oil prices has hurt margins for energy companies, a slowdown in the semiconductor business cycle has hit companies in that space and other firms have boosted investment expenses, said Patrick Palfrey, senior equity strategist at Credit Suisse Securities in New York. "It's not a broad-based macro issue," he said. "When you look at the median company, we see margins quite stable." Moreover, worries that a tight labor market will drive up wages have been limited in earnings calls for the fourth-quarter reporting period, which is nearing an end. — Reuters

## In my view

### East-West ties: Next steps for national oil companies?

By Abd Malik Jaffar

The same cliff edge threatens all national oil companies (NOCs) in the Middle East, Asia and beyond: ensuring energy security amid tighter budgets, green targets, growing populations and rising energy demand. In the Middle East alone, BP Outlook expects energy consumption to rise by 54 percent by 2040. Success will be hard-won, especially in a world of \$60/bl oil. As guardians of their economies, NOCs must reach out for strategic helping hands to stay on their toes.

Price volatility is a key pressure point, from which no NOC is immune. Such volatility has seen oil prices reach \$86/bl in early October from \$67/bl at the beginning of this year, then slide again recently by 30 percent to \$57/bl.

But there is a silver lining to this lingering cloud of guesswork. Dated Brent averaged \$72/bl as of the 7 December this year, versus an average of \$54/bl in 2017 - a 33 percent annual increase. Of

course, there could be more twists and turns ahead, such as the US' renewed sanctions on Iran. This alone could remove between 1 million barrels a day (b/d) to 1.5m b/d of oil from the market. As more 'what ifs' dominate NOCs' boardroom conversations, partnerships are pivotal to staying afloat in the sea of ambiguity.

#### Grab an oar

As NOCs are all in the same boat of uncertainty, we should all grab an oar and row together towards our united goal: affordable, low-carbon energy security. Working together will enable the expertise of others to plug your weaker spots and vice versa, therefore picking up the pace of the entire boat and getting to terra firma faster.

Collaborative sweet spots abound for NOCs and other energy entities on both sides of the Indian Ocean. For example, PETRONAS is establishing itself as a thought leader in the rapidly growing enhanced oil recovery (EOR) market - coveted expertise to support the Middle East's challenging and aged oil fields. Transparency Market Research expects the valuation of the global EOR market to soar from \$38.1 billion in 2012 to \$516.7 billion by 2023. More east-west collaborations today will lead to profitable wins in the early 2020s.

The same applies to renewables. The International Energy Agency (IEA) expects Asia to be home to two of the three countries - China, US, India - that

will account for two thirds of the global renewable expansion up to 2022. Renewables are an integral thread in the energy strategies of most Gulf countries' National Visions. The UAE, long an advocate of solar power, launched the world's largest Concentrated Solar Power (CSP) project last year, for example. Regulatory shifts also provide opportunities for NOCs in the Middle East and Asia to unleash their collaborative spirit, such as the International Maritime Organization's (IMO) new sulfur ruling. From the 1 January, 2020, the sulfur bunker limit will be 0.5 percent, down from today's 3.5 percent. Liquefied natural gas (LNG) is an increasingly popular bunkering option to complement the new fuel mix post-2020, though questions linger over affordable and logistically-viable storage options. As PETRONAS develops its second floating LNG vessel, how can synergies flourish with Arab Gulf partners, especially the UAE's Port of Fujairah, the world's second largest bunkering hub?

#### Creating symphonies

Before NOCs in the Middle East and Asia embark on joint projects, each NOC must strengthen its internal alignment. This means identifying quantifiable goals - both commercial and corporate social responsibility (CSR) - and enhancing human and technological resources. A NOC must be able to orchestrate its own corporate symphony, rather than a clash of varying views. Internal confusions bleed into partnerships, delaying projects

and spiraling costs. For example, PETRONAS' four key themes are Loyalty, Integrity, Professionalism and Cohesiveness. We would integrate these values into any partnership to ensure fairness, transparency and progress. Equally, NOCs must understand the ethos and goals of their potential partners. This is especially pertinent as the global energy transition is diversifying their traditional remit into a rainbow of interests, including renewables and nuclear power.

Threading digitalization into partnerships is crucial: the future is digital. The tool box under the umbrella of the 4th Industrial Revolution encompasses predictive analytics, artificial intelligence, automation, blockchain and much, much more. Learning this new 21st century language will sharpen NOCs' competitive edge, both individually and in partnerships. Nearly a quarter (24 percent) of respondents to a GIQ Industry Survey expect alignment between NOCs and companies from Silicon Valley to emerge as the most popular partnership in the 2020s.

Market pressures are too great and the clock is ticking too loudly for NOCs to operate in silos. Seeking and extending alliances in this era of troubleshooting is not a sign of weakness, but economic maturation. Together, national guardians can stand tall and proud. Note: Abd Malik Jaffar is Regional Director PETRONAS Subsidiaries Middle East, PETRONAS

## Business

# Boubyan Bank maintains its top customer service position in Kuwait

Boubyan the 'best in customer service atop all Kuwait institutions'



Al-Tuwaijri receiving the award



Boubyan Bank officials with the award

**KUWAIT:** Boubyan Bank continued being on top of the pyramid of customer service in Kuwait, supported by earning two awards from Service Hero, the international consumer-driven customer satisfaction index. The bank received the First Place Award in Customer Service as a Country Winner, for the fourth time in addition to being named the 2017 Best Islamic Bank in Customer Service for the ninth year in a row since 2010.

Abdulla Al-Tuwaijri, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, commented on the bank's continued receipt of such awards by stating: "The assessment of local and international companies and our continued receipt of such awards shows that reaching the top is easy, however, maintaining this position is much harder."

"The confidence of our customers was well-placed, and this was fruitful as it contributed to earning these two special awards in Kuwait. The bank would continue at that remarkable level of customer service", he added.

Al-Tuwaijri went on to explain: "Customer service is part of the bank's culture. It is no secret that almost all competitors offer similar products and services, however, the excellence and outperformance come through service and the way of dealing with customers, especially in Kuwait where customers have high expectations."

He went on to add: "Upon reviewing our products and services, one can see that aside from contributing, logically, to our profitability, they - most importantly - constitute a part of our social responsibility. This is because we contribute to emphasize the concepts of innovation and creativity in the first place besides minimizing the effort and time dedicated to obtaining the service or the product, thus, saving our customers the time which they may spend in doing more valuable activities such as family activities."

He elaborated: "Customer service necessitates that the bank staff continue providing the highest levels of service, while enhancing the same constantly in a manner that maintains the confidence of customers and gives them the edge compared with other financial institutions. Customer service challenges are increasing day-after-day, and this brings more responsibilities to the doors of various departments of the bank."

Al-Tuwaijri received the awards alongside Adel Al-Hammad, the General Manager of the Human Resources Group at Boubyan Bank, and Neven Raic, GM - Consumer Banking Group, Wadie Haider, AGM - Customer Experience Management, Bashar Al-Doub, AGM - Retail Sales & Distribution Channels, and Firas

Mahasen, Senior Manager - Customer Experience Management.

#### Selection criteria

Boubyan's choice by Service Hero relied on a group of criteria they followed during the survey, which extended over one year among consumers who evaluated companies on a scale of 10 against their service-level expectations, their experience and their satisfaction following the customer-service experience.

The evaluation relied on many elements such as staff's attitude, location of the bank, speed of service, confidence in the product, quality of service or product, value for money, the contact center, and the website of the bank. Service Hero survey implements a strict protocol to confirm the identity of consumers who take part in the survey.

The survey was taken by around 23,000 nationals and residents in Kuwait of various segments, ages, and consumption trends for the results to be true and indicative of the Kuwaiti market.

Al-Tuwaijri added: "One of Boubyan Values which we seek to instill in our staff is (Customer Focus). Also, since 2010, the bank has been focusing on customer

service as the basis of success side by side with excellence of services, products as well as the banking and financing solutions offered by the bank in compliance with the principles of Islamic Sharia."

"Perfection of work and service is the main pillar of customer service, especially when we observe the accomplishments of the bank over the past years which witnessed the increase of its market shares, coupled with the bank's ambitions towards more achievements in the future. We stress that customers are among our priorities, so, we listen to them and conduct surveys to hear their voice; this is the most significant factor for our assessment since customers' feedback is the main driver of any improvement sought by any organization," Al-Tuwaijri elaborated.

Al-Tuwaijri concluded by adding that one of the remarkable things about Service Hero's awards was that they come from an institution which is renowned for its efficiency, expertise, and fairness, especially that the awards were based on studies and consumer surveys which covered a large number of customers representing various segments in Kuwait in addition to the competition with well-established players in the Kuwaiti markets who enjoy vast experience."

## Warba Bank announces 5 winners of Sunbula draw

**KUWAIT:** Warba Bank, "the Best investment Bank" and "Best Corporate Bank" in Kuwait, held its weekly Sunbula draw number 7. The draw announced the 5 lucky winners in the presence of representatives from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and bank officials.

The bank proudly announced the lucky 5 winners of the KD 1000 prize: Deemah Ahmad Arhan Al-Rasheedi, Ahmad Hashem Mohammad Hajeyah, Ahmad Qassab Obaid Al-Dalmani, Fahad Marzouq Fahad Al-Azmi and Talal Waheed Amer Al-Shammari.

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

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

As for the chances for winning, each customer is eligible to enter the draw against each KD 10 in the Sunbula Account. Nevertheless, Sunbula Fixed Deposit investors also get chances in the Sunbula draws along with high expected returns that reach up to 3.5 percent distributed either monthly or at maturity upon the customer's preference. Furthermore, Warba Bank is leveraging on its Customer Onboarding solution, in line with its ambitious five-year strategy that enables non-Warba Bank customers to request the opening of Al-Sunbula account in a simple electronic manner without having to visit the branch, through 5 simple steps in 5 minutes. New customers will be able to request opening the account at anytime, anywhere, through the new and unique electronic system used to implement this service. Representatives will then contact the customer to determine the appropriate time to visit the branch to get required signatures, verify the customer's identity, deliver his/her debit card, and activate the account.

## Al-Babtain, TOTAL celebrate 10 years of successful partnership in Kuwait

**KUWAIT:** Al-Babtain Group and TOTAL Marketing Middle East recently celebrated a decade of joint operations and successful business performance in Kuwait. The event which was held at the Regency Hotel, Kuwait on 15th Jan-19 was attended by senior executives and management of both Al-Babtain Group and TOTAL along with 350 valued customers.

Al-Babtain Group and TOTAL acknowledged the significant contributions achieved throughout the ten-year long partnership. "Al-Babtain would like to sincerely thank TOTAL for achieving this important milestone. TOTAL and Al-Babtain have made significant progress in Kuwait and currently hold a dominant position, with consistent growth in the past 10 years. We believe that this relationship with TOTAL will continue to strengthen further in Kuwait with support of our valued customers and we will scale new heights together in the coming years," said Jihane Bou Hamdan CFO, Al-Babtain Group.

Today, TOTAL through Al-Babtain Group, is a major player in the lubricant retail market and has a strong presence in the Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEM), with TOTAL being the preferred lubricant supplier for Nissan, Infiniti, Renault, Citroen, KIA, Daihatsu cars in Kuwait, besides partnership with Volvo trucks and TATA trucks.

It is worth mentioning that in 2018, a new range of TOTAL synthetic engine oils were introduced in Kuwait. TOTAL Quartz 9000 MVP 5W40, TOTAL Quartz 9000 Future FGC 5W30 and TOTAL Quartz Racing 10W60. These engine oils have been developed keeping in mind the latest OEM requirements that meet the highest and most stringent requirements of the modern day engines. This range provides the latest technology available for owners of German, European, American, Japanese and Korean car manufacturers.

High performance Industrial grades from TOTAL like Turbine oils, Gas Engine oils, compressor oils

## Burgan Bank announces winners of Yawmi account draw

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

The lucky winners are:

1. Damtha Rakhawan Mohammad Alajmi
2. Khaleel Ibrahim Alqaddah
3. Mehrdad Yousef Mehdi Zadeh
4. Vandana Dutta Wadhuram Kewal Ramani
5. Abdulqader Zeyad Alsamady

In addition to the daily draw, Burgan Bank also offers a quarterly draw with more chances



and hydraulic oils are also well received by major Oil & Gas companies in Kuwait beside the flagship

products in commercial segment like 15W 40 - C14 & 20W 50 - SL.

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

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

## UK airline flybmi collapses under fuel costs, Brexit pressures

**LONDON:** British regional airline flybmi announced yesterday it had ceased operations and was filing for administration, blaming spikes in fuel and carbon costs and uncertainty over Brexit.

Parent company British Midland Regional Limited said it had cancelled all flights with immediate effect, and would not be able to purchase, rearrange or reschedule any bookings on behalf of customers. —AFP

What's On



# Ooredoo concludes its fifth annual football tournament

Ooredoo Kuwait concluded the fifth edition of its annual football tournament "The Ooredoo Cup 2019", which was held at Dasman Bilingual School in Sharq in coordination with 'Li3ib' platform for reserving and organizing sports activities. This is the fifth year in a row where Ooredoo holds this event which aims to further engage with employees from different departments and divisions.

The event aims to gather employees in a casual friendly atmosphere, outside of the office premises and working hours. This comes in alignment with Ooredoo's core values of caring, connecting and challenging, and the company's philosophy of investing in its employees who are the cornerstone of the establishment. The winner of the trophy this year was Ooredoo's CEO Team, which scored four goals and defended all attacks against their goal by the opposing Customer Care Team, ending a high-octane final game with a four goal victory.

The tournament included 12 teams from the company's different departments, with players from across the organization including the company's CEO Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdullah Al Thani, in addition to heads of other departments

and units, FASTtelco and Phono, as well as the security officers in the building. During the halftime breaks throughout the tournament and during the final game, Ooredoo held raffle draws for the audience, giving away prizes such as devices, accessories and gaming consoles from Apple, Huawei, Xbox, Copthorne Hotel, and JW Marriot. Costa Coffee were also present during the final ceremony. The final ceremony included special awards for specific categories which included Best Player, Best goalkeeper, Fair Play, Best Player and Top Scorer.

Commenting on this event, Ooredoo's Corporate Communications Senior Director Mijbil Alayoub said: "We're happy to organize this event for the fifth consecutive year here in Ooredoo. The tournament aims to fortify the brotherly relationship between Ooredoo staff across the organization, and is an embodiment of our core values of caring and connecting." He added that the tournament is a great opportunity for employees to interact with the company's upper management in a friendly setting, and a chance for employees to enjoy a sociable atmosphere with their families. The event comes as part of Ooredoo's year-long plan of internal activities, aiming to engage employees and entertain them.



## NBK celebrates graduation of employees from 'Trade Finance' program



The National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) held a ceremony to honor employees who have completed the specialized "Trade Finance" training program which is designed and organized in cooperation with Euromoney Learning for banking and financial training. The ceremony was attended by the highest management of the Bank, headed by Salah Y Al-Fulaij, Chief Executive Officer - Kuwait, Salah Yousuf Al-Fulaij, Emad Al-Ablani General Manager of Group Human Resources and Pradeep Handa, General Manager - Foreign Corporate, Oil and Trade Finance Group.

Extending over six months, the 32 employees enrolled had to pass several professional examinations to complete the requirements of the intensive training program. These requirements covered the basics of trade finance, collections, letters of guarantee, letters of credit, trade products structure, compliance in letters of credit and guarantees, as

well as other operational aspects of trade finance

Congratulating the graduates, Al-Ablani said, "Through the program, NBK aimed at developing the skills of its employees and enable them to gain new knowledge in the field of trade finance. The program covered the latest best practices and professional dealings, helping grow them to better serve customers following the best international standards and practices."

Al-Ablani further highlighted that the program was designed in partnership with Euromoney Learning. The components of the program focused on providing training in the specific services provided by the Trade Finance Department to support business sectors such as import, contracting, infrastructure development and many sectors with high professionalism and efficiency.

Al-Ablani concluded: "NBK is committed to the continued development and training of our employees

to increase their abilities in delivering professionally. Our specialized training programs are designed according to methodological and scientific standards and are delivered by leading banking experts who share their expertise and know-how with NBK's employees."

NBK launched the "Trade Finance" program as the first of its kind program in the banking sector in Kuwait that aims to develop the skills of its employees working in the Trade Finance Department. It is accredited by the London Institute of Banking and Finance, which is one of the oldest international institutions specialized in vocational education, banking and financial services. Euromoney Learning is one of the leading international institutions that provided training and educational services to close to 95 banks and 5,000 companies around the world in collaboration with 60 thousand experts and specialists who have provided training programs over the past five years.

## 'How to create a barcode' project given special recognition

The director of Mubarak Al-Kabeer Educational area's Omamah Bent Al-A'ass intermediate school for girls, Aamal Boshhehri recently received the school girls who had participated in the special projects' competition organized by Mubarak ELT supervision. They had recently won the first place with their project on 'How to create a barcode'. Boshhehri, the school's English department HOD, Fatima Al-Qahtani and the English teachers also received special congratulations from ELT supervisor, Abeer Al-Jeeran.



## LAPA organizes concert for Arabic heritage band

In collaboration with the National Council for Culture, Arts and Liter (NCCAL), LOYAC's Academy for Performance Arts (LAPA) recently organized a special concert for the Arabic heritage band to commemorate Kuwait's National anniversaries. The concert was held at Abdul Hussein Abdul Redha theatre band and included fifty singers and musicians and was conducted by maestros Nisreen Nasser and Yousif Bara.

The band sang and played a number of tradition-

al and national songs which were uniquely conducted with modern perceptions. The concert started with the national anthem and all the audience held Kuwaiti flags. The band also sang a new song produced by LOYAC, written by Abdul Aziz Al-Meshari, music by Abdul Hameed Dehrab and sang by Abdul Aziz Al-Mesbah and Sheikha Al-Ma'touq. Notably, LAPA's Arabic heritage band was founded in 2016 to revive Arabic traditional singing patterns using modern music.



Health & Technology

# Lowering vaccination rates, global outbreaks fuel US measles spread

**NEW YORK:** A measles outbreak that has stricken at least 225 people in New York state since October began with a traveler who visited Israel during the Jewish high holidays and returned to a predominantly ultra-Orthodox Jewish neighborhood of Rockland County. A similar pattern unfolded three months later and nearly 3,000 miles (4,800 km) away when a person who visited Eastern Europe returned to a community with strong ties to a local church group in Vancouver, Washington. More than 50 people fell ill there.

In both instances, US travelers picked up measles in foreign countries where the highly contagious disease was running rampant and brought it back to places where vaccination rates were too low by US public health standards, setting off the worst outbreaks seen in those states in decades. The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says New York's outbreak marks the highest tally of imported cases since measles was declared eradicated in the United States in 2000.

The two outbreaks appear to be winding down, health officials say, after concerted efforts to pinpoint the origins and isolate and inoculate those who were exposed but unprotected and educate parents who had resisted vaccines. The disease has spread mostly among school-age children whose parents declined to get them vaccinated. Most cited philosophical or religious reasons, or concerns - debunked by medical science - that the three-way vaccines against measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) could cause autism, authorities said.

New York State Health Commissioner Dr Howard Zucker said another key factor was mere "complacency" in an age where the potential ravages of measles are unfamiliar to parents who came of age after the vaccine was introduced in 1957. In Rockland County, the suburb north of Manhattan accounting for the bulk of cases, the state has vaccinated 15,000 children since the outbreak began there last autumn, Zucker said. The Brooklyn borough of New York City was another hot spot.

Still, officials say the measles crisis in New York and Washington states offer a lesson about the importance of maintaining a minimum level of "herd" immunization against dangerous, preventable diseases such as

measles. It also highlights the global nature of disease control, in which a hot spot of infection in one country can ignite a distant outbreak in an immunization-weak spot of another, said Dr. Scott Lindquist, Washington's top epidemiologist. Here are some key facts about measles and immunization, according to public health experts and the CDC.

**What immunization rates are ideal?**

A 95 percent rate of immunization is required to provide sufficient "herd" protection in a given population. Rates as low as 60 percent were found in parts of New York where measles spread, Zucker said.

**How bad can measles get?**

Symptoms typically include high fever, cough, runny nose and watery eyes, followed by tiny white spots inside the mouth and a red rash that can cover the body. Serious and potentially fatal complications, especially in young children and pregnant women, can include pneumonia and swelling of the brain. Ear infections occur in about 10 percent of children with measles and can lead to permanent hearing loss. One rare but fatal complication is subacute panencephalitis (SSPE), which can attack the central nervous system seven to 10 years after a person has recovered from measles.

**How contagious is measles?**

Measles is spread through casual contact with the virus, which can linger and remain infectious in the air of an enclosed space for up to two hours after it is breathed out by someone carrying the disease. The rate of transmission from an infected person to another individual nearby who lacks immunity is about 90 percent.

**Origins of latest outbreaks?**

Health authorities say the strain of the virus identified in Washington state matches the one circulating widely in Ukraine since last year. The New York outbreak has been tracked back to separate flare-ups of measles in Israel and in Eastern Europe. — Reuters

## With climate change, sunny day flooding incur losses too

**WASHINGTON:** With greater and greater frequency, the parking lot in the small historic port of Annapolis near Washington is flooded even on sunny days: water washes in, pushed by the force of ever higher tides. No one is hurt, no roofs are torn off, and the neighborhood isn't evacuated as it might be in a hurricane. But these less spectacular events also incur economic costs, in the form of fewer tourists or residents coming to shop or eat at one of the historic City Dock's 16 businesses.

Researchers at Stanford University are using a novel method to estimate the cost, published Friday in the journal Science Advances, in hopes of raising awareness of the more mundane, everyday consequences of a warming climate. "So often we think of climate change and sea level rise as these huge ideas happening at a global scale, but high-tide flooding is one way to experience these changes in your daily life," said Miyuki Hino, a Stanford graduate student and co-author of the study.

The researchers have methodically gathered photos and satellite images of the parking area to document the number of high tide flooding days: 63 in 2017, against an average of four a year in the 1960s. They then estimated the corresponding decline in the number of visitors, using parking receipts as documentation. Their conclusion: 3,000 fewer visits in 2017, signifying a loss of between \$86,000 and \$172,000 in revenues.

That is only a two percent decline in annual visits. But if sea levels were to rise seven centimeters, or three inches, the decline could double, by the researchers' estimate. At 30 centimeters, or 12 inches — a conceivable sea level rise by mid-century — the researchers calculate there would be a 24 percent drop in visits, with a resulting loss of hundreds of thousands of dollars in revenues. — AFP

CLINIC

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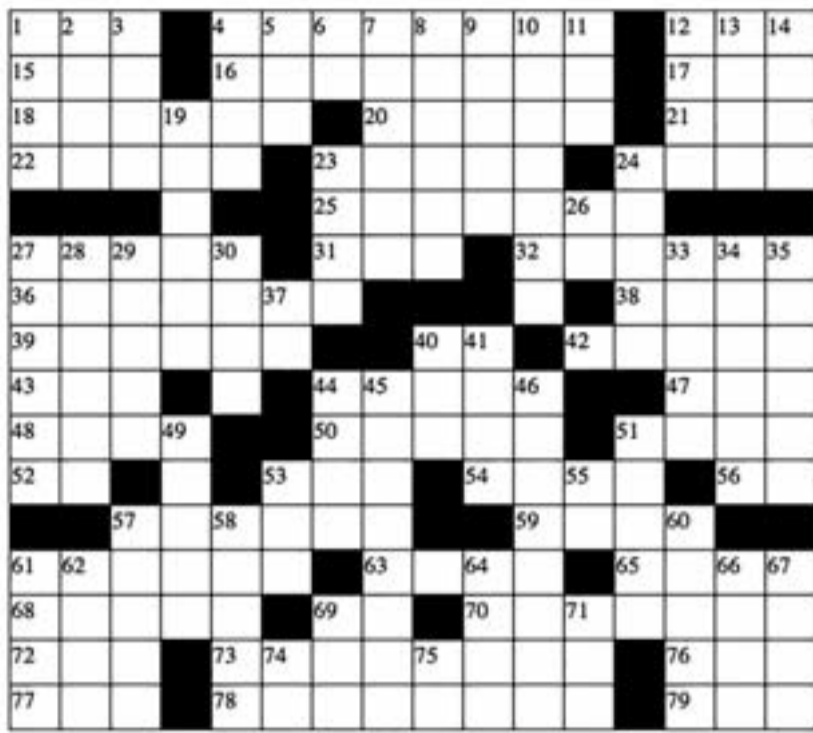
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Stars

CROSSWORD 2139



ACROSS

1. A light touch or stroke.
4. A language spoken by the Atakapa people of the Gulf coast of Louisiana and Texas.
12. Light informal conversation for social occasions.
15. A Turkish unit of weight equal to about 2.75 pounds.
16. Reflects weight of sound argument or evidence.
17. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
18. (plate tectonic theory) A hypothetical continent including all the landmass of the earth prior to the Triassic period when it split into Laurasia and Gondwanaland.
20. Flat rectangular plate (a piece of glass) on which specimens can be mounted for microscopic study.
21. A gradual decline (in size or strength or power or number).
22. A Chadid language spoken in northern Nigeria and closely related to Hausa.
25. Of deserts of northern Africa and southern Asia.
27. Jordan's port.
31. The part of the nervous system of vertebrates that controls involuntary actions of the smooth muscles and heart and glands.
32. A port city in southwestern Iran.
36. (British) A minicar used as a taxicab.
38. Informal terms for a mother.
39. Land received by fee tail v.1.
42. An expensive vessel propelled by sail or power and used for cruising or racing.
43. The Tibeto-Burman language spoken in the Dali region of Yunnan.
47. Feline mammal usually having thick soft fur and being unable to roar.
48. United States writer (born in Poland) who wrote in Yiddish (1880-1957).
50. Genus of sticky herbs with yellow flowers open in morning or evening but closed in bright light.
52. A colorless odorless gaseous element that give a red glow in a vacuum tube.
54. A republic in the Middle East in western Asia.
56. A colorless and odorless inert gas.
59. A unit of area (4840 square yards) used in English-speaking countries.
61. Doglike nocturnal mammal of Africa and southern Asia that feeds chiefly on carrion.
63. Of or relating to near the ear.
65. Toward the mouth or oral region.
68. (medicine) A grossly malformed and usually nonviable fetus.
70. Workplace where skins and hides are tanned.
72. An adherent of any branch of Taoism.
73. Something transitory.
76. An independent agency of the United States government responsible for collecting and coordinating intelligence and counterintelligence activities abroad in the national interest.
77. According to need (physicians use PRN in writing prescriptions).
78. Someone who travels by raft.
79. A slight amount or degree of difference.

DOWN

1. Amino acid that is formed in the liver and converted into dopamine in the brain.
2. A Kwa language spoken in Ghana and the Ivory Coast.
3. A vigorous blow.
4. (Greek mythology) Greek god of war.
5. A beverage made by steeping tea leaves in water.
6. A hard gray lustrous metallic element that is highly corrosion-resistant.
7. An ancient city on the Nile in Egypt.
8. A flag that shows its nationality.
9. (Jungian psychology) The inner self (not the external persona) that is in touch with the unconscious.
10. A tricycle (usually propelled by pedalling).
11. A sweetened beverage of diluted fruit juice.
12. (Greek mythology) Goddess of the earth and mother of Cronus and the Titans in ancient mythology.
13. A French abbot.
14. A small cake leavened with yeast.
19. A narrow republic surrounded by Senegal in West Africa.
23. Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
24. Tropical American tree grown in southern United States having a whitish pink-tinged fruit.
26. The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.
28. An enzyme that catalyzes the conversion of a proenzyme to an active enzyme.
29. Ludicrously odd.
30. Harsh or corrosive in tone.
33. The capital and largest city of Bangladesh.
34. A member of the Semitic speaking people of northern Ethiopia.
35. Chew the fat.
37. A silvery ductile metallic element found primarily in bauxite.
40. Either extremity of something that has length.
41. Being three more than fifty.
44. Type genus of the Amidae.
45. Small soft-furred South and Central American monkey with claws instead of nails.
46. Any of various long-legged carrion-eating hawks of South and Central America.
49. Small genus of South American trees yielding latex.
51. A city in northeastern Ohio.
53. A constellation in the southern hemisphere near Telescopium and Norma.
55. A radioactive element of the actinide series.
57. American professional baseball player who hit more home runs than Babe Ruth (born in 1934).
58. Typical geese.
60. Upright in position or posture.
62. A period of time containing 365 (or 366) days.
64. A distinct part that can be specified separately in a group of things that could be enumerated on a list.
66. An elaborate song for solo voice.
67. Two items of the same kind.
69. 30 to 300 gigahertz.
71. (British) Your grandmother.
74. An informal term for a father.
75. A chronic progressive nervous disorder involving loss of myelin sheath around certain nerve fibers.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Partially because you're trying to be nicer to others right now and partially because people notice you more, you're the center of attention. Moreover, you're eating it up. It's deserved. Enjoy and revel because it'll be short lived. Your communication skills are wonderful and you're adept at explaining just how to do the chore that is called for, Aries. People love to be around you and want to make you happy. That's good. Take advantage of this good astrological assistance and get what you need done to really created contentment.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Others look to you for advice they consider coming from the best today. People are giddy with anticipation just being around you and you need this extra attention. Lately you've been a little down on yourself but are being shown now that people think a lot of you, Taurus. Your exceptional at anything you choose to do and can do anything you choose. Not too many are that strong. Take care of your health. Enjoy a leisurely walk through the outdoors or visit a zoo. Enjoy the attention.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Today is a time you'll look back upon with affection because you're being treated royally. Ordinarily, you're not into this kind of effusive warmth but you're reveling in it now. Use your understanding of people and your ability to get the attention you deserve in a good way now. There might be a disagreement in all this effusive loving behavior. Communicate well to get others to come around to your way of thinking. Because you like being the center of attention today, you're going to love being your lover's center too. Tonight will top off the accomplishments of today.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You need to be the center of attention now and you are, at work as well as at home. Your ideas and implementations at work have the whole job talking. Your lover is talking too but about a different sort of application. This will be a day to remember and you're savoring each part of it today. Cancer. This memory in later years will make you smile. Taking care of you is more on your mind now than it's been in the past few days. That's good. A little selfishness isn't always bad. How can you help others if you don't care for you?



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Though you have the need to be the center of attention, you're also looking your life over to see what changes you need to make. Work takes a back seat to you today but still is something you know you need to consider. Others are there to help you make good decisions but you're not even in that mode. You just want to think and communicate about what you desire, Leo. And that's truly okay. Creativity is at a high right now and others will overlook your insistence to plan without planning.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

The finer things in life is a high priority especially since you're enjoying your life so much. You want to work harder, make better decisions and get ahead a work. You're being noticed. Don't allow your little bit of day dreaming to keep your nose from the grindstone. Keep yourself on point. You'll succeed in acquiring what you desire. You have a need to be the center of attention at work and at home. You're there now without working for it but you don't mind putting into place what you think you need in order to achieve your desires. You go.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Although you don't realize it now, this day will be one you appreciate later. Being the center of attention is something you need now more than you have. It's not cheap. You might have to listen to some gripes from others before you get a loving connection from your friends. Family means more now because you feel they have to love you. Upsets are coming from work and from friends. You're not really alone, Libra, but you may feel as if you've been beaten up pretty badly. Know that better is coming. Stick close to someone you love tonight.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Brothers and sisters can make you feel good about yourself today. They remind you of who you are and what you can accomplish. You revel in it especially when someone you know made you doubt yourself. Friends are closer now. You want to give back some of what they've given you on an emotional level. Being more involved with neighbors and friends gives you an emotional high now. Scorpio. Work is even experiencing this good natured you and they love you for it. Thinking feelings through makes you appreciate your workmates more.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Take a day trip in lieu of a vacation with a close friend or your lover. Enjoy clearing your mind. See the sights and try to get away from serious everyday occurrences even though work related problems try to sneak in. Laugh and enjoy this day as you become the center of attention, Sagittarius. Revel and stay focused in receiving the love you desire and deserve. This is your day. It was made for you. Let worries drift away and enjoy without worry.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You have a need to be the center of your world today. "Look at me" is your motto. If you've started a new loving relationship, you'll find what you crave in your arms. Your new lover will give you all that and more. This day isn't the best for work-related ideas because you're still coming down from yesterday. You won't stay away from work for long though Capricorn, but give yourself the moment to enjoy your new situation in life. Remembering the old and how to make your life better is high on your list of activities now and it should be. Take time for a romantic dinner and enjoy.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

You have practical and good ideas for your career now but you're also on a mental short leash too. Remember to convince others what you want and why it's good for them. You've got the ability to do so right now and make your coworkers love you for it. No whips, just encouragement is the name of the game for you at the moment, Aquarius. Love and home are something you need now and where you feel most relaxed. This is an overall good day for you to achieve your desires. You're ready for all that life has in store for you.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You feel great about your accomplishments and position in life. You may feel as if you need to put forth as much hard work on your physical well-being as you put in other areas of your life. This may be a great time to join the gym, take the walk, or start the meal planning you have been thinking about. If you do not care for yourself physically you may not be able to continue the hard work. This a great time to take this seriously and set your goals. You should have much success in this area of your life. You are devoted and determined, and this should work out for you as well.

Wordsearch Puzzle

USA State Capitals

Find and circle all of the state capitals. The remaining letters spell a quote by Theodore Roosevelt.

A T S E G U O R N O T A B S T P A U L H I S  
 U C D A U N T R R E Y E E S S A H A L L A T  
 G W I I L L L E C N N L S A L E M M N O O T  
 U Y B N E T Y D S O A N H A G O O O O T D P  
 S D T D L O L I L N L O E O A C E N T N F A  
 T E O I D N L A S E N U K Y L R A T S E N T  
 A S N A C O A I K O I L M I E A Y T O G E M L L  
 O M X N P A N S L E A F T B I H T O L A O A  
 F O I A A G O U H H C T G B U R C M R R C N  
 U I N P S I L S O V L I M N E S T E A C N T  
 O N E O B U P M R E I U T N I L I R H A I A  
 A E O L V O A M R A L L T Y E R G Y C S L I  
 M S H I J C I O Y O C O L N U R P I E R R E  
 N O P S I U C S C L N L A E U D E S S W E  
 K M N T T K N A E K O N E B R I C H M O N D  
 C S Y T O I J E F F E R S O N R I C H I T Y T A O  
 R A N N P O O D A L P I C L R E V N E D A C  
 A N O I E E E F E U R N F R A N K F O R T O  
 M T T T K R L H A R O L L N O S I D A M O F  
 S A S S A U S I A C T O P R O V I D E N C E I  
 I F O U L I V H E H G I E L A R Y N A B L A  
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Yesterday's Solution

Types of Music 2

ACID JAZZ      CLASSICAL      GYPSY      REGGAE  
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 ALTERNATIVE      DOO WOP      MAMBO      SALSA  
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 BLUES      EUROPOP      MIDDLE EASTERN      SWING  
 BOLLYWOOD      EXPERIMENTAL      NEW AGE      TECHN0  
 BOSSA NOVA      FOLK ROCK      NEW ORLEANS      TRIP HOP  
 BRAZILIAN      FUNK      OPERA      TROPICAL  
 CELTIC      GOSPEL      POP MUSIC      URBAN  
 CHAMBER      GRUNGE      PROGRESSIVE      ZYDECO

The hidden message is: ALTERNATIVE ROCK

Daily SuDoku

9				2	
3			5		
		3	9	8	5
9	1			6	2
7					1
6	3			7	5
8		1	6	3	
		2			6
	4				9

Yesterday's Solution

9	1	8	6	3	2	5	7	4
2	4	3	7	8	5	9	6	1
7	6	5	4	9	1	2	3	8
1	3	6	2	5	4	8	9	7
4	5	9	3	7	8	6	1	2
8	2	7	9	1	6	3	4	5
3	8	1	5	6	7	4	2	9
5	9	2	1	4	3	7	8	6
6	7	4	8	2	9	1	5	3

# Lifestyle

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2019



A float with a giant effigy of Charles Chaplin parades during the Nice carnival parade on February 16, 2019 in Nice, southeastern France. — AFP

## Germany claims the crown for record gathering of smurfs



A group of German friends claimed a world record Saturday for the highest number of smurfs, gathered in one place. Fans of the blue elf-like creatures created in a Belgian comic strip in 1950s, managed to gather 2,762 people dressed and painted blue in the regulation smurf attire—curly hats and all. The gathering took place at the town of Lauchringen, near the German border with Switzerland, the organizers reported on Facebook. Their record came three years after their first attempt failed to beat the record held by Welsh students who managed to unite 2,510 regulation smurfs in Swansea back in 2009. The German's first effort failed to raise the bar, with a mere 2,149 turning up.

The rules of the game are strict: the only people counted as the genuine article are those with any bare skin painted blue and the rest of the body clothed in smurf attire. The group of friends made their second, victorious attempt Saturday with the backing of the mayor of Lauchringen, they said. The smurfs, small, impish creatures who live in a village, were created by the Belgian cartoonist Pierre Culliford, known as Peyo. They became so popular that the stories eventually spilled over into cartoons and even live-action films, while the characters have been merchandised across the world. — AFP



Participants arrive for a gathering of people dressed as smurfs (small blue fictional creatures created by Belgian cartoonist Pierre Culliford) to be counted as part of a world record attempt in Lauchringen, Germany. — AFP photos





Israeli director Nadav Lapid celebrates with his Golden bear for best film for "Synonyms" during the awards ceremony of the 69th Berlinale film festival. — AFP photos



Israeli director Nadav Lapid receives the Golden bear for best film for "Synonyms" from French actress and president of the Berlinale 2019 jury Juliette Binoche.



French director Francois Ozon celebrates with the Silver Bear grand jury Prize for the film "By the Grace of God" (Grace a Dieu).

# Drama on fractured Israeli identity scoops Berlin filmfest top prize



Chinese actor Wang Jingchun reacts as he receives Silver bear for Best Actor in the film "So Long, My Son" (Di Jiu Tian Chang).



Italian director and screenwriter Claudio Giovannesi (L) and Maurizio Braucci pose with the Silver Bear for best screenplay for the film "Piranhas" (La Paranza dei Bambini).



Italian author Roberto Saviano (left), Italian director and screenwriter Claudio Giovannesi (center) and Maurizio Braucci pose with their Silver Bear for best screenplay for the film "Piranhas" (La Paranza dei Bambini).



Director Suhaib Gasmelbari (right) poses next to protagonists with his Glashuette Original-Documentary Award for his film "Talking about trees".

A critical drama about an Israeli expatriate in Paris wrestling with his identity, "Synonyms" by director Nadav Lapid, won the Golden Bear top prize at the Berlin film festival Saturday. Lapid said the sexually explicit, semi-autobiographical movie, which deals with a young man who has fled Israel over its fraught political situation, might "scandalize" many in his home country as well as France. "I hope that people will not look only at this film as a kind of harsh or radical political statement because it's not," he told reporters after accepting the prize from jury president Juliette Binoche.

"First of all, it's a human and existential and artistic statement. The film is also a celebration and a party, a celebration of cinema." The runner-up jury prize went to French filmmaker Francois Ozon for "By the Grace of God", a wrenching drama based on real-life survivors of rampant sexual molestation in the Catholic church. "The film tries to break the silence in powerful institutions," he said. "I want to share this prize with the victims of sexual abuse." Ozon noted that the film's release in France, scheduled for next week, was facing a legal challenge, which he blasted as an attempt at "censorship".

#### 'Make sense of history'

The stars of moving Chinese epic "So Long, My Son", Wang Jingchun and Yong Mei, about the lasting impact of the country's now abandoned one-child policy, shared the Silver Bear top acting prizes. "This is the tragedy of a woman, a family that loses its son," Yong said as she picked up her trophy. "We were happy we were able to complete the film." Binoche had earlier expressed "regret" that another Chinese film, veteran Zhang Yimou's "One Second", was pulled from the competition reportedly due to official censorship.

"Zhang has been an essential voice in international cinema," she said. "We need artists who help us make sense of history." German filmmaker Angela Schanelec, one of a record seven women out of 16 contenders in competition, won the best director prize for "I Was At Home, But", a drama about a teenager who returns after a week-long disappearance to his mother, a grieving widow. "Piranhas" by Italian director Claudio Giovannesi about the youth of Naples being indoctrinated at ever earlier ages into the mafia won best screenplay.

Roberto Saviano, who co-wrote the script based on his book "La Paranza dei Bambini", dedicated the trophy to NGOs working to save the lives of refugees in the Mediterranean. "Telling the truth has become very complex in our country so thank you," he said. The awards ceremony at the 69th Berlinale began with a tribute and standing ovation for the late Swiss actor Bruno Ganz, who starred in iconic German films such as "Downfall" in which he played Adolf Hitler and Wim Wenders's "Wings of Desire" set in divided Berlin.

#### 'Wilfully confrontational satire'

"Synonyms" is the third feature by Lapid, whose previous film "The Kindergarten Teacher" has been remade in the US starring Maggie Gyllenhaal. The movie, which delves into the deep ambivalence of the young Yoav about both his birth country Israel and adopted homeland of France, divided critics. The picture is centered around "newcomer Tom Mercier, who delivers a raw, disconcerting and altogether unpredictable turn that recalls the work of a young Tom Hardy (this includes his ability to act without any clothes on)," the Hollywood Reporter wrote. Yoav won't allow himself to speak Hebrew so he communicates



Chinese actor Wang Jingchun and Chinese actress Yong Mei pose with their Silver bears for Best Actors in the film "Di Jiu Tian Chang" (So Long, My Son).

in a kind of pidgin French he's cobbled together from a dictionary.

He tells largely disinterested Parisians that he has left Israel to get away from a country that he finds "repugnant, fetid, obscene, vulgar"—words that help give the film its title. When Yoav runs into money trouble, he advertises his services as a nude model. An artist who answers the post pays him to perform sexual acts on himself while shouting in Hebrew. His periodic run-ins with nationalistic Israeli security officers from the embassy prove similarly absurd. US website Indie wire called the movie a "willfully confrontational satire that pugnaciously mocks his own Israeli identity; the culture of France, where Lapid lived at the start of this century; and assorted conventions and decorums of art cinema". — AFP



Director and writer Nora Fingscheidt poses with the Silver Bear Alfred Bauer Prize for the film "System Crasher" (Systemsprenger).



German director Angela Schanelec poses with the Silver Bear for best director for the film "Ich war zu Hause, aber..." (I was at home, but).



Chinese actress Yong Mei poses with the Silver Bear for best actress in "Di Jiu Tian Chang" (So Long, My Son).

Lifestyle | Awards

**BERLIN FILM FESTIVAL 2019 WINNERS**

**Golden Bear for Best Film**  
Synonyms, dir. Nadav Lapid  
Silver Bear Grand Jury Prize  
By the Grace of God, dir. Francois Ozon

**Silver Bear Alfred Bauer Prize**  
System Crasher, dir. Nora Fingscheidt  
Silver Bear for Best Director  
Angela Shanellec, I Was at Home, But

**Silver Bear for Best Actress**  
Yong Mei, So Long, My Son

**Silver Bear for Best Actor**  
Wang Jingchun, So Long, My Son

**Silver Bear Best Screenplay**  
Mauricio Barucci, Claudio Giovannesi and Roberto Saviano, Piranhas  
Silver Bear for Outstanding Artistic Contribution  
Rasmus Videbaek  
Cinematographer, Out Stealing Horses  
Glashutte Original Documentary  
Talking About Trees, dir: Suhaib Gasmelbari  
GWFF Best First Feature Award  
Oray, dir: Mehmet Akif Buyukatalay

**Golden Bear Best Short Film**  
Umbra, dir: Florian Fischer, Johannes Krell  
Silver Bear Jury Prize Short Film  
Blue Boy, dir: Manuel Abramovich

**Audi Short Film Award**  
Rise, dir: Barbara Wagner, Benjamin de Burca  
Panorama Audience Award Winner Fiction Film  
37 Seconds, Japan, dir. Hikari  
Panorama Audience Award Winner Panorama Dokumente  
Talking About Trees, France / Sudan / Germany / Chad / Qatar dir. Suhaib Gasmelbari



A picture of Swiss actor Bruno Ganz who died yesterday is displayed as German TV host Anke Engelke addresses the awards ceremony of the 69th Berlinale film festival.



Eva Bourke, the mother of Benjamin de Burca, poses with the Audi Short Film Award.



Director Manuel Abramovich (right) and Bogdan Georgescu give a press conference after receiving the Silver Bear jury prize in the short film category for the movie "Blue Boy".



German filmmakers Florian Fischer (left) and Johannes Krell pose with their Golden Bear for best short film "Umbra".

With 'Roma,' Alfonso Cuaron reinvents how he makes films

Mexican filmmaker Alfonso Cuaron has experimented before with styles and genres, from space epic "Gravity" to road trip coming-of-age tale "Y Tu Mama Tambien" to fantasy flick "Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban." But with "Roma," his highly acclaimed autobiographical love letter to his childhood, he flipped the script, so to speak—a lot of the time, the actors didn't even have the whole script. He filmed chronologically, in black and white, and did the filming himself. Sometimes he gave the cast contradictory instructions to see what would happen, and if it would yield movie magic.

Based on the 10 nominations his film earned for the Oscars on February 24 — including four for Cuaron alone, for best picture, director, original screenplay and cinematography—it seems he did something right. The project is perhaps the most personal of his career—a near-retelling of his childhood in Mexico City, in the Roma neighborhood, at 21 Tepeji Street.

Unlike some of his Hollywood fare, the film was made in Mexico, by Mexicans. The dialogue is in Spanish and the indigenous Mixtec language. "It was a process that I did not know how to pull off—reinventing and learning as

I went was fundamental," the 57-year-old filmmaker, already an Oscar winner for best director and film editing for "Gravity," told AFP. Cuaron wanted to make a film like no other in his career, which is why he went to extremes, like filming chronologically—very rare for a feature film—and not sharing the full script.

**'Chaos' on purpose**

"Roma" focuses on Cuaron's childhood nanny, a young woman from an indigenous community who gets pregnant after her first sexual experiences—played by newcomer and Oscar nominee Yalitza Aparicio. The film also examines the disintegration of his parents' marriage, taking a wider look at domestic dramas and societal hierarchies in 1970s Mexico. Casting the film was part of Cuaron's reinvention: he insisted that the actors physically resemble the people they were playing—usually not a requirement.

As a result, most of the cast are newcomers to the industry, like Aparicio, who ended up at the casting call by chance, as her sister was the one planning to audition. Each morning, during the more than 100 days on set—Cuaron's longest film shoot to date—the director gave

some cast members guidelines that did not mesh with those given to others. "Those instructions were contradicting each other, so when I was running the camera, it was chaos, like a traffic jam—but that's life, life is not neat," Cuaron said at a directors' symposium in January.

One such scene was when Cuaron's mother asks the children to write letters to their father, who they believe is on a work trip. They do not realize their parents are separated. The director recounted that he told Marina de Tavora, who plays his mother, to make sure the eldest son "writes a really good letter to the father"—a supposed representation of their close bond. "And then I went secretly to the kid and said, 'The moment your mother starts speaking to you, just leave,'" he added. He offered similarly confusing directions in a scene when Cleo, the nanny, has a stillborn child. "My job as a director is to create these moments so people are just reacting the way they would react in real life," he said.

**'I don't want it to be like that'**

De Tavora, a veteran Mexican actress who also earned an Oscar nomination for best supporting actress, told AFP that Cuaron's new style "required a period of

adjustment." Not knowing the script "helped a lot because there was no technical process of crafting the character, but rather it ended up being more just the result of reality, or diving head first into the ocean Alfonso gave us." Cuaron said the resulting improvisation captivated him. "I had done small bits of improv in the past, but nothing at this level, and it's something I will continue to experiment with," he said.

He used a similar method to handle the production design. When designer Eugenio Caballero, an Oscar winner for "Pan's Labyrinth," got the call from Cuaron, the first thing he asked for was the script. "He told me, 'No—it's written but I don't want it to be like that,'" Caballero recalled. After talking over long hours with Cuaron, he recreated the director's childhood home, right down to its Rationalist architecture. Attention to detail was key. "What was on the table, what kind of street vendor was outside the house, what kind of noises did he hear—that kind of thing," Caballero told AFP. "From there, we built the movie." — AFP



In this file photo Mexican director Alfonso Cuaron (left), Mexican actress Yalitza Aparicio (center) and Mexican actress Marina de Tavora (right) arrive for the Los Angeles premiere of "Roma" at the Egyptian theatre in Hollywood, California. — AFP photos



In this file photo Mexican director Alfonso Cuaron arrives for the Los Angeles premiere of "Roma" at the Egyptian theatre in Hollywood, California.

# MALE PRIVILEGE: THE RURAL HONG KONG MEN WHO HAVE SPECIAL RIGHTS



In this picture William Liu, a 22-year-old democracy activist, poses in the courtyard of Liu Man She Tong, an 18th century ancestral hall belonging to his clan.



Indigenous local Selena Yung (center) speaking with a friend (right) at her restaurant in Sai Kung Country Park in the New Territories of Hong Kong.



William Liu looks at an altar in Liu Man She Tong, an 18th century ancestral hall belonging to his clan, in a rural northern part of Hong Kong known as the "New Territories".

Sitting in the spacious courtyard of an 18th-century ancestral hall belonging to his clan, William Liu defiantly rejects a lucrative birthright that his special status as one of Hong Kong's male indigenous villagers affords him. Liu hails from the rural northern part of Hong Kong known as the "New Territories" which were leased by Britain from China in 1898. Under a colonial-era policy that remains in place, any male who can trace his lineage back to that period has the right to build a three-storey house on his land without paying a land fee.

In a city with the world's least affordable property market, that exclusively male right is a major windfall. But it is being challenged in the courts as both discriminatory to women and unfair to millions of Hong Kongers unable to get on the property ladder. Liu is a villager who agrees with the court case against the building rights. "It's an unfair policy and I will not use it," the 22-year-old told AFP. Liu, a democracy activist, is opposed both to the discriminatory nature of the policy and the way the city's connected housing developers have still been able to use it to build properties. "The small house policy has turned into something that is just being abused by a small handful of people working with developers to make money," he explained.

### Lucrative land

Liber Research Community, a local land concern group, estimates that at least one out of four indigenous houses in the New Territories have been built illegally, with commercial developers making secret deals with villagers to use their land rights. Authorities largely turn a blind eye to the practice. The so-called "ding rights"-named after the Cantonese word for male offspring-were enacted in 1972 by the British as an interim measure to improve living standards for farmers. It continued after the 1997 handover to China.

With the cramped city facing an acute housing shortage, the New Territories' vast land banks are being eyed for their development potential and calls are mounting for the government to overhaul the policy. But ding rights have been vociferously defended by the powerful Heung Yee Kuk, an advisory body that has dominated rural affairs for decades and delivers reliably pro-Beijing votes in the complex system that elects Hong Kong's leader.

In a bid to alleviate its acute housing shortage, Hong Kong's government has proposed spending some \$63 billion on building artificial



islands that could accommodate a new city around a fifth the size of Manhattan. The proposal has sparked protests over both the enormous cost and the potential environmental damage. Chan Kim-ching, the founder of the Liber research group, said the government should overhaul how land is allocated in the New Territories and make it more accessible to everyone. "That could improve the environment, cancel out some of the unequal situation and solve our housing demand at the same time," he said. A government spokesperson and Heung Yee Kuk chair Kenneth Lau both declined to comment on the policy, citing the ongoing legal challenge.

### Long waits

Indigenous villagers, who along with ding rights also enjoy other special benefits including some exclusive burial rights, are often seen as an unfairly privileged group. But they argue the policy does not mean they are guaranteed a house immediately, even if they own their land. Indigenous local Selena Yung says she experienced discrimination as a woman in the

villages, but she supports the house policy, noting it benefited her two sons-whose applications were approved after waiting for more than a decade.

She told AFP: "It's already so hard for them to have their applications approved, never mind girls. They should solve this problem first." Stanley Ho, an indigenous activist who grew up in a tiny village of just a few dozen people located deep in a country park, watched as fields around his village were replaced by houses, and as decades-old trees were cut down to make way for illegal roads in recent years to facilitate construction.

He called on the government to work with the Heung Yee Kuk, environmental groups and rural representatives to decide on a way to end the "unfair policy" while still improving the living environment for villagers. "Our generation has to speak out, and we have to control our own space," he said, adding: "If we don't manage it then the developers will take over." — AFP

In this picture William Liu, a 22-year-old democracy activist, poses in the courtyard of Liu Man She Tong, an 18th century ancestral hall belonging to his clan, in a rural northern part of Hong Kong known as the "New Territories". — AFP photos

## Beckham family out in force at London Fashion Week

Victoria Beckham doesn't need celebrities at her fashion shows - her A-list family provides more than enough star power. The designer's soccer superstar husband David and all their four children turned up as guests of honor Sunday to support her London Fashion Week show, squeezing in the front row next to American Vogue editor Anna Wintour.

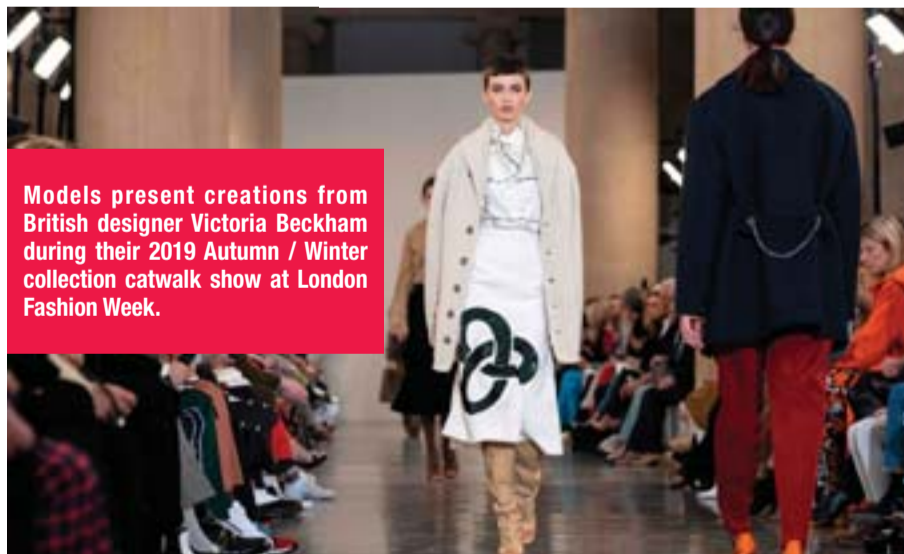
The former Spice Girl is among the big names showcasing their latest designs in the British capital,

alongside Vivienne Westwood, Burberry and Roland Mouret. Beckham said she wanted to channel "modern femininity," and had in mind a woman who's "proper but she's definitely not prim." The show was a mix of classics - trench coats, tailored check blazers, argyle jumpers and pencil skirts - with saucy eye-catching details like knee-high sock boots in lip-stick red or leopard. — AP

British designer Victoria Beckham acknowledges the crowd during her 2019 Autumn / Winter collection catwalk show at London Fashion Week in London. — AFP photos



Models present creations from British designer Victoria Beckham during their 2019 Autumn / Winter collection catwalk show at London Fashion Week.



# Classifieds

Monday, February 18, 2019

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## Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

**BY DAY:** Fair with light to moderate north westerly wind to light variable wind, with speed of 08 - 28 km/h.

**BY NIGHT:** Cold with light to moderate north westerly wind to light variable wind, with speed of 06 - 26 km/h.

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings		
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 17/02/2019 0000 UTC		
KUWAIT CITY	21 °C	13 °C			
KUWAIT AIRPORT	22 °C	08 °C			
ABDALY	22 °C	08 °C			
BUBYAN	-- °C	-- °C			
JAHRA	22 °C	10 °C			
FAILAKA ISLAND	21 °C	10 °C			
SALMIYAH	20 °C	14 °C			
AHMADI	19 °C	15 °C			
NUWAISIB	20 °C	10 °C			
WAFRA	21 °C	07 °C			
SALMY	20 °C	08 °C			

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Monday	02/18	Fair	22 °C	07 °C	VRB-NW	08 - 26 km/h
Tuesday	02/19	Cool and Partly cloudy with a chance for scattered light rain	19 °C	10 °C	NW	12 - 35 km/h
Wednesday	02/20	Fair	21 °C	07 °C	NW	12 - 35 km/h
Thursday	02/21	Fair	22 °C	07 °C	NW	12 - 32 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	05:07
Sunrise	06:26
Zuhr	12:02
Asr	15:14
Sunset	17:39
Isha	18:56

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	21 °C
MIN. Temp.	13 °C
MAX. RH	62 %
MIN. RH	22 %
MAX. Wind	N 43 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

## Hospitals

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

## Clinics

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

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## Airlines

Kuwait Airways	171
Jazeera Airways	177
Wataniya Airways	22 066 536
Turkish Airlines	1884918
American Airlines	22087425
	22087426
Jet Airways	22924455
FlyDubai	22414400
Qatar Airways	22423888
KLM	22425747
Royal Jordanian	
22418064/5/6	
British Airways	22425635
Air France	22430224
Emirates	22921555
Air India	22438184
Sri Lanka Airlines	22424444
Egypt Air	22421578
Swiss Air	22421516
Saudia	22426306
Middle East Airlines	22423073
Lufthansa	22422493
PIA	22421044
Bangladesh Airlines	22452977/8
Indian Airlines	22456700
Oman Air	22958787
Turkish Airlines	22453820/1
Aeroflot	22404838/9



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## DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Monday 18/2/2019				Departure Flights on Monday 18/2/2019			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
JAI	572	Mumbai	00:15	MSR	611	Cairo	14:10
THY	766	ISL	00:30	JZR	103	Bahrain	14:40
JZR	254	Amman	00:40	RBG	554	Alexandria	14:45
KAC	504	Beirut	00:45	QTR	1079	Doha	15:00
JZR	734	Cairo	00:50	KNE	382	Taif	15:00
THY	772	Istanbul	00:50	IRA	666	Esfahan	15:10
KAC	102	London	00:50	FDB	060	Dubai	15:10
JZR	722	Alexandria	00:55	GFA	222	Bahrain	15:25
PGT	858	Istanbul	01:00	KAC	673	Dubai	15:40
DLH	625	Dammam	01:25	SVA	501	Jeddah	15:45
RJA	642	Amman	01:35	KAC	775	Riyadh	15:50
UAE	853	Dubai	01:45	KAC	743	Dammam	15:55
THY	764	Istanbul	01:50	KNE	530	Jeddah	16:00
IGO	1757	Kochi	01:55	KAC	615	Bahrain	16:05
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30	KAC	563	Amman	16:10
QTR	1086	Doha	02:40	KAC	619	Doha	16:10
OMA	643	Muscat	02:55	ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
KKK	1268	Istanbul	03:05	KAC	283	Dhaka	16:30
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:05	KAC	646	Muscat	16:35
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	ABY	128	Sharjah	16:45
JZR	502	Lahore	03:35	SAW	706	Damascus	17:00
QTR	1076	Doha	04:00	KAC	361	Colombo	17:35
IGO	1751	Chennai	04:10	FDB	052	Dubai	17:40
KAC	418	Manila	04:25	UAE	858	Dubai	17:45
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:30	QTR	1073	Doha	17:50
FDB	069	Dubai	05:00	KAC	331	Trivandrum	18:00
KAC	382	Delhi	05:05	JZR	721	Alexandria	18:00
KAC	1544	Cairo	05:10	JZR	733	Cairo	18:10
JZR	404	Hyderabad	05:10	SVA	511	Riyadh	18:15
THY	770	Istanbul	05:10	GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
KAC	284	Dhaka	05:15	KAC	621	Doha	18:25
JZR	112	Doha	05:25	JZR	127	Dubai	18:35
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	05:30	JZR	403	Hyderabad	18:40
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:40	JZR	253	Amman	18:40
KAC	344	Chennai	05:50	KAC	381	Delhi	18:55
JZR	402	Mumbai	06:05	FDB	064	Dubai	19:20
KAC	302	Mumbai	06:25	UAE	876	Dubai	19:30
KAC	678	Dubai	06:55	MSR	621	Cairo	19:30
BAW	157	London	07:05	QTR	1081	Doha	19:55
KAC	204	Lahore	07:10	ABY	124	Sharjah	20:05
KAC	354	Bengaluru	07:35	GFA	218	Bahrain	20:15
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	KAC	357	Kochi	20:30
KAC	384	Delhi	08:00	FDB	058	Dubai	20:35
KAC	358	Kochi	08:05	KAC	301	Mumbai	20:35
KAC	304	Mumbai	08:20	KAC	345	Ahmedabad	20:40
UAE	855	Dubai	08:35	KNE	232	Riyadh	20:50
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	09:05	KAC	353	Bengaluru	20:55
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:05	JZR	401	Mumbai	20:55
QTR	1070	Doha	09:30	OMA	648	Muscat	21:20
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	DLH	624	Dammam	21:30
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	QTR	1089	Doha	22:00
AXB	395	Kozhikode	10:50	ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	22:10
JZR	702	Asyut	11:05	KAC	203	Lahore	22:15
AXB	889	Mangalore/Bahrain	11:10	KAC	1543	Cairo	22:15
JZR	122	Dubai	11:10	MEA	403	Beirut	22:20
JZR	116	Doha	11:10	ALK	230	Colombo	22:25
MSC	415	Sohag	11:15	AZQ	4566	Baku	22:30
QTR	1074	Doha	11:35	GFA	220	Bahrain	22:30
JZR	216	Jeddah	11:45	KAC	303	Mumbai	22:30
MEA	404	Beirut	11:55	KAC	383	Delhi	22:30
JZR	714	Sohag	12:35	KLM	445	Bahrain	22:50
MSR	610	Cairo	13:10	UAE	860	Dubai	23:00
QTR	1078	Doha	13:35	JAI	573	Mumbai	23:00
KAC	774	Riyadh	14:00	QTR	1083	Doha	23:25
RBG	553	Alexandria	14:05	SVA	515	Riyadh	23:30
KNE	231	Riyadh	14:10	SVA	503	Jeddah	23:45



Boats with masked revellers move on the Grand Canal during the opening regatta of the Venice Carnival yesterday. The carnival in Venice takes place until March 5, 2019. — AFP

## Israel clears Palestinians from home in Jerusalem



JERUSALEM: An Israeli settler stands inside the house of the Palestinian Abu Asab family after Israeli policemen evicted them from the house they lived in for decades, in the Old City of Jerusalem yesterday. — AFP

JERUSALEM: Israeli police yesterday evicted a Palestinian family from their home in the Muslim Quarter of Jerusalem's Old City, after the supreme court ruled Jewish claimants were the rightful owners. An AFP photographer said residents of the neighborhood in Israeli-annexed east Jerusalem scuffled with police, who stood guard as about a dozen Israeli settlers took possession of the large building. A police spokesman said two people were detained. "They disturbed police activities," he told AFP but could not say if they were subsequently released.

Rania Abu Asab, who lived in the house with her husband, their children and his aunt, stood weeping outside as the settlers raised the Israeli flag on the roof. "We live there, it's my house, it's my whole life," she said. "They took everything." She said the family was compelled to leave behind all its furniture and belongings.

Ir Amin, an Israeli watchdog group which monitors settlement activity in Jerusalem, reported on Feb 3 that

the Abu Asab family had been served an eviction notice ordering them to vacate the property by Feb 12. It said family members had lived there since the 1960s. Israeli NGO Peace Now said the home originally belonged to a Jewish family which fled during the 1948 war which accompanied Israel's foundation.

East Jerusalem was occupied during that conflict by Jordan until the 1967 Six-Day War, when it was seized by Israel and subsequently annexed, moves never recognized by the international community. The Abu Asab family lived until 1948 in a neighborhood it fled before eventually moving to the home in question.

Peace Now said in a statement yesterday that under an Israeli law passed in 1950 Palestinians cannot return to homes they fled in 1948. A 1970 act, however, decreed that property in east Jerusalem abandoned by Jewish owners could be reclaimed. "The court granted the settlers the house and the Abu Asab family became refugees for the second time," Peace Now said. — AFP

## Saudi Arabia inks deals to invest...

Continued from Page 1

he is expected to sign investment agreements for a \$10 billion refinery and petrochemicals complex in the coastal city of Gwadar, where China is building a port. Saudi Arabia has in recent months helped keep Pakistan's economy afloat by propping up its rapidly dwindling foreign exchange reserves with a \$6 billion loan, giving Islamabad breathing room as it negotiates a bailout with the International Monetary Fund.

Analysts say the crown prince's trip is being treated by Islamabad as the biggest state visit since Chinese President Xi Jinping in 2015, soon after Beijing announced plans to invest tens of billions of dollars on infrastructure in Pakistan as part of China's global Belt and Road initiative. The visit marks a deepening in ties between allies whose relationship has in the past centered on oil-rich Saudi Arabia backing Pakistan's economy during difficult periods, and in return Pakistan's powerful army lending support to Saudi Arabia.

As the guardians of most holy sites in the birthplace of Islam, the Saudi royal family carries vast religious clout in Pakistan, a staunchly conservative and mainly Muslim nation of 208 million people. "What is happening in this relationship is a renewal of Pakistan's commitment to help protect the royal family and the order as it exists in Saudi Arabia," said Mosharraf Zaidi, Senior Fellow at Tabadlab, a Pakistani think tank focused on global and local public policy. "On the flip

side, there is reassurance that Saudi Arabia will not only continue to serve as a strategic friend who will help shore up Pakistan's finances when needed, but it's also going to become a participant in the wider investment in Pakistan."

On Saturday, Pakistani leader Khan told the Saudi Gazette newspaper that his country would defend Saudi Arabia in the event of attack. "We have always said if the Holy Cities of Islam are threatened, Pakistan would go all out to defend the Holy Cities," Khan was quoted as saying. Prince Mohammed is set to become the first guest to stay at the Prime Minister's House. Khan, a populist new premier, has refused to use the residence in a bid to save taxpayers' money.

But the crown prince's arrival comes amid a vow by India to isolate Pakistan internationally following the deadliest attack in Kashmir in decades. New Delhi has accused Pakistan of having a hand in the suicide bombing that killed 44 Indian paramilitary police and vowed to punish Islamabad, which denies involvement.

New Delhi is demanding Islamabad act against the Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) militant group, which it says has the backing of the Pakistani state, over the bombing. Hours ahead of the crown prince's arrival, Pakistan dismissed Delhi's accusations, calling them "well-rehearsed tactics from (the) Indian playbook after such incidents in the past".

Prince Mohammed was also set to meet representatives of the Afghan Taliban militant group to discuss peace negotiations to end the 17-year civil war in Afghanistan. Pakistani government and militant sources said. But that was unlikely after the Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said the group's planned meetings with Khan and US officials in Islamabad were called off. — Agencies

## Iran urges better Gulf ties; launches...

Continued from Page 1

Those regional states that believe Israel and America can establish security are wrong. We, the Muslims, should ensure the regional security," Rouhani said, to chants of "Death to America" and "Death to Israel".

Rouhani's previous overtures to Saudi Arabia, such as after his election in 2013 and efforts by his Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif in 2017, have had no success, and some analysts were skeptical his latest attempt would be different. "Considering the ongoing hostility, there is no possibility of a dialogue between the archenemies," said Tehran-based analyst Hamid Farahvashian.

Iran accuses Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates of supporting militant Sunni groups that carry out attacks against Iranian forces, including a suicide bombing on Wednesday in Iran's southeastern province that borders Pakistan. Sunni group Jaish al Adl (Army of Justice), which says it seeks greater rights and better living conditions for the ethnic minority Baluchis, claimed responsibility for the attack that killed 27 members of Iran's elite Revolutionary Guards Corps.

The Revolutionary Guards have threatened Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Pakistan with retaliation. Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Pakistan deny backing the militants. Iran's foreign ministry yesterday summoned Pakistan's ambassador to protest about Wednesday's attack.

Also yesterday, Iran launched a new locally-made submarine capable of firing cruise missiles, state TV said, in the country's latest show of military might at a time of heightened tensions with the US. The launch ceremony, led by Rouhani, took place in the southern port city of Bandar Abbas. "Today, the Islamic Republic of Iran is fully self-reliant on land, air and sea," Rouhani said. "Our defensive power is meant to defend our interests and we have never sought to attack any country," he added.

Named the Fateh (Farsi for 'Conqueror'), Fars news agency said the new submarine is Iran's first in the semi-heavy category, filling a gap between the light Ghadir class and the heavy Kilo class submarines that the country possesses. Fars said the near 600-tonne underwater vessel is equipped with torpedoes and naval mines in addition to cruise missiles, and can operate more than 200 m below sea level for up to 35 days.

Iran's Revolutionary Guards on Feb 7 unveiled a new ballistic missile with a range of 1,000 km, according to the elite unit's official media agency Sepah News. The surface-to-surface missile - called Dezful - is an upgrade on the older Zolfaghar model that had a range of 700 km, aerospace commander Brigadier General Amirali Hajizadeh said.

Rouhani said yesterday that "pressure by enemies, the (Iran-Iraq) war and sanctions" were incentives for Tehran to be self-reliant in its defense industry. "Maybe we would not have this motivation to industrialize our defense sector," he said, if Iran could just buy the weaponry it needed. Iran's top military brass and cabinet ministers attended the ceremony. — Agencies

tal rape and child marriage are still legal. "You can't keep up with the international community and say you have a civilized state when all the world is working on gender equality and Lebanon is still living with the old male patriarchal mind," said May Chidiac, the new administrative development minister.

Lebanese politics continues to revolve around men. The complex sectarian power-sharing system has helped entrench former warlords and the scions of political dynasties - all male - who dominate the government and the parliament. "Lebanon is a male-dominated society and though women reached very important positions, when we talk about politics, especially parliament and government, their presence was modest," said the women and youth minister Violette Safadi. "I think we broke this barrier." — Reuters

## Lebanese women hail first female...

Continued from Page 1

role in public life, some of its laws continue to uphold a patriarchal social code. Much Lebanese civil law, including personal status matters such as marriage, divorce and inheritance, is applied according to religious sect and in some cases treats women differently to men. Lebanon has 17 recognized Muslim and Christian sects.

In 2017 the parliament abolished an old law that absolved rapists if they married their victims. But mari-



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan drives a car next to Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman upon his arrival at the Nur Khan air force base yesterday. — AFP



## Sports

# Slalom king Marcel Hirscher wins record-equalling seventh world title

## Hirscher, admits it might be his last world championships

**ARE:** Imperious Marcel Hirscher blitzed yesterday's slalom to equal a record seven world titles in an Austrian podium sweep that handed the alpine powerhouse a first gold of the world championships in Are.

Wearing bib number three, Hirscher laid down an outstanding first run on the Olympia course that completely outclassed the field and was the bedrock of a comprehensive victory—his third world slalom title after 2013 and 2017. Hirscher, in what he admitted might be his last world championships, timed a combined total of 2min 05.86sec, with Michael Matt taking silver and Marco Schwarz bronze, at 0.65 and 0.76sec respectively.

"Today I think it was really much better than, for example, four days ago," Hirscher said of his fitness, having competed in the giant slalom (in which he won silver) with a heavy cold.

"I really want to thank my whole team because they made this possible. They worked really hard to bring me here in the starting gate.

"It's unbelievable. After 2013, 2017 and now 2019, maybe my last world champs, so it's finally good to have another gold medal."

His third world slalom title draws him level with compatriot Toni Sailer for a record seven world titles in all events, two coming in the team event.

Hirscher, on track for a record eighth consecutive World Cup overall title this season, is also just the third man to win successive slalom world titles after Sweden's Ingemar Stenmar (1978-82) and Swiss Rudolph Rominger (1938-39).

France's Alexis Pinturault was sat in second after the

first run, chasing a third medal of these worlds having snapped up combined gold and giant slalom bronze.

But he fluffed his lines on the second run to eventually finish fourth behind the Austrian triumvirate, almost a second off Hirscher.

"I knew that Alexis was not in the lead," Hirscher said of his tactics in the second descent.

"So in the first part I tried to push it really, really hard. Then there were two or three gates where it was bumpy, hopefully stay safe there and then into the finish line, another attack." Switzerland's Ramon Zenhausern, who was in electric form winning all four of his head-to-head races as he helped Switzerland win team event gold, was only 12th fastest after the first leg, paying a costly price for a mistake seven turns from the bottom.

But he shot into the most significant early lead with a solid second run, holding that until Matt came down in 2:06.51. Then came the top three. First down was Schwarz, the combined bronze medallist and part of Austria's silver medal-winning squad in the team event who shot into second behind Matt.

Pinturault, enjoying a 0.79sec advantage out of the start gate, increased that in the first intermediary as he attacked down the Olympia course.

But that went into the red as he slid badly around one tight turn, the Frenchman left shaking his head in regret in the finish area. All eyes then turned on Hirscher, who had a huge 1.35sec deficit.

The 29-year-old didn't show any signs of stress, however, staying low and centered as he took the upper

section of the course by the scruff of its neck before easing off in the midsection and then turning aggressive once again over the final roll into the finish area.

Zenhausern eventually finished a very creditable fifth, with another Austrian, Manuel Feller, in sixth.



**ARE:** (L to R) Third placed Austria's Marco Schwarz, winner Austria's Marcel Hirscher and second placed Austria's Michael Matt celebrate during the medal ceremony of the men's slalom event at the 2019 FIS Alpine Ski World Championships at the National Arena in Are, Sweden, yesterday. — AFP



### Third to win successive slalom world titles

## Korda keeps it in the family to win LPGA Australian Open

**ADELAIDE:** Nelly Korda added to an amazing family tradition of winning top titles Down Under by claiming the LPGA Australian Open by two shots in Adelaide and celebrating with a scissors kick yesterday.

The world number 16 American has been the form player of recent months, and has now scored two wins and two other top three finishes in her last five events. In carding a 17-under-par 271, holding off South Korean challenger Ko Jin-young, Korda joined her father, sister and brother in being crowned an Open champion on Australian soil.

Dad Petr got the ball rolling by winning the Australian Open tennis Grand Slam in 1998, beating Marcelo Rios, and celebrated with his trademark scissor kick. Her sister Jessica then won the Australian Open golf in 2012, duplicating her father's celebration, as did brother Sebastian when he took out the Australian Open tennis boys' title last year.

Not to be outdone, Nelly also nailed the "Korda Kick" after her final round 67. Just minutes after tapping in a par putt at the 18th hole, she was handed a phone and her elder sister was looking at her through Facetime.

Korda put it in context: "I'm finally a part of the club. She was pretty much screaming congratulations, she was so happy for me. I mean this win was really special



**ADELAIDE:** Nelly Korda of the US poses with the winner's trophy following her victory on the final day of the women's LPGA Tour-sanctioned Australian Open golf championship at the Grange Golf Club in Adelaide yesterday. — AFP

for my family," she added.

"I think there's something in the air here, we love coming Down Under. I just got off the phone with my Dad and he said 'well, congratulations, you're part of the Korda Slam now'."

Korda was the overnight leader and held her nerve despite a bogey on the 15th to beat Ko by two and Taiwan's Hsu Wei-ling by five. Thailand's world number

one Ariya Jutanugarn finished 15 adrift.

Korda headed to Adelaide's Grange Golf Club on the back of her first LPGA victory at the Taiwan Championship last October, before a second place finish at the Tour Championship in Florida.

She started her 2019 campaign in a similar vein, finishing third at the Tournament of Champions last month, also in Florida. — AFP

## Thomas seizes Riviera lead as Woods surges

**LOS ANGELES:** Justin Thomas eagled the first hole of the third round Saturday to open a one-shot lead over Adam Scott at the rain-hit Genesis Open, where Tiger Woods was surging as darkness halted play.

Thomas and Australia's Scott shared the 36-hole lead on 11-under par after both completed six-under par 65s in the rain-delayed second round.

Thomas, who had 14 birdies in the 30 holes he played on Friday, kept the momentum going over six second-round holes on Saturday morning with a birdie at the fifth and a par at the par-three sixth — where he used a wedge on the green to chip over the distinctive bunker in the middle of the putting surface.

Hours later he rolled in a 13-foot eagle putt at Riviera Country Club's par-five first hole to move to 13-under par, separating himself from Scott who birdied the same hole before both parred the second.

Americans Patrick Rodgers and J.B. Holmes were both 11-under par with 16 holes to play.

"It just is such a long day," Thomas said. "It's good to get off to a good start and go home and get some rest."

The third round was set to resume at 6:45 am (1445 GMT), as organizers pushed to complete a tournament that lost seven hours to a rain delay on Thursday.

"It's not going to be light yet," said Woods, noting that players warming up for a 7 am start on Saturday could barely see.

Thomas, facing the prospect of playing 33-plus holes today, noted that the forecast also called for more rain and brisk winds. "I'm going to need to be patient because I'm playing so many holes," he said, "stay in it emotionally and stay patient, see what we can do."

Scott, too, was bracing for a lot of golf, but said that also offered an opportunity. "It's a big day, a lot of golf," Scott said. "It's a great day to get your rhythm early and make a move ... hopefully by the middle of the final round you've taken a whole bunch of guys out of the equation."

Tournament host Woods, who made the cut with one stroke to spare, wasn't ready to be counted out. He was five-under through his first four holes to vault into a tie for 14th at six-under par.

"Made a couple of putts," said Woods, whose struggles this week on the greens included four three-putts in the first round. He rolled in a five-foot birdie putt at the 10th, followed that up with a 10-footer for eagle at 11, a 21-foot birdie at 12 and a 10-footer at 13.

"I putted well," Woods said. "Hit a lot of good shots." But Woods was short of the green with his third shot from the rough at the par-five 17th when he departed the course, facing a tough up and down when play resumes.

"I've got some work to do," Woods said. I've got to get up and down at 17. Number 18's not going to be playing short with these temperatures. "It's going to be a tough day for all of us and one that we're going to have to fight through." — AFP

## Fox beats Otaegui for maiden European title

**PERTH:** Ryan Fox claim his maiden European Tour title with a comprehensive 3&2 victory over Spaniard Adrian Otaegui in the final of the World Super 6 at Perth's Lake Karrinyup Country Club yesterday. The 32-year-old New Zealander finished eight-under after 54 holes to earn a bye into the last 16 of the six-hole knockout stage and was the last man through to the quarter-finals after edging out Thai Jazz Janewattananond.

"I've been close a couple of times and it was certainly nice to get one over the line today in a place I hold pretty special," said Fox who could have been knocked out in the last 16 had Janewattananond not missed a three-footer.

"There was some scrappy stuff in there but I got out of trouble when I needed to and I played great today in the final. Adrian didn't quite play to his best this afternoon but I'm quite happy to take advantage of that." Fox also overcame Norwegian Kristoffer Reitan and Ireland's Paul Dunne to make the final where he raced to a 3up lead against Otaegui and eventually claimed the title when the fourth was halved in pars. Fox's European Tour victory is the first by a New Zealander since Danny Lee won the 2009 Johnnie Walker Classic as an amateur.

"A little bit disappointed after losing the final but it's been a good week," Otaegui said after being denied a third European Tour title. The Spaniard birdied the 18th hole on Saturday to make the knockout stages and beat Daniel Gale, top seed Per Langfors, home favourite Min Woo Lee and Scott Vincent to reach the final. — Reuters



**LOS ANGELES:** In this file photo Leo Santa Cruz (R) battles to defeat Abner Mares (L) in their WBA Featherweight Title & WBC Diamond Title fight at Staples Center on June 9, 2018. Santa Cruz defended his WBA featherweight title to win by unanimous 12-round decision. — AFP

## Santa Cruz keeps featherweight title

**LOS ANGELES:** Mexico's Leo Santa Cruz defended his World Boxing Association featherweight title on Saturday, dominating compatriot Rafael Rivera to win by unanimous 12-round decision. All three judges gave Santa Cruz the victory by scores of 119-109 as the champion improved to 36-1-1, marking the third defense in his second reign in the division.

"I tried to give my best. I did what I could," Santa Cruz said. "I'd like to give a lot better but Rafael is pretty good. It was a tough fight." Santa Cruz took inspiration from his father and trainer Jose Santa Cruz, who is battling bone marrow cancer. "It means the world to me (to have my father in my corner)," Santa Cruz said. "When I

climb in the ring, I don't want to let my dad down. I want to inspire him to keep fighting the cancer." Rivera, who fell to 26-3 with two draws, was a late fill-in for his first world title bout after original challenger Miguel Flores suffered an ankle injury last month.

Santa Cruz worked on Rivera's body from the opening round, delivering punishment at a fast pace in the early rounds while defending well to masterfully frustrate the challenger. Rivera tagged Santa Cruz with a right to the head to end the 11th round, drawing only a smile from the champion, who stayed in control through a furious exchange in the closing seconds.

Santa Cruz seeks a unification bout against American Gary Russell Jr., the World Boxing Council champion, or a third career matchup against Britain's Carl Frampton. Santa Cruz suffered his only career loss in 2016 to the Northern Ireland fighter but avenged the defeat in early 2017 to reclaim the WBA crown. "I want to unify the belts," Santa Cruz said. "I want to fight three times this year, hopefully by June or July." — AFP

## Sports

# Allen's shutout lifts Blues to 9th straight win over Avalanche

## Panarin scores twice as Blue Jackets top Blackhawks

DENVER: Jake Allen made 32 saves for his second shutout of the season, Vladimir Tarasenko and Zach Sanford scored 57 seconds apart, and the St. Louis Blues beat the Colorado Avalanche 3-0 on Saturday in Denver. Tarasenko added an assist and Jaden Schwartz also scored to help the Blues to their ninth straight win. It's the club's longest winning streak since a nine-game run from Oct. 15-Nov. 5, 2002. Semyon Varlamov stopped 30 shots as Colorado lost for the ninth time in 10 games. The Avalanche have dropped six straight at home. Allen, who made just his second start since Jan. 17, backstopped St. Louis to its second straight shutout win. The Blues have not allowed a goal in 127 minutes, 14 seconds.

### LIGHTNING 3, CANADIENS 0

Nikita Kucherov had a goal and an assist, and Andrei Vasilevskiy broke the franchise record for career shutouts as host Tampa Bay extended its point streak to nine games (7-0-2) by blanking Montreal. Yann Gourde and Tyler Johnson also scored for the Lightning, who have a league-leading 92 points and extended their winning streak to five games. Tampa Bay has outscored its opponents 25-9 during the streak. Vasilevskiy stopped all 20 shots he faced for his sixth shutout of the season and the 18th of his career, surpassing Ben Bishop for the franchise record. Vasilevskiy has five shutouts in his past 14 starts, including shutouts in each of his past two contests.

### ISLANDERS 5, OILERS 2

Ryan Pulock, Valtteri Filppula, Mathew Barzal, Anders Lee and Brock Nelson scored for New York, which beat Edmonton in the Islanders' final regular-season game at Barclays Center in Brooklyn. The Metropolitan Division-leading Islanders have won five of six. The Oilers have lost four straight and 10 of 11 (1-8-2). Robin Lehner made 34 saves for the Islanders, who will play their final 12 regular-season games and any first-round home play-off games at Nassau Coliseum on Long Island. Beyond that, all subsequent home games will be played at Barclays Center, where New York is 12-6-2 this season.

### GOLDEN KNIGHTS 5, PREDATORS 1

Max Pacioretty scored two goals, and Malcolm Subban made 29 saves as Vegas snapped a franchise-record, five-game home losing streak by beating Nashville in Las Vegas. It was the fourth two-goal game of the season for Pacioretty. Oscar Lindberg had a goal and an assist, and Brandon Pirri and Shea Theodore also scored goals for Vegas, which won at home for the first time since Jan. 19, when it defeated Pittsburgh 7-3. Kevin Fiala scored a goal for Nashville, which took its fourth loss in five games and was outshot 50-30.

### COYOTES 2, MAPLE LEAFS 0

Darcy Kuemper earned his second shutout of the season, and Alex Galchenyuk and Josh Archibald scored second-period goals as Arizona defeated Toronto in Glendale, Ariz. Kuemper stopped 21 shots in picking up his 13th career shutout as the Coyotes won both games between the teams this season. The Coyotes are 14-3-1 in the past 18 meetings between the teams. Frederik Andersen made 27 saves for the Maple Leafs, who are 3-2-0 with one game left on a six-game trip.

### SHARKS 3, CANUCKS 2

Joe Pavelski scored the go-ahead goal in the third period, and goalie Martin Jones beat his hometown team for the second time in a week as host San Jose defeated Vancouver. Pavelski, Timo Meier and Logan Couture all registered a goal and an assist for the Sharks, who have won seven of eight.

## Tampa Bay outscored its opponents

Jones made 32 saves to improve to 9-1-1 against the Canucks in his career. Antoine Roussel and Brock Boeser tallied for Vancouver, which is 3-5-1 since the All-Star break, and Loui Eriksson played in his 900th NHL game. Jacob Markstrom stopped 23 shots.

### BLUE JACKETS 5, BLACKHAWKS 2

Artemi Panarin recorded two goals and an assist as Columbus won for the fifth time in its past six games in defeating host Chicago. Ryan Murray recorded three assists for the Blue Jackets, giving the defenseman the first three-point game of his six-year NHL career. Pierre-Luc Dubois, Cam Atkinson and Josh Anderson also scored for Columbus, which got 39 saves from Sergei Bobrovsky. Patrick Kane had a goal and an assist for Chicago, and Jonathan Toews added a goal. Kane has recorded at least one point in each of his past 17 games (13 goals, 24 assists), tying Florida's Mike Hoffman for the longest point streak in the NHL this season. It was also Kane's 16th straight game with an assist, tying Jaromir Jagr for the sixth-longest assist streak in NHL history.

### FLAMES 5, PENGUINS 4

Calgary got points from 12 players and broke a four-game losing streak by edging host Pittsburgh. Andrew Mangiapane, Michael Frolik, Austin Czarnik, Travis Hamonic and Sam Bennett scored, and Derek Ryan had three assists for Calgary, which held on after taking a 5-2 lead through two periods. Mike Smith stopped 34 of 38 Pittsburgh shots. Evgeni Malkin had two goals and an assist, Sidney Crosby a goal and two assists and Jake Guentzel also scored for the Penguins, who had won two straight. Pittsburgh's Phil Kessel had two assists, the first making him the 17th American player to reach 800 points.—Reuters



GLENDAL: Nick Cousins #25 of the Arizona Coyotes skates after the puck ahead of Patrick Marleau #12 and Connor Brown #28 of the Toronto Maple Leafs during the third period of the NHL game at Gila River Arena on Saturday in Glendale, Arizona. — AFP

## Finch's Renegades win Melbourne derby BBL final

MELBOURNE: Aaron Finch's Melbourne Renegades clinched their first Big Bash League title yesterday after city rivals the Stars imploded during a tense run chase. Chasing 146 to win at Docklands Stadium, Glenn Maxwell's men were 93 without loss and cruising before losing an incredible seven wickets for 19 runs.

They finished on 132 for seven, losing the first ever all-Melbourne BBL final by 13 runs at the end of the near two-month tournament. "It's unbelievable," said Finch. "I thought when we got (Ben) Dunk caught and we had two new batters in we had a chance. It's a wicket that was so hard to chase runs on, that's why I was happy to bat first."

"The boys just executed well under pressure. Very special to win in front of our home fans," he added. After some tight bowling to restrict the Renegades, the Stars signalled their intentions early with left-hander Dunk smacking a boundary off the first ball of the innings from Kane Richardson.

But he and fellow opener Marcus Stoinis weren't taking any chances, knowing that wickets in hand could be vital in the final overs. Instead, they picked off runs when they could to keep the scoreboard ticking over coupled with some extravagant shots, including a Dunk six off Cameron Boyce and Stoinis smashing an even bigger one down the ground from the same bowler.

Dunk brought up his 50 off 38 balls with a four before Stoinis finally fell for 39 after 93-run stand, bowled by Boyce to spark the incredible collapse.

Test batsman Peter Handscomb came to the crease but only lasted two balls and then Dunk holed out to Dan Christian off Boyce for 57 before Maxwell was out for one. Nic Maddinson followed for six and then Seb Gotch for two. Dwayne Bravo was the next to go for three.

It turned the game on its head and there was no way back for the Stars. "We played some great cricket this tournament, to fall short at the end is disappointing," said a gutted Maxwell. "Hopefully we win it next year. Congratulations to Renegades, we've had some great tussles. To my boys, I've asked a lot of you and you've delivered in spades."

The Renegades, sent into bat in front of 40,000 fans, made 145 for five off their 20 overs. Test opener Marcus Harris clubbed 12 runs off Jackson Bird's first four balls but he then rashly went for another big hit and top-edged to wicketkeeper Handscomb.—AFP



## Mutawa AlKazi sponsors Atyab Al Marshoud show jumping competition

KUWAIT: As part of its keenness to be present in sport events in the local market, the Mutawa AlKazi Company, the exclusive distributor of GAC Motor vehicles in Kuwait, sponsored the Atyab Al Marshoud show jumping competition which took place at the Kuwait Riding Center. A large number of equestrians participated in the competition which offered many valuable prizes.

This sponsorship is driven by Mutawa AlKazi Co.'s CSR strategy that aims to support athletes, encourage and highlight the importance of sports for comfortable and healthy living. Mutawa AlKazi explained that this sponsorship aims to highlight the importance of jumping sport which brings together the fun and workout in a way that reflects positively on the development of the mental and academic levels.

Coming with the well-established partnership with Atyab Al Marshoud, Mutawa AlKazi participated in the event and distributed many prizes to the winners in the competition that included beginner, intermediate and advanced levels with several heights ranging from 80 to 135 cm. Throughout the competition the



Mutawa AlKazi gave the participants and visitors the opportunity to explore GS4, GS7, GS8, and GA8 models, its promotions and to reserve an enjoyable driving experience for GAC vehicles on all Kuwait roads. Driven to participate in all sports and youth activities, the company supports the youth as they are one of the

most important segments in society. Furthermore, it being present in major events as such is a great advantage to showcase GAC vehicles.

Most important segments in society. Furthermore, it being present in major events as such is a great advantage to showcase GAC vehicles.

## Sri Lanka sensation Perera hailed for Test-winning heroics

COLOMBO: Kusal Perera became a national hero in Sri Lanka yesterday after scoring an unbeaten 153 to guide his country to a sensational first Test victory in South Africa.

The country's cricket legends and politicians lauded Perera, who has become a linchpin for the ailing national side since fighting off doping charges in 2016. Former skipper Kumar Sangakkara, who had staunchly defended Perera when he was suspended in December 2015, called the performance at Kingsmead in Durban on Saturday "unreal".

"What an amazing win," Sangakkara said on Twitter. "One of the best if not THE best overseas win by (Sri Lanka). Kusal Janith Perera was unreal." Sangakkara stood by Perera when he was wrongfully accused of doping in 2015. The International Cricket Council lifted the suspension in 2016 and apologised for the botched testing.

Another former Sri Lanka skipper Mahela Jayawardena said on Twitter: "What a beauty! One of the best innings under pressure." Jayawardena said Perera, who put on a last wicket partnership of 78 had shown "intelligence and mental strength". Perera scored 67 in an unbroken last-wicket stand with Vishwa Fernando which gave his underdog team a sensational victory.

Sri Lanka's President Maithripala Sirisena and Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe also took to Twitter to hail the win. "Congratulations to our cricket team on snatching a victory from the jaws of defeat," Sirisena said. "Kusal Janith Perera makes mother Sri Lanka very proud today! Keep fighting! Great spirit by @kusalperera and all the youngsters #SAvSL," added Wickremesinghe while thanking the national side which has been the butt of jokes due to poor recent results.

"U beauty", said Sports minister Harin Fernando on Twitter. Sri Lanka won the World Cup in 1996 and since has been plagued by management scandals, allegations of corruption and player squabbling. They were swept 3-0 in a home Test series against England last year and were then beaten in Australia and New Zealand.—AFP

## Sports

# Sarri state of affairs: Chelsea face crunch Man United clash

## Sarri has lost the support of his players

LONDON: Maurizio Sarri will be fighting to save his job when crisis club Chelsea face Manchester United in the FA Cup fifth round today. Sarri is in danger of being sacked after a dismal first season at Stamford Bridge and crashing out of the FA Cup would push the Italian closer to the axe.

Chelsea suffered their heaviest defeat for 28 years when they were thrashed 6-0 at Manchester City last weekend, an indignity that came just weeks after a humiliating 4-0 loss at Bournemouth.

Amid claims Sarri has lost the support of his players, the former Napoli boss held clear-the-air talks this week in a bid to convince the squad to stick with him. It is not the first time he has challenged Chelsea's stars after accusing them of being hard to motivate, questioning their mental strength and claiming they don't understand even the basics of his game plan.

Sarri's players are said to be unhappy with the Italian's uninspiring training methods and refusal to adapt his tactics to the players he has at his disposal. Cesar Azpilicueta, Marcos Alonso and N'Golo Kante are all being asked to perform roles that are ill-suited to their strengths and so far Sarri's lengthy debriefs have had little difference.

While 'Sarri-ball' was a big hit with Napoli, Chelsea have looked laboured for much of this season, struggling for cohesion in midfield and lacking cutting edge up front. Demanding Chelsea owner Roman Abramovich and influential director Marina Granovskaia are unlikely to spare Sarri unless results

and performances improve soon.

That means Sarri must lift Chelsea-beaten in seven of their last 22 games-back into the Premier League's top four and keep them on course for silverware. They are still in the Europa League, having beaten Malmo in the last 32 first leg on Thursday, and face Manchester City in the League Cup final next Sunday.

But first Sarri must focus on United's visit to the Bridge as holders Chelsea look to move closer to a third successive FA Cup final appearance. "We know it's a crucial moment. We have some very important matches. The first will be United. It's very challenging," Sarri's assistant Gianfranco Zola said. Responding to the mounting sense of gloom around Chelsea, Zola called on his squad to pull together. "Nobody is pleased when you lose games the way we did recently. Not only the players, but the coaches and everyone," he said.

"It's a moment when we've been alternating the results, going from one good performance to a bad one. We have to be consistent. We all know this, and it's important everyone understands the situation and is working on it.

"This is important. The unity facing the challenge will make the difference." United were beaten by Chelsea in last season's final, but much has changed at Old Trafford since May. Jose Mourinho was sacked in December and his replacement Ole Gunnar Solskjaer had overseen a remarkable turnaround as interim boss.

Solskjaer went unbeaten in his first 11 games in all

total to 17, just two behind Cristiano Ronaldo.

The Polish star now has scored six times in four starts for Milan since moving from Genoa in the January transfer window to replace Gonzalo Higuain. After Remo Freuler had given Atalanta a 33rd-minute lead, Piatek struck with a memorable left-footed volley in first-half stoppage time.

Ricardo Rodriguez swung in a cross from the left, Piatek hooked the ball around defender Berat Djimsiti before volleying into the top corner from 12 yards out despite not even looking at the target.

"I was being marked closely, but I knew the ball would come into the box sooner or later, so I made the movement to ensure I got there first," Piatek told Milan TV. "I am happy with the two goals today and want to keep going like this. I am a striker, so I'd like to score in



MALMO: File photo shows Chelsea's Croatian midfielder Mateo Kovacic and Malmo's Fouad Bachirou vie for the ball during the UEFA Europa League round of 32, first-leg football match between Malmo FF and Chelsea in Malmo, Sweden, on February 14, 2019. — AFP

competitions, lifting United above Chelsea into the top four. But their momentum stalled in a big way on Tuesday when Paris Saint Germain won 2-0 in the Champions League last 16, first leg in Manchester.

United's attempt to get back on track has been hit by injuries to Anthony Martial and Jesse Lingard, who are both out for up to three weeks. Solskjaer expects a strong response despite those key absences, saying: "I

every game." Turkish winger Hakan Calhanoglu then put Milan ahead with a sharp drive 10 minutes into the second period before Piatek headed in from a corner just after the hour mark to seal victory. Milan fans have taken Piatek to their hearts, even devising a new chant "Piatek! Pum pum pum pum!" to mirror the striker's goal celebration of a pistol-shooter.

Gennaro Gattuso's Milan stay in fourth spot but they now have 42 points, four more than Atalanta, Roma and Lazio. On Friday, 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 with a 3-0 win over lowly Frosinone.

The win was a perfect way to prepare for next week's Champions League last 16, first-leg tie at Atletico Madrid. — AFP

hate losing games and it seems like the boys hate losing games.

"There's no point dwelling on it because there are big games against good teams coming up. We need to dust ourselves down and get going again today.

"You've got to bounce back at this club. You don't panic because you've lost a game, you don't change everything. It doesn't change the mindset at all." — AFP

## Piatek wonder strike as Milan stay on Champions League course

ROME: Krzysztof Piatek hit a wonder goal and grabbed a second as AC Milan came back to defeat Atalanta 3-1 on Saturday and stay on course for the Champions League. Piatek took his season's Serie A

## Messi penalty lifts Barca as Griezmann eclipses Torres

MADRID: Lionel Messi scored a penalty and missed another as La Liga leaders Barcelona ground out an unconvincing 1-0 win over Real Valladolid, while Antoine Griezmann surpassed Fernando Torres with his 130th goal for Atletico Madrid.

Messi's fitness was again in the spotlight on Saturday after a niggling thigh strain in recent weeks, but he completed the full 90 minutes at the Camp Nou and hit the 30-goal mark at Barcelona for the 11th straight season.

The Argentine coolly dispatched a spot-kick just before half-time, drilling beyond the reach of Jordi Masip after Gerard Pique was bundled to the ground by Valladolid midfielder Michel. Masip brilliantly tipped over a Messi volley soon after the interval and Luis Suarez wasted a huge opportunity to double the lead shortly after replacing Kevin-Prince Boateng with an hour gone.

Messi found himself booked for dissent after an apparent foul on him went unpunished, and he then blew the chance to kill off Valladolid when Masip kept out his second penalty of the night-awarded following a trip on Philippe Coutinho.

The excellent Masip alertly gathered Messi's follow-up header and again denied Suarez late on as Barca pulled seven points clear of Atletico ahead of their trip to Lyon in the Champions League last 16.

"We haven't played well. The truth is it wasn't a good match today. The only good thing is the victory," Pique, who made his 300th appearance in La Liga told Movistar. "Getting back on track with three points is important after two draws in the league. But we definitely have to improve. We have to be better on Tuesday otherwise we'll have a tough time."

Griezmann scored a second-half winner in Atletico's 1-0 victory at neighbours Rayo Vallecano to provide a timely boost going into next week's showdown with Cristiano Ronaldo and Juventus.



BARCELONA: Barcelona's Argentinian forward Lionel Messi (2L) and Barcelona's Uruguayan forward Luis Suarez (R) vie for the ball with Real Valladolid's Spanish defender Fernando Calero and Real Valladolid's Spanish defender Kiko Olivas during the Spanish League football match between Barcelona and Real Valladolid at the Camp Nou stadium in Barcelona on Saturday. — AFP

The French forward surpassed Torres—now playing for Sagan Tosu in Japan—for fifth all-time on the Atletico goalscoring charts as they shook off two successive defeats, including last week's 3-1 loss at home to Real Madrid.

Griezmann struck for the tenth time in his last 11 outings, forcing home from six yards on 74 minutes after Alvaro Morata laid off a high, looping ball inside the area. "Griezmann is an extraordinary player, he always adapts to what the team needs. He's very important for us," Atletico coach Diego Simeone said.

The late Luis Aragones, who coached Spain to the European Championship title in 2008, is Atletico's record goalscorer with 172. "It's always tough at this stadium. We started off well and we had chances in the first 15 minutes such as Saul's header, but then they improved," Simeone added.

"Our second half substitutions gave us more offensive strength and that allowed us to get our goal. It was a very tough match." Real Madrid, two points behind Atletico in third, could move back into second and to within six points of Barca when they host Girona. — AFP

## VAR helps Fiorentina beat SPAL

MILAN: Fiorentina were saved by VAR yesterday amid chaotic scenes after the referee disallowed SPAL a goal and instead awarded a penalty which the Tuscans converted before winning 4-1.

Mattia Valotiis deflected strike after 75 minutes had been greeted with delight by the home crowd as it had given relegation-threatened SPAL a 2-1 advantage after 75 minutes in Ferrara.

But the referee immediately ordered a video

review which confirmed Felipe had fouled Federico Chiesa in the build-up to the goal which he disallowed and instead awarded Fiorentina a penalty.

Jordan Veretout stepped up and converted from the spot with the decision proving to be a killer blow for SPAL who instead of being 2-1 up were 2-1 down.

The hosts scrambled to get back into the game but conceded a goal with Giovanni Simeone adding

a third minutes later, and Brazilian Gerson a fourth two minutes from time.

SPAL had taken the lead through Andrea Petagna after 36 minutes before Edmilson Fernandes grabbed the equaliser just before the break. Fiorentina move up to eighth—seven points off the Champions League places—after their eighth win this season. SPAL sit three points above the relegation zone after their 12th defeat. — AFP



### Matches on TV

(Local Timings)

ENGLAND FA CUP	
Chelsea FC v Manchester United	22:30
beIN SPORTS HD 2	
SPANISH LEAGUE	
Huesca v Athletic de Bilbao	23:00
beIN SPORTS HD 3	
ITALIAN CALCIO LEAGUE	
AS Roma v Bologna FC	22:30
beIN SPORTS HD 4	
GERMAN BUNDESLIGA	
FC Nuremberg v BV Borussia Dortmund	22:30
beIN SPORTS HD 5	

## Qatar aims to build \$20bn sports sector

DOHA: Qatar wants to attract more sports companies to the Gulf state, aiming to develop a \$20 billion sports sector ahead of the 2022 World Cup, a senior official said yesterday. Qatar Financial Center (QFC) - which licenses foreign companies, mostly in the finance sector, to exempt them from local ownership laws - aims to license about 150 sports companies by 2022, including around 25 this year, QFC's CEO Yousuf Al-Jaidi said at an event to announce the strategy. He did not give any names.

The drive to attract sports-related multinationals and facilitate the commercialisation of sports-related services in the state is part of plans to become a regional hub for sporting events in the run-up to Qatar's hosting of the 2022 soccer World Cup, he said. This month FIFA established a joint venture in Qatar to help run the tournament.

"A lot of the value chain is moving to Qatar as we speak for the World Cup 2022," Jaidi said.

Qatar will this year stage the World Championships in Athletics, a biennial event organised by the International Association of Athletics Federations.

"We're looking at sports service companies, legal companies, education and training, sportswear and equipment... it's a detailed cluster of sports companies catering to 2022," Jaidi said.

Last year QFC announced plans for new incentives, like free office space and seed capital, to compete with neighbouring Dubai. Jaidi said QFC also aims to attract companies in areas such as Islamic Finance, fintech and media as part of plans to attract 1,000 companies across sectors by the time Qatar hosts the World Cup, up from about 600 at present.

Qatar is looking to draw foreign investment and diversify its gas-centred economy but faces a diplomatic and trade boycott launched by Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt in 2017. The bloc accuses Doha of supporting terrorism, which it denies. There was no figure immediately available for the current value of sports investment.

Jaidi said Qatar is also positioned to serve as an alternative hub to Dubai for regional markets like Kuwait, Oman, Turkey and Pakistan, where relations have grown stronger since the Gulf rift.

"We believe that due to the geopolitical situation some very interesting government-to-government relations have formed between Qatar and neighbouring countries... (and) these can be target markets for companies wishing to do regional activities out of QFC," Jaidi said. — Reuters

**25** Slalom king Marcel Hirscher wins record-equalling seventh world title



**26** Allen's shutout lifts Blues to 9th straight win over Avalanche



**27** Messi penalty lifts Barca as Griezmann eclipses Torres



## Real suffer shock home defeat

Ramos racks up 25 red cards in 2-1 defeat to Girona



MADRID: Real Madrid's Spanish defender Alvaro Odriozola (back) challenges Girona's Spanish defender Raul Garcia during the Spanish League football match between Real Madrid and Girona at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium in Madrid yesterday. —AFP

**MADRID:** Real Madrid's resurgent La Liga run skidded to a halt as they fell to a shock 2-1 defeat at home by struggling Girona yesterday in which captain Sergio Ramos was sent off in added time, leaving them nine points adrift of leaders Barcelona.

Real looked on course for a sixth consecutive league win when Casemiro leapt highest to meet a Toni Kroos cross and head them in front midway through the first half. But Girona, who had not won in the league since November, came out with a vengeance in the second half, levelling in the 65th minute with a Cristhian Stuani penalty after a handball by Ramos.

Spanish striker Cristian Portu gave Girona an unlikely lead 10 minutes later, nipping in front of Madrid's lacklustre defender Marcelo to nod in on the rebound

after Thibaut Courtois could only parry a shot from visiting forward Anthony Lozano.

Madrid substitutes Gareth Bale and Vinicius Jr each squandered opportunities to level and things got worse when Ramos earned a second yellow card in stoppage time and was sent off for the 25th time in club football.

Real goalkeeper Courtois came close to salvaging an equaliser late on but headed wide, leaving Real third in the standings on 45 points, nine behind table toppers Barcelona, who beat Real Valladolid 1-0 on Saturday and seven back from second-placed Atletico Madrid, 1-0 winners over Rayo Vallecano.

"It's a real shame, we have lost three points and our direct rivals won, it's a shame because we were on a good run and we had reduced the gap, now we're three

points further away than we were yesterday," said Real coach Santiago Solari. "We have played a lot of games recently and that leads to not just physical tiredness but mental tiredness too, and that may have played a part in us losing energy in the second half." Madrid had eased to a 7-3 aggregate win over Girona in the Copa del Rey last month, and with the Catalans sitting one point above the relegation zone and having lost their six previous games, a home win seemed highly likely.

### MARCELO WEAKNESS

Solari made six changes from the team that beat Ajax Amsterdam 2-1 in a Champions League last-16 first leg, handing breakout forward Vinicius Jr a rest after 12 consecutive starts and also benching Bale.

But perhaps his biggest mistake was handing the out-of-form left back Marcelo a first league start since Jan 6. Girona attacked Marcelo's right wing throughout the second half, with Portu enjoying particular freedom.

They were finally rewarded for their bold attacking approach when Ramos blocked a goal-bound shot with his hand and a penalty was given.

Girona's confidence rocketed after equalising while Madrid lacked composure in their attempts to find a way back in the game.

"More than a historic victory, this was a vital victory as we were on such a bad run," said match winner Portu. "The key factor in this win was the group's mentality, it was so difficult to come here on such a bad run but the team always believed in the victory." — Reuters

## Cavaleiro sees Wolves into FA Cup q-finals

**LONDON:** Ivan Cavaleiro's goal was enough to give Wolverhampton Wanderers a 1-0 win away to Bristol City yesterday that saw the Premier League club end their 16-year wait for an appearance in the quarter-finals of the FA Cup.

Second-tier Bristol City had their chances but midfielder Cavaleiro's 28th-minute finish at Ashton Gate ended their 15-match undefeated run and nine-match winning streak.

Victory kept alive Wolves' bid to win the FA Cup for the fifth time, with the Midlands club last having lifted the knockout trophy back in 1960.

Cavaleiro was one of three changes made by Wolves manager Nuno Espirito Santo to the side that drew 1-1

with Newcastle, along with goalkeeper John Ruddy and Romain Saiss.

Nuno's decision-making was rewarded at both ends of the pitch, with Cavaleiro scoring after he was played in by the influential Matt Doherty, who hit the post three minutes later. Meanwhile 32-year-old keeper Ruddy tipped Bailey Wright's shot over the bar after 69 minutes and then denied Marlon Pack from the ensuing corner. Ruddy made an even better save to repel a close-range flick from Matt Taylor and even had to save a shot from opposite number Frank Fielding after the City goalkeeper came up for a corner in stoppage time. Wolves now join top-flight rivals Manchester City, Brighton and Watford

in the last eight, with Cup-holders Chelsea playing Manchester United shortly before Monday's draw in a repeat of last season's final. "Of course the goal was important and I'm very happy to score but the most important thing is the team move on to the next round," Cavaleiro told BT Sport.

"It was a tough game, very hard game, they have great players, very good players and it was a great win for us," Nuno added. "(I'm) very happy for the boys. It's a tough team. It's hard to defend when they put so many people in the box and you just hope for the best sometimes." Asked about the draw, the Portuguese coach added: "You have to go game by game. I would like to play at home." — AFP

## Wanders claims latest record in Monaco 5km

**PARIS:** Switzerland's Julien Wanders added another record to his growing collection with a world best 5 kilometre time in Monaco yesterday. Wanders, the 22-year-old European record holder for the 10km and half marathon, clocked 13 min 29sec, while Sifan Hassan also set a new world best time in the women's race.

Ethiopian-born Hassan of the Netherlands who also holds the European half marathon record, clocked 14min 44sec. Wanders turned up in Monaco just nine days after smashing Farah's half-

marathon benchmark by 21sec with a time of 59:13 in Ras Al Khaimah.

He finished fourth in that race in the United Arab Emirates behind Fikadu Haftu of Ethiopia. Last October the Swiss runner showed his potential when clipping 12sec off Farah's eight-year European 10km record with a 27:32 effort when finishing second in Durban.

In December he bettered Durban when clocking 27:25 to win in Houilles, France. "I got two European records and now a world record, my first one, so it's amazing," the Kenyan-based Wanders said.

"I was confident," he added. "The only thing was I got flu three days ago so it was a challenge for me, I was not sure." Wanders now changes his focus to the track. "I hope to do well in Doha (at the IAAF World Athletics Championships in September-October) in the 5,000m and 10,000m." — AFP