



## 10 Crisis, what crisis? Qatari love of luxury going strong



## 19 Palestinian DJs bring past into present with fresh beats



## 24 Rouhani keeps Zarif in post, rejects resignation



## 28 Maxwell seals series sweep for Australia with third ton



# Pakistan, India say they shot down each other's warplanes

Khan warns of Kashmir escalation • Pak publishes video of captured Indian pilot

## KAC suspends flights to Pakistan as tensions rise

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Airways yesterday announced suspending flights to Lahore and Islamabad until further notice due to the tense situation between India and Pakistan. Several other airlines, including Emirates and Qatar Airways, suspended flights to Pakistan yesterday after the South Asian nation closed its airspace following heightened tensions with neighboring India.

Etihaad, flydubai, Gulf Air, SriLankan Airlines and Air Canada also suspended services to the country and flight tracking portals showed Singapore Airlines, British Airways and others were forced to reroute flights. Airlines flying over India and Pakistan to Europe, the Middle East and Asia were disrupted and some flights were routed through Mumbai on India's western coast, so they could head further south and avoid Pakistan air space, an Indian government official told Reuters.

Mark Martin, founder and chief executive at Martin Consulting India, said about 800 flights a day use the India-Pakistan air corridor, making it "very critical".

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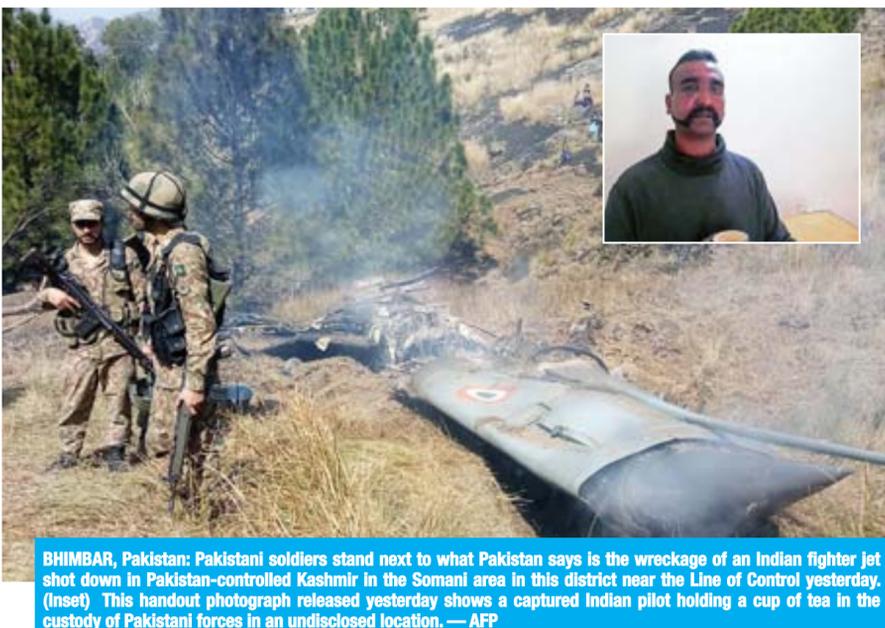
**ISLAMABAD/NEW DELHI:** India and Pakistan both said they shot down each other's fighter jets yesterday, with Pakistan capturing an Indian pilot a day after Indian warplanes struck inside Pakistan for the first time since a 1971 war, prompting world powers to urge restraint. Both countries have ordered air strikes over the last two days, the first time in history that two nuclear-armed powers have done so, while ground forces have exchanged fire in more than a dozen locations.

Tension has been running high since a suicide car bombing by Pakistan-based militants in Indian-controlled Kashmir killed at least 40 Indian paramilitary police on Feb 14, but the risk of conflict rose dramatically on Tuesday when India launched an air strike on what it said was a militant training base. A senior Indian government source said that 300 militants were killed in Tuesday's strike. Pakistan says no one was killed.

Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan called for talks with India and hoped "better sense" would prevail so that both sides could de-escalate. "History tells us that wars are full of miscalculation. My question is that, given the weapons we have, can we afford miscalculation," Khan said during a brief televised broadcast to the nation. "We should sit down and talk."

The Pakistan government's official Twitter account released a video of what it claimed was an Indian pilot who had been shot down. The man, whom Pakistan has named as Wing Commander Abhi Nandan, whose face is bloodied and blindfolded, gives his name and

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**BHIMBAR, Pakistan:** Pakistani soldiers stand next to what Pakistan says is the wreckage of an Indian fighter jet shot down in Pakistan-controlled Kashmir in the Soman area in this district near the Line of Control yesterday. (Inset) This handout photograph released yesterday shows a captured Indian pilot holding a cup of tea in the custody of Pakistani forces in an undisclosed location. — AFP

### News in brief

#### Facebook 'clear history' in works

**SAN FRANCISCO:** Facebook's feature allowing users to erase all their data is set to be released this year, many months after it was announced by the leading social network. David Wehner, Facebook's chief financial officer, said the "clear history" feature would be available "later this year". The feature will allow users to see which apps and websites send the network information, delete the data from their account, and prevent Facebook from storing it. — AFP

#### Nepal tourism minister killed

**KATHMANDU:** Nepal's tourism minister Rabindra Adhikari was among seven people killed yesterday when a helicopter crashed in the country's hilly east, officials said. Rescue workers retrieved the bodies of Adhikari, 49, the pilot and five other passengers from a hillside in Taplejung district where the Air Dynasty chopper went down. The minister was on a trip to scope out a new airstrip in the region. — AFP

#### Sri Lanka frees Indian 'spy'

**COLOMBO:** A man accused by Sri Lanka's president of orchestrating a plot to assassinate him was cleared of any wrongdoing by a court in Colombo yesterday. Investigators said there was no credible evidence the man was plotting to kill Maithripala Sirisena. Magistrate Jayantha Nanayakkara discharged the accused Indian national Merceli Thomas without charge, concluding he was not a foreign spy and there was no evidence against him. — AFP

#### First Emirati to head to space

**DUBAI:** The UAE announced Monday that the first astronaut from the Gulf country will blast off on a mission to the International Space Station on Sept 25. The state has two astronauts in training, selected from more than 4,000 applicants. Both candidates - Hazza Al-Mansouri, 35, and Sultan Al-Neyadi, 37 - said they would be happy to see the UAE represented in space, no matter who makes the journey. — AFP

#### Riyadh defiant on oil cuts

**RIYADH:** The Saudi energy minister said yesterday he is leaning towards extending oil production cuts in the second half of 2019, despite US President Donald Trump's demand to keep prices down. "We remain flexible. I am leaning towards the likelihood of an extension in the second half," Khalid Al-Falih told CNBC. "Oil prices getting too high. OPEC, please relax and take it easy," Trump tweeted. — AFP

## Trump, Kim optimistic over nuclear talks

**HANOI:** US President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un smiled, shook hands and dined yesterday in Hanoi, expressing optimism that their highly personal brand of diplomacy will lead to a deal on the totalitarian state's nuclear weapons. At the start of around two hours of talks and dinner at a luxury hotel in the Vietnamese capital, Trump predicted a "very successful" summit, due to resume today and end in a still unspecified signing ceremony.

The two-day get-together follows up on the leaders' initial historic meeting in

Singapore in June, where Trump launched his charm offensive to try and get Kim to give up his nuclear arsenal. Shaking hands and smiling in front of a bank of a dozen alternating US and North Korean flags, they briefly took questions from reporters before starting one-on-one talks, then the dinner. Critics said the Singapore summit was light on concrete results but Trump said the Hanoi talks would be "equal or better than the first" time. Kim said: "I am certain that a great outcome will be achieved this time that will be welcomed by all people."

The White House said that today Trump and Kim will meet again one-on-one, before continuing talks alongside advisers throughout the morning. This will culminate in a "Joint Agreement Signing Ceremony", the White House

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## Cairo train crash kills 20; Amir sends condolences

**CAIRO:** A hurtling locomotive crashed, derailed and caught fire at Cairo's main train station yesterday, killing at least 20 people in the latest disaster to strike Egypt's rundown railways. The country's transportation minister resigned hours after the accident. The train engine appeared to have slammed into the buffers at the end of the track at high

speed, sparking a major blaze that blackened the walls of the Ramses station. Firefighters were seen hosing down the charred wreckage of the locomotive as security forces guarded the site. Twenty people were killed and 40 injured, the health ministry said.

HH the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable yesterday to Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi, expressing his deepest condolences over the victims of the crash. The Amir wished a speedy recovery for the injured and for Egypt's utmost safety and security. HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent similar cables.

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## Cohen brands Trump 'racist' and 'conman'

**WASHINGTON:** Donald Trump's former personal lawyer Michael Cohen called the US president a conman, a cheat and a racist in explosive congressional testimony yesterday, saying he was ashamed of a decade of working for the real estate billionaire. Trump's disgraced former fixer was giving evidence as Congress prepares for the final report from a probe into possible collusion

between his campaign and Russia - and with the president in Vietnam for a second historic summit with North Korea.

Cohen - who is about to go to jail for three years after admitting financial crimes and lying to Congress - said Trump directed him in an illegal scheme to pay hush money to a porn star, and knew in advance in 2016 that WikiLeaks would publish dirt on Hillary Clinton, despite Trump's denials of both. He also said Trump directed negotiations for a Trump Tower in Moscow through the 2016 election campaign even while denying any business ties with the Russians.

Cohen said Trump implicitly directed him to lie about the project, and that



**HANOI:** US President Donald Trump shakes hands with North Korea's leader Kim Jong Un before a meeting at the Sofitel Legend Metropole hotel yesterday. — AFP



**CAIRO:** Firefighters and onlookers gather at the scene of a fiery train crash at the capital's main railway station yesterday. — AFP



Michael Cohen

White House lawyers "reviewed and edited" his testimony in 2017 when he lied to Congress about the Trump Tower negotiations. But Cohen, 52, also said he

had no direct evidence that Trump or his 2016 campaign colluded with Russians - the central focus of Justice Department and congressional investigations.

Cohen, who said he would hand over documents to support his assertions, said Trump ordered him to pay \$130,000 to adult film actress Stormy Daniels to cover up an affair in violation of campaign finance laws, and also told Cohen to lie about it to first lady Melania Trump. Cohen said he planned to provide the committee with a copy of a \$35,000 check Trump signed on Aug 1, 2017, one in a series to reimburse him for paying off Daniels after Trump took office.

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# Kuwait commends contributions to Yemen during UN pledging conference

## Kuwait pledges \$250 million in aid to Yemen

**GENEVA:** Kuwait's permanent delegate to the UN-Geneva ambassador Jamal Al-Ghunaim commended yesterday the outcomes of the UN High-Level Pledging Conference for the Humanitarian Crisis in Yemen. Ghunaim said in a statement to the press that Kuwait's aid to Yemen was a positive addition to support the humanitarian situation in the conflict-torn Arab country. Ghunaim stressed that Kuwait's financial support to Yemen preceded many years earlier and continues to helping the humanitarian and development conditions. Kuwait on Tuesday pledged \$250 million in aid as a response to UN's appeal for Yemen's humanitarian needs.

Addressing a UN-sponsored third pledging conference on Yemen held in Geneva Tuesday, Kuwaiti Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah vowed that his country would keep on helping the Yemeni people through Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) and relevant international agencies. Jarallah hoped that all joint world efforts would lead to an end to the ongoing crisis in Yemen this year, believing that international stakeholders have a mechanism to resolve it. He elaborated that the mechanism of settling the Yemeni conflict is based on UN Security Council Resolution 2216, the Gulf Initiative and its Executive Mechanism and Output of National Dialogue.

### Easing out the sufferings

In this context, he stressed the necessity of easing out the sufferings and woes of the Yemeni people and safeguarding regional and world stability. "At the behest of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Humanitarian Leader, Kuwait has exerted political and humanitarian efforts to address this crisis and its diverse dimensions," the Kuwaiti official noted. Kuwait hosted political consultations of Yemeni parties for over a hundred days and provided logistic aid to political talks in Sweden, which produced an agreement among Yemeni rivals, he reminded.

Urging all Yemeni parties to comply with this agreement, Jarallah reiterated Kuwait's support to Yemeni legitimacy, and its efforts to end this devastating conflict through its non-permanent UNSC membership. The Kuwaiti official pointed to Kuwait's hosting of the next

round of inter-Yemen political consultations, while commending and backing the endeavor of the Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General for Yemen Martin Griffiths to put an end to the Yemeni problem. This conference comes just a year after the last international gathering on Yemen, during which Kuwait expounded on the tragic situation in Yemen, which, regrettably, has not improved ever since, he said.

Jarallah warned that the Yemeni people have been suffering from an unprecedented tragic situation involving insecurity, diseases and famine, pointing to Yemen's growing humanitarian needs in spite of Arab and international



### Kuwait hopes for reconstruction conference

efforts. In this context, the Kuwaiti deputy foreign minister voiced gratitude to Saudi Arabia and UAE for their generous humanitarian aid to Yemen.

### Yemen reconstruction

Meanwhile, Jarallah expressed hope that any future international conference on Yemen would focus on development and reconstruction in the country. Jarallah noted that Kuwait has always been keen on supporting the Yemeni people and spared no efforts to put an end to their suffering. "The tragic situations in Yemen are clear to everybody, which prompted the international community to respond to the UN appeal for funding the humanitarian programs in the Arab country," he pointed out. "Kuwait attaches great importance to development as a mainstay for the post-conflict rebuilding process," he said, affirming Kuwait's desire to contribute to the development effort in sisterly Yemen soon after reaching a political breakthrough.



**GENEVA:** Kuwaiti Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah (center) attends a UN High-Level Pledging Conference for the Humanitarian Crisis in Yemen. — KUNA

### Donation to Syria

In other news, the Association of Accredited Correspondents at the United Nations (ACANU) chose yesterday a photo depicting Kuwait's generous donation to the Syrian humanitarian cause as an important media event for the UN's European headquarters in the last 70 years. Speaking during the event, Ambassador Ghunaim said that the photo displayed the moment when Kuwait, in 2014, donated a sum of \$200 million to the humanitarian cause in the war-torn country of Syria. The photo, which has advisor of the Amiri Diwan Abdullah Al-Maatouq, UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres and other prominent figures, reaffirms Kuwait's commitment

towards helping the people suffering from conflicts and wars, said Ambassador Ghunaim. He added that the UN highly appreciated Kuwait's generous stance, revealing that major news outlets had covered the event of the Kuwaiti donation.

Meanwhile, Ambassador Ghunaim said a gallery depicting important international events had photos related to Kuwait included one of the former UN Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar prior to his visit to Baghdad in January 1991 in effort to end the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. The gallery also had a photo of former US Foreign Secretary James Baker in Iraq also within the efforts to end the occupation. — KUNA



**WASHINGTON:** Former vice president and former secretary of defense Dick Cheney speaks during the event. — KUNA



**Kuwait's Ambassador to the US Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah delivers a speech.**

## Site of Gulf War memorial unveiled in Washington

**WASHINGTON:** After a long wait, a Gulf War memorial site has been designated in the heart of Washington DC at a ceremony on Tuesday in synchronization with the celebrations marking Kuwait's 58th National Day and 28th Liberation Day. Top dignitaries and Gulf War veterans attended the ceremony that held in dedication of the 'National Desert Storm and Desert Shield Memorial Site,' including former vice president and former secretary of defense Dick Cheney (1989-1993), Kuwait's Ambassador to the US Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Congressman Phil Roe and former US ambassador to Kuwait in 1991 Edward "Skip" Gnehm. The ceremony was held at the site where a memorial will be built "celebrating the victory while honoring the sacrifices of Coalition and United States Armed Forces," and to honor and remember "the historic significance" of the Operations Desert Storm and Desert Shield and

those who served it. In remarks at the ceremony, Cheney stressed that Desert Storm was a "vital mission accepted for the best of reasons." "When lines are drawn in matters of defense and foreign policy, when clear principals are laid down at the outset they have to be defended or else all kinds of trouble will follow," he remarked. He noted "a dictator (Saddam Hussein) thought he could seize a neighboring country and get away with it. We had to show him that the world doesn't work that way anymore and we did." He added "as a country, we got another thing right in 1991 and this spirit I am happy to say has never left us since, our troops were welcomed home with the gratitude and the respect they had earned." He affirmed that "this memorial, when the work is done, will complete the picture of Desert Storm as we rightly remember it, capturing the pride we should always feel."

Meanwhile, Sheikh Salem said in his remarks that the "momentous war changed us in Kuwait. We came to realize who our true friends are." He added that over 29 years, Kuwait and the US have shared "a strong and lasting bond of friendship and loyalty that continues to this day."

"This memorial will stand as a testament to friendships, shared values, shared sacrifice and the importance of upholding shared international commitments to peace and security," he

stressed. "And a reminder of the courage of the American people and their willingness to always stand with what is just."

In his remarks, Gnehm stressed that "many Americans, many Kuwaitis and many nationals of countries that participated in Kuwait's liberation do not know how virtually the entire international community under American leadership came together in just cause to fight aggression to liberate occupied Kuwait and to free its people."

"Today, we need to tell the world that we must never forget what Desert Storm and Desert Shield achieved. This memorial will stand as an affirmation of our commitment to a higher cause that we must never forget," he remarked. President and CEO of National Desert Storm War Memorial Association Scott Stump affirmed that this memorial "although remembering our fallen is of utmost importance, this will not be a place of mourning. Instead, the efforts and achievement of Operations Desert Storm and Desert Shield will be remembered and celebrated through the memorial," he said. The memorial is being built at a prime site in the nation's capital, as it is located very close to two of the most significant and visited memorials in the country, which are the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the Lincoln Memorial that have over 12 million visitors yearly. — KUNA

## Kuwait concerned over humanitarian situation in Venezuela

**NEW YORK:** Kuwait said yesterday it shared the international community's concerns over the humanitarian situation in Venezuela, which caused the displacement of thousands of people to neighboring countries. This came in Kuwait's speech before UNSC meeting to discuss situation in Venezuela delivered by Kuwait's Permanent Representative for the United Nation Mansour Al-Otaibi.

Ambassador Otaibi expressed appreciation of Latin American and Caribbean countries for hosting such large numbers of displaced people, calling all parties concerned to take the necessary measures to ensure that humanitarian assistance reaches those in need. "We followed latest developments in Venezuela over the past few days that have resulted in the deaths of a number of victims and we stress the importance of holding accountable those responsible for these unfortunate events," he said. "It is impor-

tant to respect freedom of expression and peaceful demonstration guaranteed by international law, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights."

Ambassador Otaibi explained that this crisis in Venezuela requires all relevant actors to give priority to the national interest on personal or party interests, and to commit to a comprehen-



**NEW YORK:** Kuwait's Permanent Representative for the United Nation Mansour Al-Otaibi delivers a speech during a UNSC meeting to discuss situation in Venezuela. — KUNA

sive political dialogue to address the current crisis. He urged all parties to exercise restraint, reduce tension, renounce violence and make every effort to prevent further violence, and express their support for any effort by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to reach a political solution to stabilize the situation in Venezuela as soon as possible. — KUNA

## NBK sponsors MGRP career fair for Kuwaiti youth

**KUWAIT:** The National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) sponsored the second career fair held by the Manpower and Government Restructuring Program (MGRP) in an aim to provide young Kuwaiti talents with recruitment opportunities in the private sector by creating a direct exchange platform between companies from the sector and those looking for employment.

The sponsorship comes as part of NBK's continued commitment to supporting young talents in Kuwait and training them for the workplace. The bank focused during the exhibition on introducing the requirements of various job positions and helping them identify and draw their career path.

Commenting on the success of the Fair, Emad Al-Ablani General Manager of Group Human Resources, said, "NBK invests great efforts in recruiting and developing the skills of young Kuwaiti talents. Our sponsorship of the MGRP Career Fair reaffirms its commitment in helping them achieve their ambitions and objectives." Ablani added that NBK is proud to



## Palestinian cause essential for Arabs: Kuwaiti MPs

**AMMAN:** Two Kuwaiti MPs participating in the 25th edition of the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union's (AIPU) meeting reaffirmed yesterday that the Palestinian cause is the most essential for Arabs. National Assembly Secretary MP Dr Oudah Al-Ruwaiee and MP Al-Humaidi Al-Subaiee said that choosing the title 'Jerusalem... the Eternal Capital of Palestine' for the 29th convention to be held next week underpins the significance of the cause. Ruwaiee stressed that Arab parliaments continue to adopt and support the just Palestinian causes in different international platforms. "Kuwait is one of the leading countries in supporting the Palestinian cause, and righteousness of it will prevail sooner or later," Ruwaiee noted.

Meanwhile, MP Subaiee said that choosing the theme for the 29th edition is most applicable, especially due to current circumstances that Palestine and the region are witnessing. He stressed that the Palestinian cause had always been crucial to all Kuwaiti people led by His Highness

see its young employees successfully grow to leadership positions in the bank, making it the preferred institution for recruiting newly graduated Kuwaitis as well as those looking for a promising career. NBK is unique with its strong resources and skills and professional development programs that are at par with international standards.

On another hand, Abdulla Al-Jassem, Head of Recruitment at the bank, said: "Our participation in the Career Fair aims at spreading the culture of working in the private sector and attracting young Kuwaiti talents to the banking sector."

NBK welcomed more than 200 job seekers during the Career Fair and appointed 102 applicants during the event, while it directed another 40 applicants to complete the second phase of interviews with various departments. Jassem added that applicants are appointed to each department based on their qualifications and abilities, properly investing their talents to their benefit and to help them grow.

NBK is focused on attracting young Kuwaiti talents as part of its development and training plans that invest in Kuwaitis to build a promising banking generation. The bank provides training and professional and academic programs in its position as a leading banking institutions in Kuwait that ensures its young professionals receive the training programs they need to grow.

the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the legislative and executive branches of government. Subaiee also stressed Kuwait's firm stance against the normalization with Israel. Next Sunday, the 29th AIPU will take place with the participation of Kuwait's Parliament Speaker Marzuq Al-Ghanem. — KUNA



**AMMAN:** MP Dr Oudah Al-Ruwaiee participates in the 25th edition of the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union's meeting. — KUNA

# Man hires mob to kidnap compatriot; suspects arrested in Farwaniya

## Four kidnappers promised to be paid KD 1,000 each

By Hanan Al-Saadoun and Agencies

**KUWAIT:** Farwaniya police patrols foiled an attempt by four men to kidnap a person in the area, and arrested the suspects who claimed that someone promised to pay them KD 1,000 each for the operation. Patrolmen in Farwaniya became suspicious when they saw an SUV at a traffic light between Farwaniya, Rehab and Omariya with four people inside, who were visibly nervous. They asked the driver to pull over and approached the vehicle, when they noticed a fifth person in the backseat who was handcuffed while his face was covered with a plastic bag. The man immediately screamed for police's help when they approached the vehicle, so they arrested the four and freed him. Detectives found out that a citizen had instructed the four Arab men to kidnap his fellow compatriot for reasons that remain under investigations, and had promised to pay them KD 1,000 each if they get the job done. An arrest warrant was issued for the alleged instigator, the Interior Ministry said in a statement.

Rumaihiya polyclinic. A team was sent from Bidaa rescue center. The toilet's door was forced open and a dead man was found inside - a Kuwaiti in his 30s. The body was taken by forensics personnel. Separately, Al-Rai daily reported yesterday that the body of an unidentified person was recovered by the coroner after he threw himself from the top of a building. Police and paramedics rushed to the area and found the body in a pool of blood. The person did not have any ID on him. The case was considered a suicide.

conditioning duct of a Mubarakiya perfume store. Separately, firemen fought a blaze that scorched cars and spare parts in a Shuwaikh garage. Industrial Shuwaikh, Shuhada, Salmiya and backup centers responded and prevented the fire from spreading. No injuries were reported. In other news, Acting Deputy Director General for Firefighting Affairs Brig Mohammad Al-Mohammad inspected security points and work of firemen on Arabian Gulf Road. He said firemen are ready to face all circumstances.

incident took place in an Ahmadi governorate area when a car was seen driven without a plate on the front, so she was pulled over and a citation was issued. The woman did not like it and insulted him verbally. The woman was sent to the police station, where she was charged with insulting a public employee on duty.

**Body found**  
Police were called to open a locked door at

**Store fire**  
Capital and Hilali firemen put out a blaze in the air

**Policeman insulted**  
A citizen was charged with insulting a policeman on duty who issued her a citation, Al-Rai reported. The

**Theft**  
A Pakistani man was mugged by a man wearing a dishdasha claiming to be a detective, who stole KD 1,000 and a smartphone before disappearing. The victim was driving in Qurain, when he was surprised by the man who claimed to be a detective, who said he will hurt him if he does not give him the money and the phone, reported Al-Rai. Detectives are working on the case.

**Smuggling foiled**  
Abdaly customs officers foiled an attempt by a Gulf national to smuggle nearly 4,000 tablets of Captagon, Al-Rai reported yesterday. The driver seemed nervous upon arrival from Iraq, so he was searched and the drugs were found. He was sent to concerned authorities.

## Schools 'almost empty' after national holidays

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

**KUWAIT:** Schools were almost empty yesterday after the national holidays, while the entire teaching staff is present, well-informed educational sources said. "It seems that there no solutions to the mass absence problem and that the few students who showed up to school were sent home," commented the sources who spoke on the condition of anonymity. Meanwhile, a number of lawyers warned

employees at various ministries and government bodies against not showing up to work yesterday and today - February 27 and 28 - using fake sick leaves, which might lead to seven years in prison for using fake official documents.

In other news, MP Saleh Ashour demanded setting limits on the 'chaotic celebration' of the national holidays, as he put it. Ashour also demanded organizing an official public ceremony that technically and organizationally suits Kuwait's reputation and image. Ashour thanked security and media officials and staff for the efforts they exerted in commemorating the national anniversaries. The Interior Ministry had announced in the meantime that police dealt with over 300 reports, several traffic accidents and 16 fights during the national holidays.

## Blood banks eyed for Ahmadi, Sabah health zones

By A Saleh

**KUWAIT:** The Ministry of Health (MoH) plans to open a blood bank in Ahmadi health zone with a capacity of 50 beds and another at Salwa Sabah Al-Ahmad Stem Cell Center in the Sabah health zone with a capacity of 40 beds, said informed sources. The sources added that a large branch of the blood bank will open soon at Jaber Hospital with a capacity of 20 beds to bring the total blood bank bed capacity to 180, including the central blood bank in Jabriya and Jahra blood bank.

The sources reassured that strategic blood reserves used in emergencies are stable and explained that constant calls to donate blood are made to boost public awareness about the significance of donating blood in general.

Meanwhile, Health Minister Sheikh Dr Basel Al-Sabah approved granting private medical facilities four-year licenses to practice medicine after meeting all the conditions required by MoH and other government bodies. He also instructed that the current licenses will remain in effect until they expire, and that in case a private medical facility violates the regulations or conditions, a three-month grace period would be given to set things right before the violation is referred to the licenses committee to decide on the penal measures to be taken.

**Waste disposal**  
Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Housing Affairs Jenan Bushehri said

that the Environment Public Authority (EPA) had filed 351 citations for disposing waste in rain drainage and sewer grids. Responding to a parliamentary inquiry, Bushehri explained that EPA had referred 93 violations to the public prosecution and that 220 others are pending. She noted that 67 percent of the violations had been committed by restaurants (235) and 13 percent by medical facilities (47), followed by garages and carwashes with 40 citations.

**Labor inspection**  
Acting Manpower Authority Director Abdullah Al-Motoutah announced opening offices of the labor inspection department at each government project site to be closer to laborers working on these sites. Motoutah added that the authority holds a monthly diwaniya with diplomatic missions in Kuwait to communicate with them, listen to their remarks and respond to their inquiries concerning various labor-related issues.

# CONDOLENCES

## Central Circle Company (CCC)

Dr. Ziad Al-Alyan,

Management and Staff convey their

deepest condolences to

**Eng. Ahmad Abdulqader**

**Ramadan Ismail**

on the sad demise of his

**Father**

*May Allah Almighty bestow His mercy on him*

Local

# Amir greets citizens, residents on national celebrations



**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Tuesday congratulated citizens and residents on the 58th anniversary of National Day and the 28th anniversary of Liberation Day. His Highness the Amir appreciated their joyful and exuberant participation in various public festivities that reflected highly civilized conduct, and national unity and amity. His Highness Sheikh Sabah urged everyone to be well aware of, and grateful for, the bliss of liberation, security and welfare, to maintain national unity and to harness all potentials and energies for development and prosperity. The efforts of all state agencies involving police and army to ensure smooth national celebrations marking the country's national occasions were also highly commended by His Highness the Amir. His Highness Sheikh Sabah reminisced with much pride the nation's martyrs who had sacrificed themselves in defense of the dear homeland, praying Allah the Almighty to have mercy upon them and to grant them Paradise. Furthermore, Sheikh Sabah thanked



the leaders of Arab and Gulf countries for sharing Kuwait in its national celebrations in a way that reflected historical close relations among Arab countries. Finally, His Highness the Amir prayed Allah the Almighty to bestow the graces of perpetual security, safety and prosperity on the dear nation, and to help everyone seeking to serve Kuwait.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah addressed in a statement yesterday citizens and expatriates, expressing his appreciation for their salutations during the 58th National Day and 28th Liberation

Anniversary. His Highness the Crown Prince also expressed satisfaction towards the huge efforts carried out by state entities during the national celebrations.

His Highness Sheikh Nawaf also expressed gratitude to GCC leaders for their cables during the national occasions, saying that it continues to solidify their ties with the state of Kuwait. His Highness the Crown Prince took the chance to remember all those who laid their lives in the sake of protecting Kuwait from harm and also wished the Kuwaiti people and country evermore success and welfare under the leadership of His Highness the Amir. — KUNA



**KUWAIT:** Revelers celebrated Kuwait's National and Liberation Days with parades held at the Arabian Gulf Road during the holiday. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat and Joseph Shagra

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: Palm trees lightened in the colors of Kuwait's flag during the national celebrations. — Photo by Nawara Fattahova

# Kuwaiti embassies continue to mark national celebrations

KUWAIT: The Kuwaiti embassies and diplomatic missions in Canberra, Bern, Bandar Seri Begawan, and Dhaka held receptions marking the country's 58th National Day, 28th Liberation Day, and the 13th year of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's ascension to power. In the Australian capital, Ambassador Monther Al-Essa held a reception attended by Deputy Chief of Protocol and senior Australian officials in additions to Arab and foreign diplomats and representatives. Essa congratulated on the occasion His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and the Kuwaiti people on the advent of the national occasions. Ambassador Essa praised the bilateral relation between Kuwait and Australian in all fields, noting that Kuwaiti investments in Australia reached 8.7 billion, mostly in energy and liquid natural gas (LNG) sectors. Trade surplus between the two countries reached \$708 million in 2017 including wheat, meats, and other products.

In Switzerland, Kuwaiti Ambassador Bader Al-Taneeb extended his own wishes of prosperity and development to the leadership and people of his country held a similar function. Head of Kuwait Heritage Group at Beit Al-Othman Anwar Rifai and other officials attended the celebration. Meanwhile, the Kuwaiti embassy in Brunei held a similar reception in celebration of Kuwait's national day. Ambassador Salah Mubarak Al-Mutairi took the chance to congratulate His Highness the Amir, His Highness the Crown Prince, the government and people of Kuwait on the national occasions.

The function in Brunei was attended by a score of senior officials from Brunei as well as Arab and foreign diplomats. In Bangladesh, Kuwait embassy celebrated the national days by holding a reception ceremony that was attended by high ranking officials, who greeted Ambassador Adel Hayat on the occasion, expressing thanks for the Kuwaiti support of the development projects in Bangladesh.

In Guangzhou, China, General Consul to the Chinese city Khalifa Al-Kharafi congratulated His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the government and people of Kuwait on the advent of the country's national occasions. In recent times, Kuwait and China took huge strides towards boosting relations especially after the visits conducted by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah as well as First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to late China last year. During his visit in 2018, His Highness the Amir attended the eighth Arab-China forum and also meet with President Xi Jinping, expanding the horizon of Kuwaiti-Chinese cooperation in all possible fields. First Deputy Premier and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad also promoted during his visit late December the country's Vision 2035, indicated the



HONG KONG: The Kuwaiti diplomatic mission in Hong Kong celebrates the country's national days.— KUNA

Ambassador. He also touched on other past and current visits that contributed to the development of relations such as the first visit by a Kuwaiti official to China carried out by then Minister of Finance and late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah in 1965, an event followed by the opening of Kuwait's embassy in 1972. Kuwait opened its General Consulate in Hong Kong in 1999 and Guangzhou in 2008.

Meanwhile, a senior member in the Standing Committee of the People's Congress of Guangdong Province congratulated the Kuwaiti leadership and people on the advent of the national celebrations. The member lauded the strength of relations between China and Kuwait, revealing, in specific, that trade between Kuwait and the province of Guangzhou had reached around \$1.5 billion in 2018, an increase of around 11.88 percent from the previous year. The member indicated that the province was eager to pursue more ventures of cooperation with Kuwait and contribute to Kuwait Vision 2035. In Hong Kong, Kuwait's General Consul to the city and Macau Salah Al-Saif hosted a similar celebration. Senior officials of the Hong Kong government and a score of diplomats attended the festivities. Consul Saif congratulated the Kuwaiti leadership and people on the advent of the national days, wishing his country evermore prosperity and welfare.

The Kuwaiti diplomat lauded his country's relations with Hong Kong, affirming that both sides were looking into opening various venues of cooperation. Secretary for Justice of Hong Kong Teresa Cheng commended Kuwait on the advent of the GCC country's national celebrations, affirming that her government was eager to expand cooperation with Kuwait on all possible fields. She encouraged Kuwaiti investors to seek opportunities in the grand Gulf region south of China, which includes Hong Kong, which has a GDP of \$1.5 trillion.

To Europe and specifically Milan, Italy, the General Consul Abdunnasser Bukhadour held a

reception at a local hotel, which gathered senior Italian figures and diplomats in the northern region of the country. He extended congratulations to the Kuwaiti leadership and people on the occasions of the national days, expressing joy to the strong turnout for Kuwait's national celebrations. In Moscow, the reception — held by Kuwait Ambassador to Russia Abdulaziz Al-Adwani — was attended by senior Russian officials including Russian President Vladimir Putin's special envoy to the Middle East and North Africa and Deputy Defense Minister Mikhail Bogdanov, Minister for North Caucasus Sergy Chepotarev and Deputy Chairman of the Federation Council Ilyas Umakhanov. It was also attended by Ambassadors of Arab and foreign countries accredited to Russia, as well as representatives of business circles, orientalists, clerics and members of the Kuwaiti diplomatic mission. In a speech delivered by Ambassador Al-Adwani congratulating the Kuwaiti leadership and people on the national occasions. He praised the role of the Kuwaiti leadership in trying to resolve conflicts on both gulf and Arabic scenes. Adwani also praised the development of the Kuwaiti-Russian relations, which have become a factor in supporting regional stability in the Gulf region. In a similar statement, Russian President Vladimir Putin's special envoy to the Middle East and North Africa and Deputy Defense Minister Mikhail Bogdanov praised the "distinctive" relations between both countries in different fields. He noted that Russian Foreign Minister Syrgy Lavrov would soon pay a visit to Kuwait.

Minister for North Caucasus Sergy Chepotarev said in a statement that there is a broad prospect for the development of the Kuwait-Russia ties through high-level relations. He expressed hope that both countries will expand cooperation in the fields of trade, economy, tourism, energy, and mega projects especially in Northern Caucasus province that has a Muslim majority. In a similar celebration, Kuwait

Ambassador to Ukraine Rashed Al-Adwani held a reception ceremony on the national occasions in the capital Kiev that was attended by top state officials including Deputy Prime Minister Pavlo Rozenko.

In Abu Dhabi, Acting Charge D'affaires at the Kuwaiti embassy Abdullah Al-Salem held a reception at a local hotel attended by senior UAE officials in additions to Arab and foreign diplomats and representatives in the fellow GCC country. Salem congratulated on the occasion His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and the Kuwaiti people on the advent of the national occasions. The Kuwaiti diplomat also touched on the deep-rooted relations linking

Kuwait with the UAE, saying that the leaderships and people of both brotherly nations were eager to walk side-by-side into a mutual future of welfare, security and development.

In Ankara, a similar function was held by Kuwaiti Ambassador Ghassan Al-Zawawi who extended his own wishes of prosperity and development to the leadership and people of his country. The Ambassador commended the ever-developing relations between Kuwait and Turkey, affirming that both countries have succeeded in boosting ties and commercial exchange in recent years. The celebration in the Kuwaiti embassy in Ankara was attended by a score of Turkish officials as well as Arab and foreign diplomats. — KUNA

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Nigeria's Buhari wins re-election; opposition vows court battle

## Melting missiles - just one problem with F-35s stopping N Korea rockets



HASAKEH: A veiled woman looks back at Al-Hol camp in al-Hasakeh governorate in northeastern Syria. The motley crew of foreign jihadist wives held at the Al-Hol camp in northeastern Syria are united by at least one thing: the fear of being separated from their children. — AFP

# Jihadist wives cling to children

## Countries of origin not in a hurry to repatriate radicalized citizens

**AL HOL:** The motley crew of foreign jihadist wives held at the Al-Hol camp in northeastern Syria are united by at least one thing: the fear of being separated from their children. Pinned in a special section of the camp and huddled in rudimentary tents, most of them are tight-lipped about the lives they led in the Islamic State group's "caliphate".

Kenza, from Morocco, is one of the few who agreed to talk, as a swarm of children of various origins ran around her tent to collect water for their mothers. She slipped out of Baghouz two weeks earlier, as Kurdish-led forces closed in on the riverside hamlet where holdout IS fighters are making their very last stand. The 38-year-old, fully veiled in black like nearly all other women in the camp, sums up her four years under IS rule in a few laconic words.

Her husband brought her to Syria, he never worked for IS "because he brought his own money" and then he died in a bombardment. When asked why she and her three children followed him all the way to the hell of Baghouz, she says: "The jihadists prevented us from fleeing." She is now sheltered in a large UN tent which

she shares with dozens of other families. Kenza, who would not give her full name, says she hopes Morocco will take her and her children back and sees no reason why she should be detained.

### How long?

In the camp's dusty alleys, a black child who says he is American stops every adult he sees and asks them in a soft, plaintive voice: "Hey, my father is dead. Do you know how much longer we're going to stay here?" Nobody answers him because nobody knows. Some of the foreign suspects held at Al-Hol have been there, in the custody of the Kurdish forces administering the area, for two years. Their countries of origin are not in a hurry to repatriate radicalized citizens and claim the legal framework for any returns is too weak.

A few yards away, two young French women are wondering if France will allow them to return with their children. France, which has one of the largest Western contingents among jihadist ranks in Syria, has hinted it may take back children but without their parents. "Being separated from our children is not an option. They are all we have left," says one of them, who would not give her name. Most women in the camp have the same reaction but relations between the dozens of nationalities represented in the foreign women's section are not always easy.

### Tension in the camp

Besides those who hail from Syria and Iraq, the two countries the "caliphate" once straddled, the largest groups are from Russia, the former Soviet republics,

Turkey and Tunisia. One British woman says she would rather not talk to reporters for fear of retaliation from her more radical "sisters" from central Asia. "The situation is bad here. There are quarrels between sisters," says one woman from Trinidad and Tobago. Tension is also rife between the foreigners and the Syrian and Iraqi families who were displaced by the conflict and resent the jihadists. "There have been attacks against foreign women" at the camp's main market, camp manager Nabil Hassan said.

Al-Hol is now home to 50,000 people, including 30,000 who arrived over the past two months. The humanitarian burden is huge on the Kurdish administration, which is calling for stepped up efforts from the international aid community. Baghouz has been under intense bombardment for months, health conditions inside the besieged IS pocket are dire and many of the families who arrive in Al-Hol need medical assistance. At least 78 people, mostly children, have died on the way to the camp or shortly after arriving in recent weeks, according to the International Rescue Committee. — AFP



Most of them 'tight-lipped'

## On Jerusalem's edge, a 'nowhere land' for Palestinians

**KUFR AQAB:** Palestinian residents of Kufr Aqab, just north of Jerusalem, could be forgiven for thinking they live under two governments at once, or perhaps none at all. They pay taxes to Israel, which collects their trash and theoretically plans their roads. But electricity and water come from Palestinian companies, and when the police come to the often lawless area they too are Palestinian. Both the Israeli and Palestinian authorities say they provide services to the area, but residents say in reality no one is in control.

They say the result is an often chaotic nowhere-land where high-rise buildings are constructed only a few metres apart and rubbish piles up on roadsides. "Life here has become unbearable," said shop owner Abu Mohammed, who has lived in the area for 25 years. Kufr Aqab is among a handful of locations that occupy a unique and bizarre status in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Israel considers the area part of Jerusalem, which it fully controls. But Kufr Aqab lies on the other side of Israel's separation barrier dividing Jerusalem from the occupied West Bank.

As such, the Israeli government has only partial control over the area, operating through contractors and a community administration. Its police officers rarely, if ever, patrol, though the army is known to enter to carry out arrests. Around 100,000 people live in the five-square-kilometre area, hit by high rates of crime and poverty.



KUFR AQAB: Photo shows a view of the Palestinian residential area of Kufr Aqab, between Jerusalem and Ramallah, which lies on the other side of Israel's separation barrier dividing the occupied West Bank from Jerusalem. — AFP

On a recent visit AFP saw trash piled on the side of streets next to buildings without proper sewage systems. "The fugitives from Israel come here and the fugitives from the Palestinian Authority come here and there is no one to control them," said Abu Mohammed.

### Unique status

Why then, do the residents remain? The key lies in the unique status of the area. Unlike their counterparts in the West Bank, Palestinians from Jerusalem hold ID cards that grant them access to the city and all of Israel. West Bank ID holders, on the other hand, have to apply for permits to enter Jerusalem.

If Palestinians from Jerusalem are proved by Israeli authorities to be living beyond the wall, they can be stripped of their Jerusalem IDs—but not in locations like Kufr Aqab.

Palestinian figures estimate that around 85 percent of Kufr Aqab residents are Jerusalem ID holders. Homes are also far more affordable there than inside Jerusalem. Yusef Qassam, 63, can't live in Jerusalem because he has a West Bank ID, but his wife is from the city and their four children have Jerusalem IDs.

So the family lives in an apartment in Kufr Aqab. "If the Israelis prove that she lives in the West Bank, she will lose her Jerusalem ID. We know that Israel is emptying Jerusalem of Palestinians," he said. This is a common Palestinian accusation about the disputed city—one that Israel denies. Israel occupied east Jerusalem in the 1967 Six-Day War and later annexed it in a move never recognized by the international community. It sees the entire city as its capital, while the Palestinians want the eastern sector as the capital of their future state. — AFP

## Guns and milk: what they carried from 'caliphate'

**NEAR BAGHOUZ:** Guns, laptops, gold coins and baby formula: when Syrian fighters search women emerging from the ruins of the jihadist "caliphate", what they find is not the contents of your average handbag. Women arrive in droves at a screening point controlled by the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces, 20 kilometers north of the Islamic State group's last redoubt in the village of Baghouz near the Iraqi border.

Veiled from head to toe, they conceal weapons under their clothes or in their bags, tucked between their children's scant belongings, says Nawal Kobani, an 18-year-old SDF fighter. "The men don't carry anything, these things we only find with the women," the blonde, green-eyed fighter tells AFP at the SDF outpost. On Monday, the SDF evacuated over 46 truckloads of people from the last scrap of the jihadist proto-state, adding to the 5,000 men, women and children evacuated last week. The SDF say they are seeking to clear civilians from the IS pocket before a final push to crush jihadists now trapped in less than half a square kilometre in Baghouz.

### 'No pictures or memories'

The latest batch of evacuees arrive at the SDF screening point at sunset on Monday, dust covering their clothes from the rough journey out of Baghouz. Clad in black in the fading light, a group of

women huddle in a circle on the rocky, arid ground, waiting to receive food hand-outs from the SDF. Carrying a bag in his hand, a young child trudges through the crowded screening point, searching for his mother, Wardah. Behind him, one woman tends to her child, another takes out a bottle of milk for her newborn, and a third sits still in silence, as though in shock.

Abeer Mohammad, a 35-year-old Syrian evacuee originally from the northern province of Aleppo, opens her tiny bag and pulls out a dirty plastic box containing pinches of powdered milk. "I didn't bring anything with me except some clothes and some milk for the young one," she says, her three children sitting beside her. "We didn't have anything left anyway," she says, her eyes covered by a full face veil. The women's black veils make it hard to differentiate between them.

Another Syrian woman from Aleppo, who asked not to be named, said: "No pictures or memories or anything. We didn't bring anything but clothes".

### 'They have surrendered'

Around 50,000 people—mostly women and children—have streamed out of the Baghouz pocket since early December, according to the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights. The early groups carried large suitcases and blankets with them as they left the IS redoubt. Some women stacked gold bracelets on their arms. But the latest arrivals came out carrying nothing more than small backpacks.

Umm Mohammad, a 45-year-old Syrian from Aleppo, sits beside a pair of crutches. She was wounded six months ago when a shell crashed into her home in Al-Shaafa, one of the last jihadist bastions taken by the SDF. "Today, we carried the clothes that we could gather and we brought them with us here," she said. — AFP

# Nigeria's Buhari wins re-election as opposition vows court battle

Atiku rejects results; scores die on and after voting day

ABUJA: President Muhammadu Buhari has won a second term in Nigeria, the election board said on yesterday, but his main rival planned a fraud challenge after a vote marred by delays, logistical glitches and scores of deaths. More than 260 people were killed since the start of the campaign in October, 47 of them during Saturday's vote and its aftermath, according to one monitoring group. Buhari, a 76-year-old former military ruler took 56 percent of votes against 41 for his main rival, businessman and former vice president Atiku Abubakar of the People's Democratic Party.

The incumbent has a daunting to-do list, including reviving an economy still struggling to recover from a 2016 recession and quelling a decade-old Islamist insurgency that has killed thousands in the northeast, many of them civilians. "The new administration will intensify its efforts in security, restructuring the economy and fighting corruption," he told celebrating supporters at the campaign headquarters of his All Progressive Congress party in the capital Abuja. The president garnered 15.2 million votes to Atiku's 11.3 million, on turnout of just 35.6 percent, the electoral commission said. That compared with 44 percent turnout in 2015.

While Buhari urged supporters not to gloat or "humiliate" the opposition, Atiku said the election was rigged. "It is clear that there were manifest and premeditated malpractices in many states which negate the results announced," he said. "I hereby reject the result of the February 23, 2019, sham election and will be challenging it in court." One obvious red flag was that states in the northeast ravaged by insurgents' attacks generated much higher voter turnouts than peaceful states, Atiku said.

The opposition's accusations have heightened tensions in Africa's most populous nation and biggest oil producer where six decades of independence have seen long periods of military rule, coups and secessionist wars. But the



ABUJA: Nigeria's Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) chairman Mahmood Yakubu (left) presents to Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari his certificate of election after he was re-elected yesterday in Abuja. — AFP

controversy could just peter out, as happened recently after a presidential vote in Democratic Republic of Congo. "A legal challenge is very unlikely to overturn the official result," said John Ashbourne, senior emerging markets economist at Capital Economics in London, of the Nigerian election.

### Deaths and delays

The candidate with the most votes nationwide is declared the winner as long as they have at least one quarter of the vote in two-thirds of Nigeria's 36 states and the capital, Abuja. Buhari secured enough votes to meet both requirements, a remarkable turnaround after the race looked close. He campaigned on pledges to fight corruption and overhaul Nigeria's creaking road and rail network. "As a youth of Nigeria, I believe this is the way forward for this country and for my generation, and that is why we choose to bring him back for the second time," said Juwarat Abubakar

among cheering supporters. Atiku, 72, had said he would aim to double the size of the economy to \$900 billion by 2025, privatize the state oil company and expand the role of the private sector. "As President Buhari seems likely to remain in power, Nigeria's credit challenges remain and include a low growth environment, very high exposure to fluctuations in oil prices of government revenues and export earnings, weak institutions, and high levels of corruption," said Aurelien Mali, Moody's senior analytical adviser for Africa.

Voting was delayed by a week after the election commission was unable to get ballots and results sheets to all areas. At least 47 people were killed during voting and afterwards, according to the Situation Room, a monitoring organization linking various civil society groups. Some deaths resulted from clashes between groups allied to the leading parties and the police over the theft of ballot boxes and allegations of vote fraud. — Reuters

## Dozens buried in Indonesia gold mine collapse

NORTH SULAWESI: Indonesian rescuers scrambled yesterday to find dozens buried in the collapse of an illegal gold mine that killed at least three people, the disaster agency said. The effort to save survivors at the remote site on Sulawesi island was hampered by steep terrain and unstable soil conditions after the collapse triggered a landslide Tuesday evening, it said. Three people have been found dead while 14 others were pulled from the rubble alive yesterday, according to officials.

"Dozens of people were mining for gold at this location when suddenly beams and supporting boards broke due to unstable soil conditions," said disaster agency spokesman Sutopo Purwo Nugroho. More than three dozen people may still be trapped at the site in the Bolaang Mongondow region of North Sulawesi, where some five miners were killed in December after an illegal gold mine accident. The mineral-rich Southeast Asian nation has scores of unlicensed mining sites and safety regulations are routinely flouted.

Some of the still-buried victims were responding to rescuers' calls but it was not clear how many were still alive. Ground conditions at the mine

were unstable due to the large number of holes dug by the miners, officials said. "We still have hope. When we called them they still responded from down there, asking for help," local disaster agency official Abdul Muin Papatungan said. "We can't use heavy machinery because the location is very steep... it could endanger the victims," Papatungan said.

Rescuers were trying to get water to the buried miners but feared a wrong move could make the situation worse. "There are a lot of challenges because the rocks that fell are in a very dangerous position," Papatungan said. "We're trying to be extra careful." Local hospital chief Wahdiana Mantang said nine patients had been released after the accident and several others were being treated for injuries. "They're suffering from lacerations, gashes and some have broken bones," she added.

Environmentalists called on local officials to enforce regulations and safety measures in response to the accident. "We predicted this was going to happen," said Theo Runtuwene, a local director for the Indonesian Forum for the Environment. "The area is mountainous and (miners) dug holes there, which is extremely risky... There are dozens of sites in North Sulawesi where the ground is very unstable, especially during the rainy season," he added. In 2016, 11 miners died after a mudslide engulfed an illegal gold mine in Sumatra's Jambi province. A year before, 12 people were killed when a shaft collapsed after they tunneled into a disused gold mine on Java island. — AFP

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## International

## Chaos turns to uncertainty at the Venezuelan border town

## Venezuelan security forces crack down on opposition supporters

URENA: Bloody violence may have subsided for now at Venezuela's blockaded border, but for local people, terror has turned to anxiety about how they will reach the schools and shops they depend on. In the Venezuelan border town of Urena, Kelly Pinto stared at the Santander Bridge leading to Colombia—now blocked by a white armored truck. Like many of her neighbors, she was wondering when it will reopen so she can reach the Colombian city of Cucuta.

"My youngest is really worried. She says, 'Mummy, I want to go to school; mummy, I have an exam,'" said Pinto, mother of two girls aged eight and 10. "What am I supposed to do?" she said.

"They won't tell us whether they are going to open it or not." Nearby, a small group of schoolgirls stood with a sign that read, "We want to go to school. Let us pass." While her children go to a school across the border from their crisis-hit country, Kelly lives off trading in goods she buys on the far side of the bridge. Thousands like her rely on crossing to Cucuta to get the basic goods and services lacking in Venezuela.



## Unrest leaves 4 people dead

## Blocked by debris

On the bridge, a white armored truck—known as a "bat" for the white metal wings that extend from its sides—sat blocking the way. The border has been shut since clashes broke out on this and other nearby border crossings over the weekend. Venezuelan security

forces cracked down on opposition supporters trying to bring aid supplies across the bridge. National Guards fired tear gas and rubber bullets. Demonstrators set fire to a bus. Its charred remains were being towed out of the way on Tuesday, but other debris still lay around. President Nicolas Maduro had branded the aid bid a ploy by his opponent, self-declared president Juan Guaido. Maduro said it was a pretext for a US invasion.

## Awaiting orders

Colombia had said it would reopen the border crossings from Cucuta to Urena and nearby San Antonio early Tuesday. But the decision depends equally on the Venezuelan military. The crossings were still blocked later in the day. A group of local people timidly approached a detachment of soldiers guarding the Santander bridge, hoping to be allowed to cross. The locals offered to help clear the rubble left over from Saturday's disturbances. The soldiers "told us they are in the process of opening it," said one of the group of neighbors, Gladys Celis.

Her husband and eldest daughter work in Cucuta and her younger daughter goes to school there. But the soldiers "gave no date, no time, nothing," she added. "They are awaiting orders." Maduro's authorities claimed a victory on Saturday after blocking Guaido's side from trucking in the aid. International



CUCUTA: Supporters of Venezuelan opposition leader Juan Guaido jump the security fence back to the Colombian side of the Francisco de Paula Santander International Bridge in Cucuta, during clashes with Venezuelan security forces in Urena, Venezuela. — AFP

bodies criticized the military for targeting those trying to bring in the aid trucks, one of which was set on fire.

## Bad memories

Maduro's government on Saturday shut down the country's entire border with Brazil, where unrest left four people dead. He also closed four border bridges to Colombia in the western state of Tachira. The

2,200-kilometer border with Colombia had already been shut before, from 2015 to 2016, after an attack on a Venezuelan military patrol. Since that peak of tension with Colombia, it had been reopening gradually for people's work or medical needs until the latest upsurge of unrest. But regional trade groups say only about a fifth of local trade has recovered from that earlier shutdown. — AFP

## News in brief

## Indonesian housewives arrested

BANDUNG: Three Indonesian housewives have been arrested over an online video that claimed President Joko Widodo would ban prayer and make gay marriage legal in the Muslim majority country if re-elected, police said. Widodo has fended off accusations over his Muslim credentials for years, claims that have been revived ahead of April presidential elections. Indonesia has also been battling a wave of fake news and misinformation campaigns online in the lead up to the polls. The video, shared thousands of times online, showed two women in hijab headscarves telling an old man that Widodo would end the call to prayer, which is performed five times a day by many in the world's most populous Muslim country. He would also force women to remove their hijab in public and legalise gay marriage, which is highly opposed in Indonesia, the video suggested. — AFP

## 'Arson' attack hits mosque

JOHANNESBURG: A mosque in Durban has been set ablaze, in the latest assault on an Islamic building in South Africa, a Muslim leader said. Images of the charred mosque, located in the suburb of Effingham, showed forensic officers on site and community members inspecting the damage. "The attack happened in the early hours of the morning at around 1:30 am," Islamic elder Mohammed Tariq told AFP, adding that no-one was injured because of the early hour. "The mosque itself has been burnt extremely badly and emergency personnel have been on the scene. A case of arson has been opened," he said. Police could not be reached for comment. The attack comes amid tensions between Muslim factions in South Africa, a country that prides itself on its religious tolerance. — AFP

## Australian jailed in Bali

DENPASAR: An Australian man charged with selling cocaine in Bali was jailed for more than five years yesterday. A court on the Indonesian resort island handed down the sentence to Brendon Luke Johnson, arrested last year with almost 12 grams of cocaine hidden at his rental home. Johnson, who is reportedly 43, and his Indonesian girlfriend Remi Purwanti were each given five years and four months in prison by the Bali court. Foreigners are regularly arrested for drugs offences in Bali, which attracts millions of visitors to its palm-fringed beaches every year. Indonesia has some of the world's toughest anti-drug laws and traffickers can be sentenced to death. Earlier this year, a Tanzanian man was arrested in Bali for trafficking after more than a kilogram of methamphetamine was found in plastic baggies inside his stomach, according to police. — AFP

## Human Rights Watch slams UAE

BEIRUT: Human Rights Watch has accused authorities in the United Arab Emirates of mistreating and denying adequate medical care to a terminally-ill Emirati woman in prison on terrorism charges. The New York-based rights group said Alia Abdel Nour, 42, was diagnosed with breast cancer after her arrest in 2015 and is being denied regular contact with her family. "Abdel Nour should be allowed to spend her last days watched over by her family, not by prison guards who keep her shackled to a hospital bed," HRW's Middle East and North Africa director Sarah Leah Whitson said in a statement. The rights group called on the Emirati authorities to release Abdel Nour "given her current condition". Abdel Nour's family says she was forced to sign a document saying she was refusing chemotherapy, HRW said in a statement. — AFP

## 'Unreasonable verdict': Cardinal George Pell's grounds for appeal

SYDNEY: Cardinal George Pell's lawyers plan a multi-pronged appeal against his conviction for the sexual assault of two choirboys at Saint Patrick's Cathedral in Melbourne in 1996-97. Prosecutors and the defense can take several months to submit their written arguments and counter-arguments to Victoria state's Court of Appeal before a hearing by a bench of three judges. Here's what the legal team said are going to be Pell's grounds of appeal:

## Verdict was unreasonable

Pell's lawyers will argue that the verdict was unreasonable, in what is a "fairly standard ground of appeal", said Matthew Collins, the president of the peak body for barristers, the Victorian

Bar association. The Court of Appeal would have to be convinced that something during the trial "had gone wrong", such as an error made by the judge, or that something said by one of the barristers prejudiced the jury in a way that could not be overcome, Collins said.

Some defence lawyers have used the argument, though rarely successfully, that a guilty verdict should be quashed on the grounds that the jury's decision is so far against the weight of the evidence it should be set aside as "unreasonable". "It only succeeds rarely, and in an exceptional case, because in our system, great reliance is placed upon the common sense of the jury," Collins said. Experts say a possible weakness in the jury's verdict is that it was based on the testimony from the one surviving victim of offences that took place more than two decades ago.

## Jury not correctly formed

Fourteen, instead of the usual 12, jurors were empanelled for the trial. After the trial, 12 of them — eight men and four women — were part of the final deliberations. The defense will contend that the jury in this instance was unlawfully constituted. Collins said while it was unusual for there to be more than 12 jurors empanelled, it was not unheard of.



SYDNEY: This photo illustration shows the front pages of Australia's major newspapers reporting the conviction of Cardinal George Pell in Sydney yesterday. — AFP

## Animation video rejection

The legal team will argue that Chief Judge Peter Kidd should have allowed them to play an animated video for the jury. The illustration was meant to show how the movement of people in the cathedral would have raised questions about whether the choirboys could have

found themselves alone in the sacristy — where most of the offences took place — following Sunday mass. Justice Kidd did not allow the animation to be played, saying it was based on guesswork. Collins said having an animation presentation was "certainly unusual" but not unheard of. — AFP

## Moscow's help for the homeless expands 'out of sight'

MOSCOW: With temperatures outside well below freezing, about 30 homeless people gather around a television set in one of Moscow's few dedicated shelters, far from the city centre. Wearing a medical mask to reduce the risk of infectious diseases, an employee keeps a note of new arrivals at the 24-hour centre in Lyublino, a southeastern suburb of the sprawling Russian capital. At the back of the registration room, a homeless woman in a wheelchair weeps silently.

"This is a model centre for Russia," says Sergei Timoshenkov, director of the facility which has 1,000 beds and some 500 employees. The Lyublino shelter offers the capital's homeless a place to wash, eat and change their clothes, as well as legal advice and psychological support. Those who come are usually required to be sober but the rule is suspended during the winter, when a night spent exposed on the streets could mean death. For the past 10 years, the centre has been at the forefront of the city's efforts to tackle its homeless problem.

## Long-held stigma

During the Soviet era, homeless people were prosecuted under anti-begging laws. Their number boomed during the 1990s with the economic collapse that followed the fall of the USSR. Now there are six such shelters—Lyublino and five smaller ones—in the capital, and NGOs working in the field have largely praised Moscow's progress on the issue. But some criticize a policy that removes a group still facing lingering social stigma from the centre of the city, as Moscow continues a wave of development that accelerated leading up to last year's World Cup. "The current policy is to put homeless people out of sight," says Darya Baibakova, of the Nochlezhka NGO, that works with those without permanent accommodation.

She believes that Moscow should have facilities in every district, rather than in "remote industrial areas". And she underlines the lasting impact of the "long years



MOSCOW: Homeless people take a walk outside a shelter in Moscow. The city's biggest shelter for the homeless is located in southeast Moscow and aims to help the needy in recovering their personal papers, finding a job and returning to normal life. — AFP

of stigmatization" of homeless people. In October, Nochlezhka had to drop a plan to open a laundrette for homeless people near the city centre under pressure from residents.

"Some locals threatened to beat up our staff, set fire to the laundrette, and even kill the homeless people," says Baibakova.

## Severe frostbite

Nonetheless, the Lyublino centre and Moscow's wider policy have borne results. In 2003, 1,200 homeless people in Moscow died from the cold. In the winter of 2017-2018, the death toll was 11. Yury, who had eight fingers and both legs amputated due to severe frostbite, has spent the night at the shelter with his girlfriend. He originates from the eastern Ukrainian city of Donetsk, now at the centre of a conflict between Kiev and Russian-backed separatist rebels. Yury says he lost his passport in Russia and cannot apply for a new one, meaning he has no access to city housing schemes. All he can use are the emergency shelters. "We'll have to leave soon," he says, without clarifying where the couple might go after Moscow. — AFP

## In major religion case, US top court weighs Maryland cross case

WASHINGTON: The conservative-majority US Supreme Court yesterday takes up one of the biggest cases of its current term when it weighs whether a cross-shaped war memorial on public land in Maryland is an unconstitutional government endorsement of religion. The so-called Peace Cross, a 40-foot-tall concrete memorial to 49 men from Maryland's Prince George's County killed in World War One, is situated on public land at a busy road intersection in Bladensburg just outside Washington.

Fred Edwards and two other plaintiffs filed a 2014 lawsuit challenging the cross as a violation of the US Constitution's Establishment Clause, which prohibits the government from establishing an official religion and bars governmental actions favoring one religion over another. The cross was funded privately and built in 1925. The property where it stands was in private hands when it was erected, but it is now on land owned by the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, a governmental agency. The nine justices on the high court, which has a 5-4 conservative majority, are due to hear a 70-minute oral argument, with a ruling due by the end of June.

The Establishment Clause's scope is contested, so comments by the justices suggesting a willingness to allow greater government involvement in religious expression will be closely scrutinized. The cross has the backing of President Donald Trump's administration and members of the American Legion veterans' group, who hold memorial events at the site. Veterans and their relatives have said the monument has no religious meaning despite being in the shape of a Christian cross, calling the lawsuit misguided and hurtful. — Reuters

International

# Melting missiles - just one problem with F-35s stopping N Korea rockets

## Pentagon seeking ways to neutralize nuke threat

WASHINGTON: Looking for a quick way to stop North Korean missiles immediately after lift-off, the Pentagon is studying as a near-term option whether a group of F-35 fighter jets hovering around North Korean airspace could pick off freshly-launched rockets. In its current form, the idea defies physics, missile defense experts say. It calls for interceptor missiles that fly so fast they could melt one expert said, and the only surefire way for US military aircraft to defeat a missile with current technology would be to fly in hostile airspace, according to three experts interviewed by Reuters.

The idea, part of a six-month study launched last month, shows how the Pentagon is seeking ways to neutralize the threat posed by Pyongyang even as President Trump meets North Korean leader Kim Jong Un this week in Vietnam in his effort to stop Kim's nuclear program. Concern over US missile defenses has grown with the escalating threat from North Korea. Two years ago North Korea conducted about a dozen missile tests, some with multiple rockets, including the launch of a suspected inter-continental ballistic missile that could hit the US mainland.

They also tested a purported hydrogen bomb. The F-35 plan under study would likely involve continuously flying a group of the stealthy jets within range of known North Korean missile sites. Once a missile is launched towards US territory, the F-35's advanced sensors would detect and then fire a special air-to-air missile before the Pyongyang projectile exits the atmosphere, the latest missile defense strategy and Pentagon leadership have said.

Military officials say the F-35 option is the one they want to test first because it could use existing military hardware and potentially be operational sooner than other strategies, and at a relatively low cost. At the same time Pentagon leadership says the tests may reveal a new interceptor is needed, or that the F-35 may only have a role in detecting the just-launched missile and not necessarily also shoot it down.

Speaking about that option after last month's release of

the defense strategy review, Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering Michael Griffin said: "we do think it could be both cost effective and ... within the bounds of math and physics." Among other proposals included in the review was one involving lasers mounted on drones - proposed to stop missiles just after take-off in what is called the boost phase. During this portion of the flight the missile is most vulnerable, flying at its slowest speed, easily detected by the heat from its engines, and incapable of evading interceptors as it accelerates to break out of the earth's atmosphere.

Melting missiles

Geography complicates the F-35 plan. Tom Karako, a missile defense expert at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington noted that jets lying in wait for a North Korean missile would in theory need to respect North Korean airspace. But remaining at such a distance could leave the jets too far from the missile launch to be effective. Theodore Postol, a missile defense expert at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology said even a modified air-to-air missile would be too slow to take out an intercontinental ballistic missile before it exited the atmosphere.

Air-to-air missiles like those made by Raytheon Co would only have an estimated 200 seconds to hit a ballistic missile before reaching an altitude where the air is too thin to maneuver. Given that it would take an F-35 approximately 50-60 seconds to detect, lock onto and launch an air-to-air missile, Postol said, the jet would need to be very close to the ballistic missile to take it out. "If you are on top of it you can shoot it down," the retired rocket scientist said. "But the odds are going to be very low that you can be on top of it."

Even if a much faster and lighter version air-to-air missile was mounted in an F-35 jet, depending on the distance the weapon would have to fly so fast it would begin to melt, Postol added. Despite the obstacles, the very fact



HANOI: A motorcade transporting North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, make its way to the Sofitel Legend Metropole hotel in Hanoi yesterday, ahead of the second US-North Korea summit. — AFP

that Pentagon was weighing such an option was significant, Karako said. "This shows a broader cultural shift." Rather than some giant program, Karako said, the Pentagon is considering "a mission that is integrated into a broader mesh of tactical programs the Department of Defense can call on."

Making it work will be a challenge, though. "You

would need to be very close to the launch site, within North Korea itself, said physicist Laura Grego, who studies missile defense at the Union of Concerned Scientists. Grego said that even if the air-to-air missile traveled at five times the speed of sound, the F-35 would need to be within about 50 miles of the missile, "probably closer, to be realistic." — Reuters

### Bangladesh shuts down popular blogging site in crackdown

DHAKA: Bangladesh's most popular Bengali blog platform has been blocked by telecom regulators in what critics yesterday denounced as an assault on freedom of expression. The somewhereinblog.net platform was among more than 20,000 websites that internet service providers were ordered to shut down as part of a crackdown on online pornography and gambling. But the platform, which hosts more than 250,000

registered bloggers, said it does not allow any obscene content, adding the crackdown was a clear attempt at censorship. The sweep also blocked the Bengali version of Google Books as well as popular social media apps such as TikTok and Bigo.

"We were stunned after discovering our blog was blacklisted and blocked," said Mozaidid Al Fasaki, a moderator and spokesman for somewhereinblog.net. "Our platform, in no way, supports or spreads pornographic or obscene material and we always stay on a high alert regarding content that might hamper national security or sovereignty." The spokesman described reported allegations by the telecoms minister that the site promotes atheism as "disheartening".

"We ... believe in the freedom of speech. As long as someone doesn't cross the boundary (of inciting hatred) and expresses his or her opinion

Weibo, as people posted about delayed trains, traffic congestion and road closures in Chinese cities through which Kim's iconic olive green train is expected to pass.

Some seemed genuinely confused by the sudden shutdown of roads, while others referenced Kim's epic train ride through China-many choosing to use nicknames for the North Korean leader, such as "Boss Kim" or "Little brother Kim", potentially to avoid censorship. The train, which has a top speed of 60 kilometers per hour, set off from Pyongyang on Saturday for a 4,000-kilometre journey that is expected to total 60 hours-the great majority of it across China. "Those watching Leader Kim's Changsha road situation, has he made it to Changsha yet?" wrote one user, referring to the

about social issues and religion, we see no reason to censor them," Al Fasaki said. Telecoms Minister Mustafa Jabbar, who ordered the crackdown, told the Dhaka Tribune newspaper that somewhereinblog.net was closed due to objectionable content. "Have you ever gone through the content that blogging websites publish? After verifying reports on all the websites, we made the move," Jabbar said.

Rights groups have accused the government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, which has just started a fourth term, of undermining free speech. Last September the government passed a controversial digital security act that journalists said severely curbs media freedom.

Dozens of social media activists including celebrated photographer Shahidul Alam were detained for several months last year for social media comments about student protests in Dhaka. — AFP

capital city of central Hunan province. "Changsha friends, are you ready?"

"This train is so slow," commented another. "Yesterday it arrived in Zhengzhou-it's only now made it to Wuhan." Already, censors have started to erase or limit the visibility of Weibo posts on road closures, as Kim's train route remains swathed in secrecy. Some posts hashtagged "Zhengzhou road closures", for instance, have been blocked by the social media site, according to FreeWeibo, which tracks censored and deleted Weibo posts. Other hashtags, such as "Changsha road closures", are not searchable, despite their use in Weibo posts. The sighting of Kim's armored train, which has tinted black windows and a yellow stripe, has set off a flurry of train spotting. — AFP

### India v Pakistan: a history of conflict over Kashmir

NEW DELHI: India and Pakistan have fought two wars and countless skirmishes over Kashmir, the Himalayan region claimed in full by both nuclear-armed rivals. But rarely have ground troops or air forces crossed the heavily militarized de facto border between the two foes, known as the Line of Control (LoC), in Kashmir. Here are some of the major clashes between the South Asian enemies over the flashpoint mountainous territory.

1947

The first war breaks out over Kashmir after partition divides the subcontinent into India and Pakistan. The maharaja of Kashmir, the local ruler, accedes to India as tribal fighters from Pakistan launch attacks.

1965

India and Pakistan fight a second brief war over Kashmir before a ceasefire is declared.

1971

India and Pakistan fight another war, not over Kashmir but over Islamabad's rule in then East Pakistan, with New Delhi supporting Bengali nationalists seeking independence for what would become Bangladesh.

India's air force conducts bombing raids inside Pakistan.

1984

Indian forces seize the Siachen Glacier, a remote and uninhabited territory high in the Karakoram Range also claimed by Pakistan. The first of many battles are fought over the high-altitude stretch, until a ceasefire is signed in 2003.

1999

Pakistan-backed militants cross the disputed Kashmir border, seizing Indian military posts in the icy heights of the Kargil mountains. Indian troops push the intruders back, ending the 10-week Kargil conflict which costs 1,000 lives on both sides.

2016

India launches what it calls "surgical strikes" on targets in Pakistani Kashmir in September, less than two weeks after a militant attack on an Indian army base leaves 19 soldiers dead. Pakistan denies the strikes took place. In November, seven Indian soldiers are killed after militants disguised as policemen storm a major army base near the frontier with Pakistan.

2019

India vows retaliation after at least 40 paramilitaries are killed in a suicide attack in Kashmir territory it controls. New Delhi blames the Pakistan-based militant group Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) for the attack. In the early hours of February 26, Indian conducts air strikes against what it calls JeM's "biggest training camp", killing "a very large number" of militants. — AFP

### China scrubs social media as Kim train trundles south

BEIJING: Chinese censors raced to scrub online discussions about North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's whereabouts as his armored train trundled southward to Vietnam for his summit with US President Donald Trump. The secretive itinerary fuelled speculation on Twitter-like

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## Unshackled yet far from free, ex-slaves struggle

**M**barka Mint Essatim was 23 when she discovered she was a slave. Her master's driver saw her doing heavy lifting one day and asked if she was paid. When Mbarka said 'no', he told her the truth about the family she had always considered her own. "I knew no one else and thought they were my family," she said of her masters, members of the light-skinned elite known as white Moors in the west African country of Mauritania. She neither looked like them nor lived like them. "I did not sleep with them in the same house. I was afraid of them, they struck me ... raped me. I wanted to be like children my age, going to school and studying. I was alone."

She tells the story coolly, sitting in a makeshift shack in the capital, Nouakchott, as if the child taken from her mother at five to wash dishes and scrub floors was someone else. Essatim escaped in 2011 with the help of the driver, now her husband, but has no job or education and seven children to raise in a nation where her ethnic group occupies the bottom rung. Life is no longer defined by servitude, punctuated by rapes or beatings, but Essatim struggles to feed her family.

About 40 million people globally are estimated by the United Nations to be modern-day slaves, but no data exists on how many are freed or escape - and face a fresh ordeal as they seek basic services and support to start life anew. As Mauritania begins to emerge from a decades-old tradition of descent-based slavery, activists say tens of thousands are in Essatim's situation - struggling to get by each day.

Activists say improving their lot is harder than ending slavery, and just as crucial to repairing race relations and maintaining peace. Mauritania was the last country to abolish slavery - in 1981 - and criminalized it in 2007. The Global Slavery Index, published annually by human rights group Walk Free Foundation, estimates that 2 percent of the population, or 90,000 Mauritians, are still enslaved. "For the slaves, all we can do is free them," said Alioune Sow, a member of the Initiative for the Resurgence of the Abolitionist Movement (IRA), which freed Essatim's children. "We are not the state. We don't have funds," said pharmacist Sow, who donates medicine to ex-slaves when he can.

Although it is hard to identify victims - countless remain hidden within mansions - former slaves are easy to spot. Rights groups say they amass in the poorest areas, often lacking running water, health centers and schools. Charities and government help, but reach just a fraction of those in need. From her moment of liberty, Essatim said she was on her own. "I was happy to be free... (but) I wanted to have a house to live in, and work for me and my husband," said the 30-year-old. She still has neither.

### Freedom by law

Haratines, Mauritania's 'slave caste', make up nearly half the population, with the rest divided between white Moors and other black ethnic groups, according to Minority Rights Group, a London-based rights organization. Essatim was born a slave because her mother was one. Raped by her master and his son as a teen, she had two girls who were given away to various members of the master's family. "When I refused to let her (first-born) go, they took her by force," Essatim said. "All I could do was cry. I was afraid for her to face what I faced." Mauritania's government denies slavery is widespread and says cases are rare and handled swiftly. "We ban drugs, we ban terrorism, we ban arms trafficking. And it happens," said Hamdi Ould Mahjoub, head of Tadamoun - the national agency that deals with the impact of slavery. "This too (slavery) is a crime ... and there are people who do it." Anti-slavery groups paint another picture, in which the state rarely supports victims and people of influence protect slave owners, who share their class.

There have been four prosecutions of slave owners since 2007, while anti-slavery activists have been jailed on multiple occasions - including Biram Dah Abeid, president of the IRA. With enough evidence, the group can pressure the state to intervene, said Sow. But they have had little success advocating for harsher sentences and victim compensation, he added. "When you compensate (the slave) he will have means, he'll have a start," said Sow. "We continue to insist on this point."

Essatim said her dream is education for her children - but it is fast slipping out of reach. Aged from five months to 16 years old, none has gone to school. The older ones were barred for lack of identity papers, a common problem when the father is a slave master, activists say. Her younger ones lacked school supplies and missed the registration deadline, said Essatim. "The situation cannot change if they don't go to school," said Ibrahim Bilal Ramdhane, who started an organization called Fondation Sahel to educate former slaves. Born into slavery, Ramdhane went to school as his masters had no need of him. He later convinced his family to leave. "It's the only solution. It might take 100 years, but that's what must be done," he said. Mahjoub, director of Tadamoun agency, agreed that education was a priority and said government had created at least 60 schools since 2014, mostly for former slaves. But inequality is still stark. State schools for mainly Haratines often lack teachers or fall into disrepair; white Moors opt for private school. Some ex-slaves also keep children at home because they do not think schooling is important, added Ramdhane. — Reuters



A Porsche is seen at the Doha Jewellery and Watches Exhibition on Feb 20, 2019. — AFP

## Qatari love of luxury strong despite crisis

**A**bdulla Sager Al-Khori has little doubt about the significance of a luxury watch when it comes to fashion - and making a statement - even in the thick of Qatar's diplomatic crisis. "Because we have the traditional dress the only thing we can use as an accessory are watches and cufflinks, so the watch is a big part of our being on top of fashion and being fashionable," said the 36-year-old who works in public relations.

But Khori's passion for timepieces goes further than most - he is a founding member of the Qatar Watch Club, a group of some 50 men who meet regularly to discuss their love of watches. It "started from just wanting a watch to just tell the time... I want this watch because I love the history, I love how hard it is to make this mechanism and how complicated these watches are," he said. "So, it (went) from just a tool to telling the time to a passion that I hope to pass on to my children in the future."

Khori, who initially trained as a mechanical engineer, spoke to AFP at the close of the Doha Jewellery and Watches Exhibition, a vast five-day show that ran until February 25. The event attracted large crowds to view the latest collection from global luxury brands, including Chaumet, Dior, Chopard, Tiffany, Rolex, Vacheron

Constantin - with its slogan of unashamed exclusivity "One of not many" - and Alfordan.

### No price tags

Qatar is one of the richest countries in the world, ranked by some as the richest in per capita terms, and many of those drawn to the exhibition turned up not just to look but to buy. There was nothing so vulgar as a price tag in sight, and the show was an unabashed testament to opulence and wealth far beyond the reach of many. Three-million-dollar necklaces vied for attention with \$200,000 watches and iconic cars from the set of Hollywood movies.

Slim-suited European retailers chased the next sale, models displayed latest designs and elegantly-dressed rich locals shuffled between high-end stores - as nearby Bangladeshi cleaners looked on. Leading Qatari dignitaries and royal family members attended and Bollywood superstar Aishwarya Rai Bachchan was flown in to officially open the show. One retailer told of how 500 watches specifically-designed for the Doha exhibition, each costing 30,000 riyals (\$8,200), sold out before the show had even opened. The air itself was rich with the distinct aroma of expensive oud - also known as liquid gold - fragrances.

Outside, drivers waited for their valet-service parked Maseratis, Bentleys and Rolls-Royces.

### Crisis?

Even a regional diplomatic crisis which has engulfed Qatar politics for almost two years has failed to dent sales of luxury items. "Our sales have almost doubled since the situation because now the Qatari people are buying in Qatar," said Hublot regional director David Tedeschi. "They're not buying anymore" in the other oil-rich Arab states of the Gulf. Geoffrey Ader, a collectible watch aficionado at the show, said 2018 figures showed that "Qatar holds the first position" for sales of luxury watches. Since June 2017, Doha has been isolated from neighboring former allies including Saudi Arabia over allegations of Qatari support for terrorist groups and of being too close to Iran. Despite repeated denials from Doha, some fear that the bitter regional spat could permanently reshape Gulf politics. And despite the watch club being an all-male affair, interest is far wider, according to Tedeschi. "In Qatar... we have a lot of women customers," he said. In most countries around 30 percent of customers are women, while it runs at between 40 to 45 percent in Qatar. — AFP

## Going TikTok: Indians hooked on Chinese app

**A** video clip shot on a sparse rooftop of what looks like a low-rise apartment block shows a young Indian man swaying while lip-syncing a song praising Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Describing himself as a proud Indian with the online identity "garrytumar", he is wearing ear-studs and shows a beaded necklace under a partly unbuttoned shirt in the 15-second clip. "Modi has single-handedly trounced everyone ... Modi is a storm, you all now know," goes the Hindi song, posted on Chinese video mobile application TikTok, the latest digital platform to grip India's small towns and villages ahead of a general election due by May.

Created by Beijing Bytedance Technology Co, one of the world's most valuable start-ups potentially worth more than \$75 billion, TikTok allows users to create and share short videos with various special effects. It is becoming hugely popular in rural India, home to most of the country's 1.3 billion people. Social media platforms such as Facebook, its unit WhatsApp and Twitter are extensively being used by Indian politicians for campaigning ahead of the election: Facebook's 300 million users and WhatsApp's 200 million have made India their largest market in the world, while Twitter too has millions of users.

TikTok is fast catching up: it has been downloaded more than 240 million times in India so far, according to app analytics firm Sensor Tower. More than 30 million users in India installed it last month, 12 times more than in Jan 2018. "Most urban elites haven't heard of TikTok and those who have, tend to view it as a platform for trivial content. In reality, it hosts diverse content including a fair share of political speech," said Kailas Karthikeyan, a New Delhi-based technology analyst who has tracked TikTok for nine months. TikTok's video-only interface makes it less elaborate and easier to use compared to platforms such as Facebook or Twitter, making it a bigger attraction in rural India, he added.

### Political interest

While Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the opposition Congress party have not officially joined TikTok, videos tagged #narendramodi have received more than 30 million views and those about Congress chief Rahul Gandhi (#rahulgandhi) have got nearly 13 million hits. Total views for political videos is far higher. Amit

Malviya, the BJP's chief of information technology, said the party was tracking TikTok conversations and it was "a brilliant medium for creative expression". The party, however, has no plans as of now to officially join the platform, he said.

A Congress source said the party was exploring joining TikTok and assessing how it could be used to better reach out to people in rural areas in the run-up to the election. Not all political videos on TikTok seek votes. Some videos show people waving the Congress flag on Indian streets. Another clip shows Modi and German Chancellor Angela Merkel on a stage, with a Hindi-language rustic voiceover of her saying she will marry the Indian leader. "I would die with him and live with him," the Merkel voice impersonator declares in the video. In another TikTok post, Modi fan Yogesh Saini says the prime minister is his world, moments before opening his jacket to reveal a video of Modi on his chest. Saini, 23, isn't affiliated to any political party, but says: "It's my job to support Modi-ji, so I'm doing that," using the honorific Indian suffix. He spoke to Reuters from the small town of Sawai Madhopur in the desert state of Rajasthan.

### Scrutiny, backlash

Jokes, dance clips and videos related to India's thriving movie industry dominate the platform. #Bollywood tagged videos have nearly 13 billion views and the app is also flooded with memes, as well as videos on cooking. TikTok, though, is facing opposition from some quarters. The information technology minister of the southern state of Tamil Nadu, M Manikandan, said he will urge the federal government to ban the app as some content was "very unbearable". "Young girls and everybody is behaving very badly. Sometimes the body language is very bad, and (people are) doing mimicry of political leaders very badly," Manikandan told Reuters.

A Hindu nationalist group close to Modi's BJP too has called for a ban on TikTok. TikTok said it respects local laws and there was "no basis" for the concerns. Promoting a safe and positive in-app environment was its "top priority", it said. The backlash comes as social media companies face increased scrutiny from authorities over fake news and undesirable content ahead of the polls. A federal proposal will mandate them to swiftly remove "unlawful" content when asked.

A senior government official in New Delhi said the government wants TikTok to comply with the new Indian regulations as and when they kick in, but there wasn't any immediate concern on content. Still, the government has asked the Chinese company to have better checks in place to ensure its users are aged above 12, which is recommended by the app itself, the official said. — Reuters

## Young Erdogan aims to emulate famous namesake

**R**ecep Tayyip's father had big ambitions for his son. Already bearing the family name Erdogan, his father called him Recep Tayyip after Turkey's president hoping his son would emulate his idol's success. Now the younger Erdogan wants to follow in his namesake's footsteps with a foray into politics, running in March 31 elections for a village chief post in a neighbourhood of Golcuk in Turkey's north-west. Village chief, or muhtar, is a key post in the local elections - held every five years - when President Erdogan will look to shore up his influence at the grassroots level.

"Since I was born with this name, it is like I have a written destiny," the 20-year-old Recep Tayyip told AFP outside his office. When his father, a local social security administrator and admirer of the Turkish leader, named him, President Erdogan was still just the mayor of Istanbul. But he soon became an "idol" for the younger Recep Tayyip. "With his way of addressing the world and care for people, he is one of the leaders I take as a model," Recep Tayyip said.

Erdogan has been in power since 2003, first as prime minister and then as president. For supporters, he is a strong leader putting Turkey on the map, but critics brand him an autocrat who has eroded freedoms. After the president's campaign for youth to get involved in politics and reforms to lower the voting age from 25 to 18, the younger Erdogan found the courage to jump into the fray. "I always thought about politics but I was shy, then I plucked up the courage after the election reform," he said. "I said to myself, everyone is doing it and why not me?"

### 'Joking'

Recep Tayyip said he has not yet met the president in person. But he has plenty of memories about his name. "At first people think I am joking and those who do not believe me, they check my identity card," he said. The young hopeful said he received a positive response to his candidacy, but was not free from criticism on social media plat-



Recep Tayyip Erdogan, a candidate in elections for a village chief post, poses on Feb 13, 2019 in Golcuk in front of his campaign headquarters. — AFP

forms. "Some say Reis (the chief, a nickname for the president) has an impostor on social media, and others say 'they said he cannot even be muhtar, but he will become one'".

That was a reference to the symbolic meaning of the muhtar post holds for Erdogan the president. When President Erdogan was mayor of Istanbul in 1998, he was jailed briefly for reciting a poem found to be religiously motivated, considered a violation of Turkey's secular norms then. After his conviction, some newspapers reported that "he cannot even be a muhtar any more" - a phrase Erdogan often refers to in speeches now to show how he struggled to get to the top.

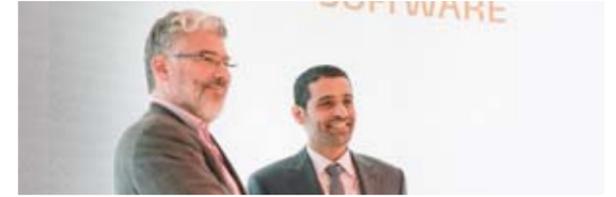
With the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) claiming to be the voice of the pious underdog in a secular system, Erdogan regularly gathers muhtars from all over Turkey at his presidential palace in Ankara since he was elected president in 2014. He uses this as a platform to deliver political messages and inspire local leaders.

Muhtar candidates are not party affiliated in Turkey and the younger Erdogan is competing against two other individuals. Recep Tayyip said he had so far enjoyed the benefits of having the same name as the president. "Our president is a beloved one, elected with 52.6 percent of the vote.

Of course I see a better prospect of his supporters being likely to vote for me," he said. The only disadvantage he had with his name was abroad at passport control when he visited Germany recently. "They are not fond of the name: It is a global brand name." — AFP

## Business

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In this file photo, Air France and KLM aircraft stand parked at Schiphol Airport, Netherlands. Shares in Air France-KLM plummeted yesterday, a day after the Dutch government announced it was buying a stake in the troubled airline in a bid to match the French state's influence. — AFP

## Air France-KLM shares slump 11%

### Dutch govt eyes 14% stake to balance French influence

**AMSTERDAM/PARIS:** Shares in Air France-KLM fell sharply yesterday after the Dutch government said it would take a 14 percent stake in the airline, highlighting tensions between France and the Netherlands over control of the company.

Air France-KLM shares were down by 11 percent by 0855 GMT which analysts said reflected worries that governments' competing interests may run contrary to those of investors.

"Air France-KLM risks becoming a political football between two governments," Liberum analysts said in a note. Late on Tuesday, Dutch Finance Minister Wopke Hoekstra announced the Netherlands had taken a 12.7 percent stake for 680 million euros (\$774 million) and aimed to increase that to about 14 percent, to counter-

balance the French government's stake in the group.

The move, which took the French by surprise, came weeks after a confrontation between the Dutch government and the company's French-dominated executive board over waning Dutch influence.

Although Air France and KLM merged back in 2003, the KLM subsidiary has always maintained an independent corporate structure within the group. With the backing of the Dutch government, the KLM subsidiary has balked at attempts by Air France-KLM group's new Canadian CEO Ben Smith to move toward deeper integration. Liberum analysts said that while the stake-building by the Dutch government appeared to have supported the share price over recent days, hopes that the French government would eventually sell its shares

now look unjustified. "We view this development as negative," they wrote. "Government interference is unwelcome and likely to be contrary to investors' interests. Delta Airlines and China Eastern Airlines each also hold an 8.8 percent stake in Air France-KLM.

#### 'Seat at the table'

CEO Smith travelled to the Netherlands for a reportedly uncomfortable meeting with Finance Minister Hoekstra before an Air France board meeting on Feb. 19. Sources close to KLM said Smith's dismissive attitude toward Dutch government concerns about the importance of Amsterdam's Schiphol Airport in the group's future may have played a role in the government's decision to act. Hoekstra said buying the stake

was a "fundamental step toward protecting Dutch interests", at a news conference called at short notice on Tuesday night in the Hague. "Buying this stake ensures we have a seat at the table."

French Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire said he had not been informed in advance of Dutch plans, and added it was essential for Air France-KLM to be "managed without national public interference."

Air France this month reported full-year operating earnings of 266 million euros, compared with 1.07 billion euros at the KLM subsidiary. The group has trailed rivals Lufthansa and British Airways on profitability, held back by restrictive French union deals and strikes that last year wiped 335 million euros off earnings and forced out its CEO. — Reuters

## Top gadgets at Mobile World Congress

**BARCELONA:** From a tiny robot which strikes a pose when you point a camera at it to a pocket translator, here are five eye-catching devices on display at the Mobile World Congress trade fair which opened Monday in Barcelona:

#### Smartphone-controlled light bulb

Want to dim the lights in your living room but don't feel like getting up from the sofa? China's Xiaomi, the world's fourth-largest smartphone maker, presented a new connected light bulb—the Mi LED Smart Bulb—that lets users control light color and brightness via an app on their phone or Amazon's voice-controlled assistant Alexa.

The company said the light bulb offers 16 million color options.

#### Robot companion

South Korean robotics company Torooc turned heads with its tiny companion robot called Liku which walks and expresses emotions like a human with its large eyes. The robot, just 1.5 feet (0.5 meters) tall and weighing 2.5 pounds (1.1 kilos), has a forehead camera that allows it to pick up on our cues to strike up a rapport. If you walk into a room and greet Liku, it will tilt

its head toward you, make eye contact and smile.

Its cartoon-like eyes can express "emotions" including surprise, happiness and sadness, or appear to be sleeping. If you point a camera at it, Liku will smile and strike a stylish pose with its arms and legs—even when you take a selfie with it.

"We designed LIKU to have an adorable appearance, to elicit positive feelings. When people look at Liku, they smile naturally. We hope Liku will be your first robot friend," said Torooc chief marketing officer JaeHee Chang. The company plans to start shipping the robot early next year. It is priced at around \$2,500 (2,200 euros).

#### Dog health monitoring harness

Spanish startup Dinbeat presented a harness for dogs dubbed the DinbeatPRO which uses sensors to monitor breathing, body temperature, barking activity level and body position.

While there are many activity monitors for pets geared for pet owners, the harness was specifically designed to be used by veterinarians treating hospitalized dogs. "Right now medical devices which were designed for humans, which are much more complicated and have cables, are used and the animal must be sedated to use them," said Dinbeat project manager Marina Gomez de Tejada.

#### LavvieBot for top cats

Going on holiday and have no one to look after your cat? South Korean startup PurrSong displayed an automatic litter box called the LavvieBot which auto-cleans and auto-refills.

After your cat does its business inside the machine and has left, LavvieBot noiselessly pushes a rake



BARCELONA: Sony Xperia 1 smartphones connected to a TV screen are displayed at the Mobile World Congress (MWC) in Barcelona yesterday. — AFP

through the litter before hurling a few handfuls of clean litter in the box. It can even send you text notifications when your cat uses the toilet or when the litter storage or the waste bin is full.

"This is clearly marketed towards cat owners who don't have the time to take care of their cat all the time, or they just want the freedom of not having to clean out the litter box every day," said PurrSong marketing manager Heaven Nam.

#### Pocket translator

The Netherlands-based startup Travis presented a pocket-sized smart device that uses artificial intelligence to translate conversations between people speaking different languages in real time.

The device has a headphone jack at the bottom, so you can plug in your own, and it works with wireless earbuds as well. You select the language you need to be translated and then just start your conversation. — AFP



Business

# AUB holds annual ceremony to honor its outstanding employees



Bank's senior management and staff

**KUWAIT:** In the presence of its senior management, Ahli United Bank held the annual ceremony to honor its outstanding employees for the year 2018. The event witnessed the distribution of certificates of appreciation and commemorative gifts to the employees who have been in the Bank's service for a long time and who have displayed a high level of commitment and dedication.

They have been an inspiration for many of the more recent joiners to the Bank. The ceremony also witnessed the honoring of the employees and departments that were awarded prestigious international prizes during 2018.

AUB holds this annual event in order to underscore its strong belief in the importance of deepening social ties among its employees and reward the best performers. Held at Marriott Courtyard Kuwait Hotel the celebration opened with a recital of verses from the Holy Koran, followed by a number of events and competitions including the distribution of valuable prizes to the participating employees.

AUB Acting Chief Executive Officer, Tareq Muhmood, honored the outstanding and best performing departments

and employees, commended the results achieved by the honored employees during 2018, alluding to the achievements and the remarkable progress made by the bank year after year. Just as important as the financial numbers, the Bank, through its services, has supported a large number of businesses in individuals in Kuwait. This has supported the continued prosperity of the community and economy. As part of this, the Bank's performance has earned a number of prestigious international prizes in the year 2018.

At the end of the event, Tareq Muhmood thanked the Bank's employees and lauded their performance, adding that they were the main factor behind the Bank's progress.



Nageeb Amin

He highlighted that 2019 offered a wonderful opportunity to grow and contribute further to sustained prosperity of our customers and the community that we are part of.

Speaking at the event, the Bank's General Manager of Human Resources, Nageeb Amin, said: "This ceremony reflects the splendid spirit of our personnel." This spirit, he added, "is an exceptional example of a positive environment that highlights the Bank's ability to keep many of its employees who are our real wealth."

A number of these employees have been with the Bank for more than thirty years." Amin wished the honored employees more progress and success, trusting that the Bank's recognition and appreciation of their performance will propel them toward making further efforts and will support their Bank's future progress.

Commenting on the event, Mariam Al-Mudhaf, AUB's Head of Employee Relations & Services, said: "This annual event is a platform for the Bank to express Management's appreciation of the efforts made by the employees and the contribution made by each of them to the Bank's success."



Tareq Muhmood

## Bayer faces new marathon after mammoth Monsanto merger

**FRANKFURT:** German chemicals and pharmaceuticals giant Bayer reported plunging profits for 2018 after taking over US agricultural firm Monsanto, with years of hard work ahead of the group to fight off legal risks related to the merger and to keep profits flowing in its medicines division.

Net profit at the Leverkusen-based group tumbled 76.9 percent, to 1.7 billion euros (\$1.9 billion), as costs from the \$63 billion mega-merger as well as one-off effects burdened the bottom line.

Bayer highlighted a windfall in the previous year from selling shares in former polymers division Covestro that made for an unfavorable comparison with 2018. Operating, or underlying profit before special items grew 2.8 percent to 9.5 billion euros, while revenues rose 4.5 percent to reach 39.6 billion, adjusting for price and currency effects.

The group had to sell off part of its existing seeds and pesticides businesses to rival BASF to get the Monsanto deal past competition authorities, bringing in 4.1 billion euros. Costs for special items at the group rose from 1.2 billion euros in 2017 to 2.6 billion last year. And charges linked to the Monsanto takeover weighed in at 2.0 billion euros, while depreciations cost 3.3

billion. The buyout marked the capstone of Bayer's transformation into a "focused life science company clearly aligned to the megatrends in health and agriculture," chief executive Werner Baumann said.

### Marathon challenges ahead

But while bosses eye future revenue opportunities, the company's feet are tangled in a thicket of 11,200 cases in the US alleging health problems caused by Monsanto herbicide glyphosate. A California jury last year awarded a long-time user of the weedkiller almost \$290 million after he argued it caused his non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, although the judge later reduced the award and Bayer has appealed. A first federal case got under way this week, also in California, one of seven trials scheduled for this year. "We'll need a certain number of cases to move through the courts to have an idea of what direction" the risks for the company are headed, Baumann said.

"From our perspective, we are crystal clear that it's a safe product," he added, pointing to dozens of scientific studies as well as regulatory findings from major countries that back the company's position. Elsewhere in the business, Baumann acknowledged that the company's pipeline of future pharmaceutical products "could be stronger, there's no question about it". At the moment blockbuster drugs, including anticoagulant Xarelto or cancer treatments Stivarga and Xofigo, bring in 6.8 billion euros of revenue a year. But many of their patents are set to run out in the mid-2020s, with few candidates to take their place as surefire top sellers.

### Optimistic for 2019

Baumann said that Bayer had spent



**LEVERKUSEN:** The logo of German chemicals and pharmaceuticals giant Bayer can be seen at the company's headquarters in Leverkusen, western Germany, yesterday. — AFP

"several million" euros on preparing for the risk of a no-deal Brexit that could see new trade hurdles between the European mainland and Britain, stashing between 8 weeks and 12 months' supply of many drugs. But some radioactive treatments like Xofigo can't be stored long-term, leaving the firm to negotiate "special allowances" to import them, Baumann said.

"Hopefully we won't need any of it" if the EU strikes a deal with Britain, a market worth around one billion in revenue to Bayer annually, he added. Worldwide in 2019, Bayer is confident of reaching 46 billion euros in adjusted sales-around four percent higher than 2018 — and lifting

operating profit before special items to 12.2 billion. It plans to sell off business areas like animal health, parts of its over-the-counter medicines unit and Currenta, the spin-off German firm that operates its former chemical parks. Meanwhile 12,000 workers are set to depart in a restructuring scheme running until 2021, many of them in Germany. Bayer is working with worker representatives to offer early retirement and other schemes to ease the transition for those leaving, human resources chief Hartmut Klusik said. Shares in Bayer topped the gainers on the blue-chip DAX index in midday trading in Frankfurt, rising 4.2 percent to reach 69.29 euros. — AFP

## Zimbabwe sold up to \$20 million to banks for trade on new forex platform

**HARARE:** Zimbabwe's central bank has sold up to \$20 million to banks for trading on a newly-launched forex interbank market, but the money could be exhausted by the end of next week due to high demand, banking sources said yesterday. Zimbabweans had hoped the end of Robert Mugabe's rule in 2017 after an army coup would change their economic fortunes, but have instead watched as a severe dollar crunch hobbles businesses and brings shortages of medicines, fuel and food.

Many anticipated walking into banks to buy US dollars after the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ) scrapped a discredited 1:1 dollar peg for surrogate bond notes and electronic dollars last week, merging them into a lower-value transitional currency called the RTGS dollar.

But banks were under orders to restrict transactions to companies and individuals with foreign payments to make that would stimulate economic growth, according to a central bank directive seen by Reuters. That, and the fact the exchange rate has remained stuck at around 2.5 RTGS to the dollar since the currency started trading on Friday, brought criticism from bankers and economists that it was not the monetary reform needed.

The central bank sold what it called "seed" US dollars to a handful of banks on Friday, but RBZ governor John Mangudya and Finance Minister Mthuli Ncube have refused to say the amount.

"They sold between \$15 and \$20 million to the banks," said one executive whose bank bought dollars from the RBZ. "But that will be exhausted by the end of next week, and that is when reality will kick in."

"We will run out soon"

Another executive at one of Zimbabwe's three biggest banks confirmed the amount and added: "The problem is that there is huge demand, but no one is selling, so we will run out pretty soon." Dealers at banks said the reason sellers were not coming forward was because they wanted a higher rate for dollars.

On the black market, \$1 bought 3.6 RTGS, unchanged from Tuesday. But dealers said the central bank was giving indications to the market that it did not want the official rate to move beyond 2.5 for now.

"You then ask yourself whether this is really a free float," a dealer at a Harare bank said. The central bank says it removed the 1:1 dollar peg to benefit exporters who previously surrendered a portion of their dollars at the official rate.

Exporters, including miners who earn the most dollars for the economy, can now sell part of their US dollars at the 2.5 rate. But they can only keep dollars in local foreign currency accounts for 30 days, after which they are required to sell on the interbank market. This, the central bank hopes, will create a ready pool of dollars for importers and the government.

But some analysts are skeptical, saying exporters should be allowed to keep all their dollars and only sell when they need to, if Zimbabwe is to attract foreign investment. "This is not much of a currency reform. They just merged the RTGS (electronic dollars) and bond notes and devalued the exchange rate, but everything remains the same," said Tony Hawkins, professor of business studies at the University of Zimbabwe. In another sign of the acute dollar shortages, long queues resurfaced at petrol stations this week where fuel is supplied by government purchases in the US currency. — Reuters

## US business groups urge Trump to delay tariff hike

**WASHINGTON:** Over 150 business groups sent a letter to President Donald Trump yesterday urging him to publish a federal notice that makes clear tariffs do not automatically increase on Saturday, after his decision to delay a steep tariff hike on Chinese goods.

Trump announced the delay on Sunday, without giving specifics, after his top trade negotiator, Robert Lighthizer, and Chinese Vice Premier Liu He wrapped up seven days of talks. The announcement was the clearest sign yet that China and the United States are closing in on a deal to end a months-long trade war between the world's two largest economies that has slowed global growth and disrupted markets.

Tariffs on \$200 billion worth of Chinese imports had been set to rise to a prohibitive 25 percent from the current 10 percent if no deal were reached by Friday. "Although we are encouraged by the latest signs of progress, it is important to note that existing tariffs and shifting deadlines are hanging over American businesses and farmers and undermining their ability to grow, invest, and plan for the future," the letter said.

The business groups include the American Petroleum Institute, the National Retail Federation, the Retail Industry Leaders Association, the Internet Association and the Motor & Equipment Manufacturers Association among others. They are part of the Americans For Free Trade coalition. US businesses paid an additional \$2.7 billion in tariffs in November 2018, according to data from a coalition of US business groups fighting trade tariffs. — Reuters

## VIVA announces nationwide 5G services with Huawei in 2019

**KUWAIT:** VIVA, Kuwait's fastest-growing and most developed telecom operator, announced the establishment of a 5G Innovation Center, with the aim to explore, develop, and launch new 5G use cases in Kuwait by 2019. Currently VIVA is already in action to rollout a nationwide 5G network with over 1000 5G NR sites supported by a massive device ecosystem of more than 100K devices including 5G CPEs, setting the benchmark as one of the largest 5G commercial rollouts in the world up to date. The 5G innovation center comes to enforce VIVA's 5G business strategy execution and will open the door for new business models such as ultra-broadband, IoT, smart city services, and position VIVA as the undisputed leader in 5G era.

On this occasion, Eng Zarrar Khan, VIVA's CTO said: "Two months back, VIVA celebrated its 10th year anniversary, the growth we witnessed in the past represents an amazing success story. We provided best in class Telco services to our customers, invested in latest cutting edge technologies, and boosted Kuwait leadership in ICT era.

Moving forward, we intend to position VIVA as first operator in the world to deliver true 5G NR experience, with the planned nationwide coverage, our clients will have access to 5G networks and experience new services. The establishment of the 5G innovation center will help us to drive digitalization across vertical sectors. Industries from telemedicine to smart cities to public safety will thrive with the support of 5G infrastructure. The networks will enable new revenue streams, enhance operational efficiency, reduce costs, and ultimately uplift the standard of living across Kuwait.

VIVA Kuwait chose Huawei as strategic partner to support its 5G rollout, leveraging Huawei's 5G leadership and E2E Ecosystem. Over the past 10 years, VIVA and Huawei collaborated to deliver successful 3G/4G services, this 5G move reflect VIVA's confidence and trust in Huawei's capabilities.

5G is the next generation wireless network, enabling new 5G use cases to emerge and transform the way live, with its ultra-high capacity, services such as VR/AR, 4K/8K video live streaming will provide immersive experiences, critical communication use cases including driverless cars and drones will revolutionize transportation industry, sensors, machines and smart devices will be all connected bringing the smart city dream into reality. 5G will touch each and every aspect of our lives for the better.



VIVA's chairman and Huawei's Chairman attend the signing ceremony

## Business

# Ooredoo Kuwait presents incredible digital revolution at MWC2019

## Al-Thani: ANA is Kuwait's first all-digital customized product for our customers

**BARCELONA:** Ooredoo Kuwait announced yesterday at Mobile World Congress MWC2019 - taking place until February 28th - the launch of ANA, the first operator to provide personalized mobile plans to enrich customers' digital lives in partnership with Matrixx Software, a Silicon Valley-based company that specializes in advanced mobile software, to digitally transform the mobile experience for mobile customers in Kuwait.

'ANA' is powered by Matrixx, which specializes in helping mobile customers buy, manage, share and pay for digital services. Ooredoo is the first operator in the Kuwait market to launch such a service, which provides an all-digital, individually customized mobile product that gives customers complete control of their mobile plans and digital worlds, and makes it easier to buy, use and pay for Ooredoo services directly from their mobile phones.

Speaking to media about this outstanding achievement, Chief Executive Officer at Ooredoo Kuwait Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdullah Al-Thani said: "In line with the MWC theme of 'Intelligent Connectivity,' our new digital mobile services in Kuwait enrich our customers digital experiences with the freedom to choose and customize the digital package that fits their needs through features like eSIM, roaming and booster packs.



Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdullah Al-Thani and Dave Labuda



A group photo with Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdullah Al-Thani

Customers can create their own mobile number, make appointments, track health, pay bills, and much more. We are proud to push the digital experience boundaries for our customers, bringing the best of Silicon Valley through our partnership with Matrixx". Al-Thani further added, "the launch of Kuwait's first all-digital, individually customized mobile product is a true reflection of our digital transformation

strategy that we are pursuing in Ooredoo Kuwait and living up to our vision of enriching people's digital lives".

The launch of ANA reiterates Ooredoo's position as a market leader in digital transformation, having spearheaded many pivotal initiatives, such as the introduction of the first eSIM in Kuwait, and ground-breaking 5G trials. Combined with Ooredoo's award winning superfast

networks, this new service will further enhance customers' enjoyment of digital services.

Ooredoo is keen to use ANA to help empower a growing population of young, digital savvy customers with the latest technology, in line with Kuwait's Government wider digital transformation plans related to New Kuwait 2035.

Dave Labuda, Chief Executive Officer

and Founder, Matrixx Software, said: "Partnering with Ooredoo is part of our mission of making it possible for Ooredoo to lead digital transformation in Kuwait and succeed in the on-demand economy. Our technology works by providing a new commercial platform for rapid digital transformation. It is increasingly important for mobile operators to be able to offer tailored mobile solutions."

## Warba Bank to conduct Al-Sunbula draw today

**KUWAIT:** Warba Bank, "the Best investment Bank" and "Best Corporate Bank" in Kuwait, will be conducting its weekly Sunbula draw number 9 today at 11 am in presence of a representative from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and the Bank officials.

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

## UFM holds 'facility management professional' training course



**KUWAIT:** United Facilities Management Company K.S.C.C (UFM), a subsidiary of United Real Estate Company K.S.C.P (URC), one of the leading real estate development companies in the Middle East and North Africa, organized the "Facility Management Professional" training course in collaboration with International Facility Management Association (IFMA) in Marina Hotel from 10th to 14th February 2019. The training course was conducted by IFMA's accomplished instructor, Robert Blakey, and attended by UFM's employees and facility managers from governmental and private sectors.

The training course is part of UFM's learning and development approach towards its engineers and technicians in addition to other facilities management professionals in the work force by

applying the latest facilities management systems towards community safety and sustainability.

Robert Blakey is a renowned international developer and trainer of modern facilities management systems who takes a unique approach to life-cycle studies with an outcome that impacts society on several different levels to include global, organizational, program and individual. During his visit to Kuwait, Blakey highly admired the facility management services provided by

UFM to its facilities such as Marina Hotel, Marina Mall World and KIPCO Tower, in which he considered UFM one of the best facilities management providers in the region.

Ahmad Yousef Al-Kandari, UFM Vice Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, expressed his happiness for organizing "Facility Management Professional" training course in collaboration with IFMA to both UFM's engineers as well as various facilities management professional trainees from the

local market. "UFM's membership with IFMA is part of the company's strategies to provide its clients with a high quality of facilities management services for governmental, private and oil sectors in line with the international standards," Al-Kandari said.

Al-Kandari also expressed his appreciation to the engineering affairs department at Amiri Diwan for their participation in the training course to develop and optimize their facilities management services in Kuwait.

## Burgan Bank's airport branch to service customers 24 hours a week

**KUWAIT:** Ensuring optimal and ongoing customer service for its growing customer base, Burgan Bank announced that its airport branch will remain open 24 hours for seven days a week starting from 3 March 2019. The service will ensure all existing and new customers have continual access to the bank's operations, their accounts, as well as to new products and services. The staff at the Airport branch will be on call and available at all times to benefit its customer's different banking requests and requirements.

Established in 1977, Burgan Bank is the youngest commercial bank and second largest by assets in Kuwait, with a significant focus on the corporate and financial institutions sectors, as well as having a growing retail, and private bank customer base. Burgan Bank has majority owned subsidiaries in the MENAT region supported by one of the largest regional branch networks which include Gulf Bank Algeria - AGB (Algeria), Bank of Baghdad - BOB (Iraq & Lebanon), Tunis International Bank - TIB (Tunisia), and fully owned Burgan Bank - Turkey, (collectively known as the "Burgan Bank Group"). Furthermore, Burgan Bank has a present in the UAE through its corporate office ("Burgan Financial Services Limited) which had helped the bank to participate in multiple financing opportunities in the UAE.



## EU tells Italy to sort out its public finances

**BRUSSELS:** The EU yesterday urged Italy to clean up its public finances, telling the populist government in Rome that urgent work was needed given the country's "weakening" economic prospects.

Italy watered down key measures in its big-spending budget late last year under pressure from the EU, which threatened to impose fines if Rome broke its deficit and debt-reduction commitments.

But the European Commission, the bloc's executive arm, insisted that Italy's ruling coalition of the anti-establishment Five Star Movement (M5S) and the far-right League party need to do more to get Italy's books in order. "Our message to Italy today is also familiar: that it must take steps to improve the quality of its public finances, increase the efficiency of its public administration and justice system, enhance its business environment, and strengthen its labor market and the financial system," Economics Affairs Commissioner Pierre Moscovici said at the launch of a report on the economies of EU member states. "Moreover, the urgency of doing so is all the greater given Italy's weakening economic outlook."

The report listed a series of major concerns about Italy's economy including high levels of government debt, non-performing loans and unemployment.

The report warned that even with Italy's watered-down spending plans, the government's debt ratio is "not expected to decline in the coming years".

The Italian economy contracted in the fourth quarter of 2018 because of a slowdown in exports, plunging the eurozone's third-largest economy into recession and increasing the government's budgetary problems. Italy's public debt is a big problem, sitting at a huge 2.3 trillion euros (\$2.6 trillion), or 131 percent of the nation's annual economic output-way above the 60 percent ceiling set by the EU. Earlier this month, Italian unions led a protest of hundreds of thousands of people in Rome to demand pro-growth policies, the biggest such demonstration in four years. — AFP

## Joy Alukkas receives IAA award

**COCHIN:** Joyalukkas Group Chairman Joy Alukkas receiving special award from International President of IAA Sreenivasan Swamy at the 44th International Advertising World Summit at Cochin.



What's On



# Ooredoo's 5G-Enabled Aerial Taxi Lands at Mobile World Congress

Visitors can experience the power of 5G by taking a VR 'flight' over Doha, Qatar in the Aerial Taxi

Ooredoo, one of the world's leading ICT providers, is demonstrating how 5G can revolutionise transport, with the world's first 5G-enabled Self-Driving 5G connected Aerial Taxi landing at its booth at Mobile World Congress 2019 (MWC19). MWC19 is being held in Barcelona on 25-28 February under the theme of "Intelligent Connectivity" and is expected to attract some 107,000 professionals from over 200 countries and territories.

The aerial taxi, which is on display at Ooredoo's booth - complete with a Virtual Reality experience that simulates flying over Qatar's capital Doha - is just one example of

how 5G is poised to help bring about a complete transformation of society.

The self-driving 5G connected Aerial Taxi is not the only futuristic service on show that will leverage the superior speed and low latency of 5G. Ooredoo is also offering live demonstrations of how the technology can enable innovative services including child location monitoring, stadium security using drones, and intelligent connected apps to assist visitors at mega events such as the upcoming football tournament in Qatar in 2022.

Over the past year, Ooredoo launched the world's first

commercial 5G network in Qatar, and trialed the first international 5G call in the Arab World. Now, Ooredoo has more than 100 live 5G sites in Qatar, has done 5G tests and trials in Indonesia, Kuwait and Maldives, and has set up a 5G Technology Centre Myanmar.

Sheikh Saud Bin Nasser Al-Thani, Group Chief Executive Officer, Ooredoo, said: "We took an early global lead in 5G technology when we were the world's first communications company to launch commercially-ready 5G in 2018. In this year's Mobile World Congress, we're anticipating great interest in our 5G demos, particularly the self-driving

5G connected Aerial Taxi at our pavilion, where users can sit inside the taxi and experience the thrill of flying over Doha in Virtual Reality. We're proud to showcase Qatar's leadership in 5G and Smart City applications, and show a world of future-oriented services, which fits perfectly with MWC19's theme of 'Intelligent Connectivity'."

Ooredoo is preparing 1,200 network stations to be 5G-ready, spreading the benefits of the technology nationwide in Qatar. Visit the Ooredoo pavilion in Hall 2H60 at MWC19 at Fira Gran Via, Fira Montjuic and La Farga L'Hospitalet, Barcelona.



## Gulf Bank celebrates Kuwait National Day and Liberation Day

Gulf Bank, one of Kuwait's leading banks, and its employees celebrated the Kuwait National Day and Liberation Day, displaying national pride on the occasion of the 58th National Day. The bank also

extended its thanks and appreciation to the hard-working Kuwait's police force, with a number of employees visiting police checkpoints to thank them for their work over the course of the country's celebrations. Speaking of the celebration, Ahmad Al-Amir, Assistant General Manager for External Communications, Gulf Bank commented, "On behalf of Gulf Bank, we extend our congratulations and thanks to HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. We would also like to wish the people of the country a Happy National and Liberation Day."

Ahmad Al-Amir

## NBK Family shares National Day spirit with hospitalized children



On the occasion of Kuwait's independence and the anniversary of its liberation, National Bank of Kuwait's (NBK) family paid a visit to NBK Children's Hospital at Sabah Medical district to share happy National moments of Kuwait's celebrations with the children and their families.

by the children during the celebration. Also, NBK family shared with the children the decoration of healthy cookies using black, white, green and red Kuwait's flag colors on the occasion of the national celebrations.

The visit is part of NBK's national celebration month at the hospital. The month of February included several events like drawing, designing and coloring Kuwait flag, maps and characters on canvas to celebrate the patriotic spirit.

NBK's visits to the children targeted children, nurses and doctors. NBK is committed to provide a healthy environment for children to be able to stand for their treatment strong and happy. NBK is proud seeing children happy every week there is a visit.

The visit to the hospital was emotional and overwhelming for both the children and NBK family. It reflects the bank's high sense of duty and responsibility towards all those in need from different sectors of society. It is a well rooted tradition that has been carried out by NBK each year in its efforts to continuously have an active role in the Kuwait society.



The celebration comes as part of a program designed to engage with children and runs all year long. Children and the Hospital's team took part in the fun activity to celebrate the National Day. Flags, pins, caps and Kuwaiti theme clothes were worn

## Burgan Bank celebrates National Days with staff

In celebration of Kuwait's National days, Burgan Bank - Internal Communication honored and shared in the country's joy with its staff from the head office and their branches. Reflecting national pride, the bank decorated and illuminated its main branch with the colors of the Kuwaiti flag. They also handed special gifts and badges decorated with slogans symbolic of patriotism to the delighted employees. Held under a festive spirit, the employees expressed their joy of the initiative via their respective social media channels. Burgan Bank congratulates the residents of Kuwait on the occasion of the nationwide celebrations.



## CBK receives special needs students

In celebrating the 68th National Day and the 28th Liberation Day anniversaries, the Commercial Bank of Kuwait's (CBK) corporate communication sector recently received students from Al-Amal School for boys; a special education school. The reception was attended by CBK's board

chairman Sheikh Ahmad Duaij Al-Sabah, CEO Elham Mahfouz and a number of the bank's executives.

In this regard, CBK's deputy manager for communal communication affairs Amani Al-Wer'a stressed that CBK is keen on communicating with various society categories on

various occasions and stressed that receiving Al-Amal school students is part of the bank's community services through sponsoring activities that boost patriotism. Wer'a added that using sign language, the students were briefed about various services and promotional offers CBK provides.



# China drafts new rules to ban rogue scientists after gene-editing uproar

BEIJING: China has drafted new rules to supervise biotechnology research, with fines and bans against rogue scientists after a Chinese researcher caused a global outcry by claiming that he gene-edited babies.

The announcement comes as He Jiankui's controversial experiment continues to transfix the scientific community, with researchers saying the procedure had the potential of enhancing the learning capabilities and memory of the babies. He announced in November that the world's first gene-edited babies — twin girls — were born that same month after he altered their DNA to prevent them from contracting HIV by deleting a certain gene under a technique known as CRISPR.

The claim shocked scientists worldwide, raising questions about bioethics and putting a spotlight on China's lax oversight of scientific research.

Gene-editing for reproductive purposes is illegal in most countries. China's health ministry issued regulations in 2003 prohibiting gene-editing of human embryos, though the procedure is allowed for "non-reproductive purposes".

The new rules unveiled by Beijing on Tuesday propose to classify technology used for extracting genetic materials, gene editing, gene transfer and stem cell research as "high risk".

Health authorities under the central government would manage such research. The State Council, China's cabinet, would be responsible for "the supervision and administration of clinical research and applications throughout the country," according to the rules. The new draft proposes fines of between 50,000 and 100,000 yuan (\$7,500 and \$15,000) for scientists or institutions that carry out

research without proper authorization, and the government can stop the work. Scientists can also be fined 10 to 20 times the amount of "illegal income" earned from unauthorized research and be banned from their field of work for six months to one year.

"If the circumstances are serious, their medical practice license shall be revoked and the individual shall not engage in clinical research for life," the rules say. He Jiankui has been placed under police investigation, the government ordered a halt to his research work and he was fired by his Chinese university.

#### Smarter babies?

His experiment involved deleting a gene called CCR5, a process that could also enhance memory and the brain's ability to make new connections — linking it to academic success, according to a study published last week in the journal Cell. "Certain aspects of cognitive function, including long term memory, could have been enhanced by the CCR5 mutation in the twin girls," said Alcino Silva, a neurobiologist at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA).

His team first discovered how the CCR5 gene affected learning and memory in mice in 2016.

The study by Silva and others showed people who naturally lack the CCR5 gene recover more quickly from strokes. People missing at least one copy of the gene also seem to have better learning abilities, it said, suggesting a possible role in everyday intelligence.

"It is very possible that other aspects of cognitive function (of the twins) may have also been disrupted. We simply do not know enough at this time to be altering the

genome of healthy babies," Silva told AFP. "There was no reason to put these two babies through an untested and potentially very dangerous, life-altering procedure," Silva said. Eight volunteer couples — HIV-positive fathers and HIV-negative mothers — signed up for He's trial. A second woman became pregnant in the experiment but it is unknown if she has given birth yet.

#### Who funded it?

Miou Zhou, a professor at the Western University of Health Sciences in California, told AFP he was "shocked" by the controversial experiment, which could inflame speculation about the creation of super-intelligent humans using gene-editing technology. "Because I have been studying CCR5 on cognitive function in mice for a long time, I remember my first reaction was why (did) he choose CCR5 to make the first genetically edited babies?" Zhou said.

During a human genome summit in Hong Kong last year, He Jiankui acknowledged he knew about the potential brain effects of tinkering with the CCR5 gene from Silva's and Zhou's previous research dating back to 2016.

"I saw... (Silva's) paper, it needs more independent verification," he replied when asked about it during a Q&A session. "I am against using genome editing for enhancement." Investigators told Xinhua that He was "pursuing personal fame" and used "self-raised funds" for the experiment. But a November submission by He's team to the Chinese Clinical Trial Registry has identified the Shenzhen Science and Technology Innovation Free Exploration Project — a publicly-funded program overseen by the local government — as bankrolling the



The announcement comes as He Jiankui's controversial experiment continues to transfix the scientific community, with researchers saying the procedure had the potential of enhancing the learning capabilities and memory of the babies. — AFP

experiment. The program, however, denies funding He's project. A statement on its official WeChat social media account said it "never sponsored" He's experiments and that the information provided to the clinical trial registry "was not true". — AFP

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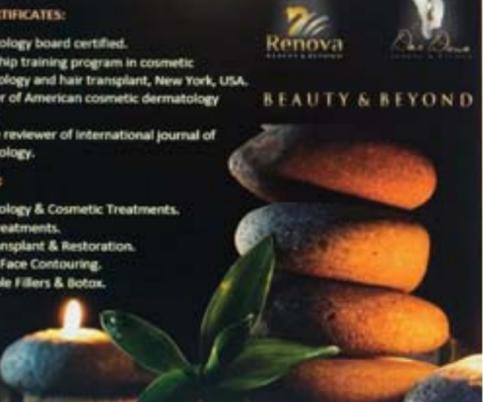
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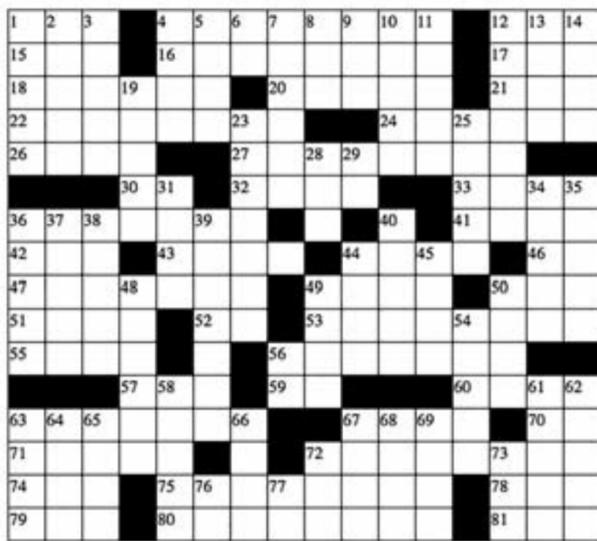
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1. A magnetic tape recorder for recording (and playing back) TV programs.
4. A female ballet dancer.
12. South American wood sorrel cultivated for its edible tubers.
15. A self-funded retirement plan that allows you to contribute a limited yearly sum toward your retirement.
16. Increased or intensified in value or beauty or quality.
17. An anxiety disorder characterized by chronic free-floating anxiety and such symptoms as tension or sweating or trembling of light-headedness or irritability etc that has lasted for more than six months.
18. An island in the southern Mariana Islands that is the administrative center of the United States Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands.
20. The period of time during which you are absent from work or duty.
21. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
22. The Palestinian uprising (beginning in 1987) against the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.
24. Special design or visual object representing a quality, type, group, etc.
26. A bluish shade of green.
27. Giant tree-like plant having edible nuts and leafstalks that yield a refreshing drink of clear watery sap.
30. (Akkadian) God of wisdom.
32. An independent ruler or chieftain (especially in Africa or Arabia).
33. Primitive chlorophyll-containing mainly aquatic eukaryotic organisms lacking true stems and roots and leaves.
36. Tree of the genus *Catalpa* with large leaves and white flowers followed by long slender pods.
41. Marked by or showing unaffected simplicity and lack of guile or worldly experience.
42. Leaf or strip from a leaf of the talipot palm used in India for writing paper.
43. Give over.
46. Destruction of heart tissue resulting from obstruction of the blood supply to the heart muscle.
47. A poem consisting of 3 stanzas and an envoy.
51. A member of the Siouan people inhabiting the valleys of the Platte and Missouri rivers in Nebraska.
52. A state in the Rocky Mountains.
53. Not capable of movement or of being moved.
55. A transparent optical device used to converge or diverge transmitted light and to form images.
57. An independent agency of the United States government responsible for collecting and coordinating intelligence and counterintelligence activities abroad in the national interest.
59. A nonmetallic largely pentavalent heavy volatile corrosive dark brown liquid element belonging to the halogens.
60. The basic unit of money in Bangladesh.
63. Alternatively, a member of the family Nymphaeaceae.
70. The atomic weight of an element that has the same combining capacity as a given weight of another element.
71. A promontory in northern Morocco opposite the Rock of Gibraltar.
74. An honorary degree in science.
75. French writer considered by some to be a founder of the detective novel (1832-1873).
78. A light touch or stroke.
79. The compass point midway between east and southeast.
80. Filled or abounding with clouds.
81. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.

DOWN

1. The act of going to see some person or place or thing for a short time.
2. United States writer (1871-1900).
3. An Indian side dish of yogurt and chopped cucumbers and spices.
4. Lacking or deprived of the sense of hearing wholly or in part.
5. A former copper coin of Pakistan.
6. A state in New England.
7. A deep bow.
8. The compass point midway between northeast and east.
9. Fiddler crabs.
10. Being one more than six.
11. Swelling from excessive accumulation of serous fluid in tissue.
12. A member of the Siouan people formerly inhabiting the Black Hills of western South Dakota.
13. An enclosure made of wire or metal bars in which birds or animals are kept.
14. (Old Testament) In Judeo-Christian mythology.
19. Low-growing tropical perennials grown for their stinging foliage.
23. Causing fear or dread or terror.
25. Lacking either stimulating or irritating characteristics.
28. Being one more than six.
29. A trivalent metallic element of the rare earth group.
31. Type genus of the Alcidae comprising solely the razorbill.
34. The 3rd letter of the Hebrew alphabet.
35. Lighted up by or as by fire or flame.
37. Having winglike extensions.
38. A sharp hooked claw especially on a bird of prey.
39. A tricycle (usually propelled by pedalling).
40. A small constellation in the southern hemisphere near Lupus and Ara in the Milky Way.
44. (trademark) An antacid.
45. (physics and chemistry) The smallest component of an element having the chemical properties of the element.
48. Least expensive statin drug (trade name Lescol).
49. A coffin along with its stand.
50. Capital and largest city and economic center of Peru.
54. Genus of East Indian trees or shrubs.
56. A metallic element having four allotropic forms.
58. (psychoanalysis) An idealized image of someone (usually a parent) formed in childhood.
61. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
62. Jordan's port.
64. The elementary stages of any subject (usually plural).
65. Dwell (archaic).
66. A French abbot.
67. Type genus of the Majidae.
68. A river that rises in northeastern Turkey (near the source of the Euphrates) and flows generally eastward through Armenia to the Caspian Sea.
69. King of Denmark and Norway who forced Edmund II to divide England with him.
72. A communist nation that covers a vast territory in eastern Asia.
73. An agency of the United Nations affiliated with the World Bank.
76. The eleventh month of the civil year.
77. A state in northwestern United States on the Pacific.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Go shopping. Take a trip. You've got pent-up energy that needs to be released. There are ways you can satisfy that liveliness because some of this energy is sexual in nature. You don't want to be hemmed in right now at all. You need people to bounce ideas off and the time to do it. Any subject is open and isn't taboo. Laughing is at the forefront and not because you're the comedian, Aries. You need to vent and this is the way you can. Have a wonderful day and culminate it with a nice dinner with friends or family.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Carefully think over whether you really want to end what you perceive to be a dead-end job right now. You may want to return to school for more education but you need to create a way to eat and sleep too. Get the necessities together before you make a major move. Think. Take some time alone. Read a book to get your brain to process all that's going through it. Make it a read that you can neglect and still reflect intelligently without problems. You're wishing for change, Taurus. Use care for what you ask. Energy and thought manifest.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You may be asked to start a new group at your job. Jump on it. You'll get to show your intelligence and manner of handling people and new work. Superiors have noticed your ability to sum things up, cut through the red tape and communicate well with people in your group. You boss is sure you can handle anything that comes up. Gemini, because he or she has already seen it. On another note, you may feel alone today even in a crowd. Don't worry this is short lived. Try to do something you like after work.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Career is at the forefront because you may have to choose between work and whether you're enjoying yourself while doing it. You're working about as many hours as you're with family. You need to love what you're doing. If you're not a new place of employment is being sought. Respect is what you need. If you're getting it at work then that goes a long way towards fulfillment. As a parent if you're looking for respect and if you've got children you know that's not something you're likely to achieve anytime soon. Get it at work if you can. Cancer because you're probably only going to be frustrated at home. Meet with friends tonight.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Workmates love working with you and show it as do you for them. You're enjoying what you do in your career and consider the people you're working with are becoming a work family to you. Your emotions are making you think back to years ago and another time when life was great for you. The memories are mounting and you don't even realize, Leo, that you're creating memories now. Your homelife and family are good and that's what really matters. You need to be needed and it's okay.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Thank goodness yesterday is over and some modicum of normalcy has returned to your life today. People seem to care for you again. They're at your beck and call, or almost, when you request help. Your grasp of the abstract at work today propels you forward in job expectations. Receive compliments with tact and gratitude. At home or with a lover, talk about philosophy. It'll be well received now. Virgo. Do something physical to burn off some of the attitude residue from yesterday. Go swimming or dine around water. It'll top off your evening.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

You feel loved and you have a clarity of spirit both on your emotional state and your finances. You can help your friends now to understand life's situations better. Work goes wonderfully meaning nothing has come up to bother you there today, Libra. Today and tonight is a time of communicating to a lover your desires and motivations. There are always reasons for everything and it always takes two when lovers are involved. Use your most diplomatic behavior and understating in realizing you're part of the two.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

A work acquaintance might have you traveling or making plans to visit him or her. This is something you've looked forward to doing but may have the slightest fear of the unknown since it takes you out of your comfort zone. This could be the blessing of a lifetime for you where career is concerned and could give you the very wealth you need. Higher education may be involved and only serves to move you towards your goals. Though this is a difficult time to be calm you need to try.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Those you love are helping you through a tough time. It's appreciated. Don't allow yourself to fall down the crevice of a depressed emotional iceberg. Realize that you're one tough cookie, always have been, always will be. You can do anything you need. Even though work related problems arise, know you have them beaten. Sagittarius. You're looked upon with fondness by those who hired you. Others don't matter. Keep your wits about you and march forward with your head held high. Go out tonight and enjoy with friends. Make sure you have those you love around you.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Be careful not to overextend yourself now. Your mind is speeding through ideas and evaluations of those thoughts at a bullets pace. You may decide you want to start a new company or expand the one you're with now. You may even be seen helping to build the building you'll house later or running laps because you feel you need to exercise in order to blow off some excitement. This is all good. Capricorn. Enjoy the sensation. You've worked for it. Things fall right into place as if it's meant to be and it is.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

This is a nice time to reflect and communicate with others on work, home and family. Clear thought helps you work harder and be more efficient. Someone at work lends some sympathy when you're feeling down about timetables and how to get things done effectively. Family tries to unite around you with love and understanding. Aquarius. You're learning through experience now as you have in the past how much your family is there for you and how they've helped you through some emotional times before. You might even be thinking of making changes in your love life now. Take your time. Those words are what you've noticed is a prominent theme this month.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You've made it. You're back at work and guess what, you have the drive and the oomph to complete long-term projects at work now. People enjoy your enthusiasm especially your boss. You've got more than just work on your mind though. You want your life to be better in the health department as well. Pisces. You might take a cooking course for fifteen-minute meals or decide to meet for online adventures with a romantic get-a-way dating match market. Everything you touch is wonderful. As you create better, you want more now. The world is your oyster.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Winter

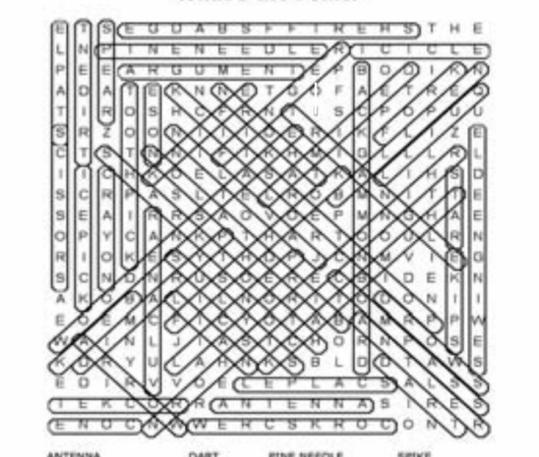
Find and circle all of the Winter related words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a Japanese proverb.



- |           |                |             |            |
|-----------|----------------|-------------|------------|
| BLACK ICE | HAIL           | SEASON      | SNOWBOARD  |
| BUIZZARD  | HEADBAND       | SKATES      | SNOWFLAKE  |
| BOOTS     | HIBERNATION    | SKI DOO     | SNOWMAN    |
| CARNIVAL  | HOCKEY         | SKI PANTS   | SNOWSHOES  |
| CHRISTMAS | HOLIDAYS       | SKIING      | SOLSTICE   |
| COLD      | ICE FISHING    | SLED        | SOUP       |
| EGG NOG   | ICICLES        | SLEET       | STEW       |
| FIREPLACE | KNIT CAP       | SLIPPERY    | STORM      |
| FIREWOOD  | LONG UNDERWEAR | SNOW CASTLE | SWEATSHIRT |
| FOG       | MITTENS        | SNOW FLOW   | TIBOGGAN   |
| FREEZE    | OLYMPICS       | SNOW SHOVEL | VACATION   |
| FROST     | PARKA          | SNOW TIRES  | WIND CHILL |
| GLOVES    | SCARF          | SNOWBALL    | WOOL SOCKS |

Sunday's Solution

What's the Point?



- |                  |           |                 |              |
|------------------|-----------|-----------------|--------------|
| ANTENNA          | DART      | FINE NEEDLE     | SPIKE        |
| ANTLER           | DECIMAL   | POINTER STICK   | STAPLE       |
| ARGUMENT         | FINGER    | PYRAMID         | STYLUS       |
| ARROW            | FISH HOOK | QUILL           | SWORD        |
| BACKGAMMON BOARD | FORK      | RHINOCEROS HORN | THORN        |
| BALLPEN          | ICE PICK  | ROCKET          | THUMBSTICK   |
| BEAK             | SCICLE    | SCALP PEL       | TOOTHPICK    |
| BIRD TALON       | JAVELIN   | SCISSORS        | TRIANGLE     |
| COMPASS          | KNIFE     | SEWING NEEDLE   | TRIDENT      |
| CONE             | NAIL      | SHARK TOOTH     | VULCAN EAR   |
| CORKSCREW        | NOSE      | SHERIFF'S BADGE | WOODEN STAKE |
| CRAYON           | PENCIL    | SPEAR           |              |

Sunday's Solution



Daily SuDoku

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

Sunday's Solution

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

# Lifestyle

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2019



Schoolgirls look at "The Morning of the Streltsy Execution" by Russian painter Vasily Surikov exhibited at The State Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow. — AFP



Rashid Abdelhamid, a film producer, works on a music track at the house of Palestinian DJ Sarouna.

“ We Palestinians, we are caught in conflict, occupied, hobbled, but we make music and we like to have fun’ ”

## PALESTINIAN DJs BRING PAST INTO PRESENT WITH FRESH BEATS

**A** mixing desk at her fingertips, the artist known as Sarouna coaxed a haunting refrain from the bass track—music both about the past and the present. Like other popular names on the Palestinian electro scene, the 23-year-old, wearing a hoodie emblazoned with “Made in Palestine” in Arabic, creates songs by drawing on local folk music. “Why would I go for European styles, which I don’t really feel attached to?” she said, in her bedroom studio overlooking the hills around Ramallah. “We will live this heritage so that we do not forget.” The project was the idea of Rashid Abdelhamid, a film producer, assisted by Sama Abdulhadi, who many consider the first Palestinian woman DJ. They assembled 10 artists from the Palestinian territories, Israel, Britain, France and Jordan at a villa in Ramallah.

From this two-week artistic residency in 2018, an album of 18 songs was born, entitled “Electrosteen”—a word combining Electro and “Falesteen”, Arabic for Palestine. Each with their own musical backgrounds, the artists worked from hundreds of pieces of traditional Palestinian music recorded about 15 years ago by the Popular Art Centre, a Palestinian organization based in Ramallah in the occupied West Bank. At first, faced with treasures from the rich local tradition, “we didn’t know what to do. We didn’t want to spoil them,” said Sarouna, the youngest of the musicians, her hair cut in a boyish style.

“I listened, I listened, then I took a little piece of music, I put it in the software and I put a rhythm on it, similar to that of the music but with more electro accents,” she said. “Sometimes I added qanun,” she said, referring to the stringed instrument used in traditional music. On March 1, artists involved in the project will take to the stage of the Arab World Institute in Paris for a performance.

### ‘Not a remix’

Bruno Cruz, a longtime DJ who is also on the album, said he was fascinated by the project. In his studio overlooking the sea in the northern Israeli city of Haifa, he was recently mixing while surrounded by dozens of posters, reminders of his many concerts in the region and in Europe since the late 1990s. “I had been trying previously to do this sort of mix,” Cruz said, but getting copyright clearances for traditional material was a challenge. They then came across the center’s collection which made songs available to the Electrosteen project. “You could use them without worries. It was great,” he said.

Listening to the archives, he recognized rhythms and melodies sung by his aunt and grandmother when he was a child and also discovered a still wider musical heritage, which differed according to district. “Every place has a story of its own, even if, in the end, all this is Palestinian folklore,” the 35-year-old said.

He chose to integrate into one of his pieces a recording from the 1950s of a wedding singer from the northern West Bank and the traditional interaction between the performer and the guests. “There is a strange connection between traditional Palestinian music and breakdance or hip-hop, with an MC who sings and addresses people in the room,” Cruz explained, folding his hand as if gripping an imaginary microphone, mimicking a master of ceremonies leading the party at Palestinian celebrations.

Sometimes it’s hard to recognize the original music, as Electrosteen musicians have added their own stamp. “It’s not a remix of famous songs,” said Abdelhamid. The artists “have incorporated small instrumental parts, voices, atmospheres,” he explained, each one bringing their own musical influences.



### ‘Everything is political’

And if this new treatment of old gems changes preconceptions of Palestinian culture, so much the better, he said. “The idea is to say, ‘OK, we Palestinians, we are caught in conflict, occupied, hobbled, but we make music and we like to have fun,’” said Abdelhamid. For him and the artists who participated in the album, “everything is political” as a Palestinian, whether one likes it or not.

“It’s new music with techno accents, with hip-hop, dub, reggae, which can be played in discos and big festivals all over the world,” said Cruz. “It will take the Palestinian cause to places where the Palestinian Authority—the Palestinian government—cannot be heard.” Abdelhamid is already looking to the future and said he would like to add dance to his future project and mix dabke—a traditional Arabic line dance—and hip-hop moves. — AFP

Sarouna, a Palestinian DJ, works on a music track at her home in the West Bank city of Ramallah, in the Israeli-occupied West Bank. — AFP photos



Sarouna, a Palestinian DJ, works on a music track at her home.



Bruno Cruz, 35, a Palestinian DJ who contributed to the album “Electrosteen”, mixes in his studio in the northern Israeli city of Haifa.

# A family trapped in the I Coast conflict: Apolline Traore's new film

A new film set during the 2010-11 post-election violence in Ivory Coast and centered around the courage of a 12-year-old girl, premiered Tuesday at Fespaco, Africa's biggest film festival, in Burkina Faso. "Desrances" was written and directed by Burkinabe filmmaker Apolline Traore, whose 2017 film "Frontieres" also featured at Fespaco. Her latest offering focuses on the courage and wisdom of women in the face of men's folly. The film's title refers to the character Francis Desrances played by Haitian actor Jimmy Jean-Louis, perhaps best known for his role in the hit television series "Hercules" (as The Haitian). In the film, Desrances is desperately looking for his wife and their newborn son, whom he fears were abducted by gangsters during the violence in Abidjan.

But the real hero of the film is his daughter Haila, played by Ivorian Jemima Naomi Nemlin. She saves her

father's life and makes him see that she is as worthy of being his heir as her brother. "The film highlights the story of a girl who has a lot of strength, at least as much as a boy," actor Jean-Louis said after the film's screening in Ouagadougou. "There are a lot of barriers against women in society, things that hinder their progress. It's men who have always led (society), and the result has not been great," he added. "The future is in the hands of women!"

**'Afro-Optimist'**

Traore, 43, became known internationally two years ago with "Frontieres" (Borders), which picked up a special award at the 2017 Fespaco festival. But with her new film, she hopes to become the first woman to win the festival's top prize. David Kessler, director of Orange Studio which co-produced "Desrances", told AFP that young African directors today "are real pros." "I am very optimistic about the emergence of new talents" in African cinema, he added.

Kessler also pointed to "a huge appetite for local content". "The public is demanding films and series made locally that speak to their everyday life, in Senegal or Ivory Coast for example." Jean-Louis was equally positive about African film-making. "From a cinematographic point of view, all our stories are still to be told, our heroes, our ancestors, our cultures, all our languages." "The world does not know Africa through cinema. A few films have been made by others about us, but we have never really given our version of Africa," he added. "I am super Afro-optimist!"

"Desrances" is in competition with 19 other full-length movies for the so-called "African Oscar"—the Golden Stallion of Yennenga, named after a mythical 12th-century warrior princess who founded the Mossi empire.



Burkina Faso's film director Apolline Traore (right) poses with Haitian actor Jimmy Jean-Louis during the Panafrican Film and Television Festival of Ouagadougou (FESPACO).



Burkina Faso's film director Apolline Traore (top, second from left) poses with Haitian actor Jimmy Jean-Louis (top, second from right) and other actors during the Panafrican Film and Television Festival of Ouagadougou (FESPACO) in Ouagadougou. — AFP photos

Fespaco—the acronym in French of the Pan-African Film and Television Festival of Ouagadougou—takes place in the capital of Burkina Faso every two years. Launched in 1969 and loosely modeled on the Cannes Film Festival, it provides an opportunity for African movie and TV pro-

essionals to network and pitch their work to clients in Europe, North America, and beyond. — AFP

## Yangon gripped as big-budget blockbuster brings streets to standstill



This photo shows production crew setting up a street scene during the filming of the movie "Line Walker 2" near a pagoda in Yangon.

Cars dangling from cranes, street shootouts and actors rappelling from roofs—Yangon residents were transfixed this week by the filming of a big-budget Hong Kong action movie around the city's iconic Sule pagoda. Yangon has lent the charm of its colonial-style buildings and golden temple spires to Line Walker 2 — the sequel to the 2016 blockbuster of the same name which grossed \$90 million worldwide. Line Walker 2 stars Hong Kong heartthrob Louis Koo and Nick Cheung.

The final day of shooting drew hundreds of locals wearing the sarong-like longyi as well as a long line of robed monks crowding onto overhead pedestrian passes, craning for a view of a choreographed firefight. "It is amazing to see cars flying in the air, like in the big films," Sai Mine, who was visiting Yangon from northern Shan State, told AFP. The 25-year-old had heard about the filming and begged her sisters to take her to Sule Pagoda where the smoldering remains of a car lay nearby. Myanmar actors were cast as well, and Aung Myint Myat said he got the "amazing" opportunity to play a SWAT team leader in the film.



"I'm really proud of it," he told AFP. Amateur filmmaker Thar Nge expressed delight at the chance to witness the day-long process to film a scene that plays out in seconds on the silver screen. "I am a big fan of action and adventure films and it is amazing for me to be able to see these moments," the 22-year-old told AFP. Some were hopeful a big-budget film featuring Yangon's sights could boost tourist numbers. While the number of Chinese tourists increased in 2018, Myanmar has seen a drop in Western visitors following news of the army's crackdown on the Muslim Rohingya minority in northern Rakhine state. — AFP

This photo shows production crew setting up a street scene with damaged vehicles during the filming of the movie "Line Walker 2" near a pagoda in Yangon. — AFP photos

## Shakira to be questioned in June over alleged tax fraud

Colombian superstar Shakira will be questioned by a court near Barcelona on June 12 for allegedly evading 14.5 million euros (\$16.5 million) in taxes, a Spanish court said Tuesday. In a statement, the high court of Catalonia, where the singer lives with her partner, FC Barcelona footballer Gerard Pique, said she had been summoned to appear before a judge in Esplugues de Llobregat. The 42-year-old is suspected of not paying taxes in Spain despite being a resident between 2011 and 2014, according to prosecutors. The case only covers the period from 2012

to 2014, however, as the timeframe to prosecute alleged tax offences in 2011 has expired. In a relationship since 2011 Pique, with whom she has two sons, Shakira transferred her official residency to Spain in 2015. Until then, it was in the Bahamas.

But a spokesman for prosecutors in Barcelona told AFP last year that this didn't "match reality" with her children and partner in Barcelona. Shakira's representatives insist that until 2014 she earned most of her money in international tours and didn't live more than six months a year in Spain—a prerequisite to be an official tax-paying resident in the country. With her mix of Latin and Arabic rhythms and rock influences, Shakira is one of the biggest stars from Latin America, scoring major global hits with songs such as "Hips Don't Lie" and "Whenever, Wherever." — AFP



In this file photo Colombian singer Shakira performs on stage during her "El Dorado World Tour" at the Azteca stadium in Mexico City. — AFP

## Hit song 'Despacito' breaks YouTube record with six billion views

The mega-hit "Despacito" by the Puerto Rican singer Luis Fonsi has become the most watched video ever on YouTube with more than six billion views, the Google-owned service said Tuesday. The video, first released in January 2017 by Fonsi and Puerto Rican rapper Daddy Yankee, already holds the

record for the fastest two billion, three billion and four billion views (272 days).

Fonsi's Spanish-language hit, whose English title is "Slowly", has had nearly two billion views more than its nearest challenger, "Shape of You", by the British singer Ed Sheeran. The South Korean singer Psy was the first to cross the two-billion-views barrier on the platform with his "Gangnam Style" in 2012, which also set off a dance craze. Psy is now fifth in the YouTube charts with 3.3 billion views. — AFP



## Mexico's Inarritu to head Cannes film festival jury

The five-time Oscar-winning Mexican director Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu is to head the jury at this year's Cannes film festival, the organizers said yesterday. The 55-year-old is one of the "three amigos" of Mexican filmmakers who have dominated the Academy Awards in recent years alongside Alfonso Cuaron, the best director winner this year with "Roma" and last year's victor Guillermo del Toro for "The Shape of Water". He is also one of only three filmmakers ever to have won the Oscar for best director back-to-back—for "Birdman" in 2015 and "The Revenant" a year later. "Not only is he a daring filmmaker full of surprises, Alejandro is also a man of conviction, an artist of his time," Cannes director Thierry Fremaux said.



In this file photo Director Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu arrives on the red carpet for the 88th Academy Awards in Hollywood, California. — AFP

Inarritu made his big breakthrough at Cannes in 2000 with his breathtaking debut, "Amores Perros", a gritty overlapping panorama of Mexico City that introduced the world to the actor Gael Garcia Bernal. It won the sidebar Critics' Week prize and was later pipped for the best foreign language Oscar by "Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon". Inarritu later won best director at Cannes—the world's biggest film festival—for "Babel", his 2006 epic told in five different languages over three continents.

**'Passion and devotion'**

Having been the first Mexican director ever to be nominated for an Oscar, he is now the first to head the jury at Cannes, which sees itself as the "Olympics of cinema", with movies from every corner of the globe. Inarritu, who rarely sits on festival juries, said he would apply himself to the task with "passion and devotion". "Cinema runs through the veins of the planet and this festival has been its heart," he added. Last year Australian actress Cate Blanchett presided over the jury, which gave the top Palme d'Or prize to Japan's Hirokazu Kore-eda's "Shoplifters".

She also led red carpet protests to demand an equal place for women in Hollywood. Fremaux said the festival was "particularly proud" to have made space for Inarritu's 2017 virtual reality installation "Carne y Arena" in its official selection. The VR show allowed people to put themselves in migrants' shoes and "addressed the question with great strength and humanity", Fremaux added. Unlike Cuaron, whose Oscar-winning masterpiece "Roma" was backed by Netflix, Inarritu has never made a film with the streaming giant.

Cannes and Netflix got into a bitter spat last year after the US giant boycotted the festival in protest at the festival's insistence that films in competition must follow French rules on streaming. Under a French law to protect cinemas, streamers must wait 36 months after a film's cinematic release before they put it online. Consequently "Roma" and several other Netflix films have not made it to general release on the big screen there. However, both sides have since walked back from the clash, with Netflix boss Reed Hastings admitting that they may have gone too far. "Sometimes we make mistakes. We got into a bigger situation with Cannes than we meant to," he said. The Cannes film festival will run from May 14 to 25. — AFP

## No more 'lucky' beards: Japan's sumos hit by whisker ban

**J**apanese sumo officials have introduced a crackdown on beards, calling them "indecent" and telling wrestlers they must look spick and span during competitions under strict, new rules on personal grooming. The draconian whisker ban is part of fresh regulations also barring tattoos and long nails, a sumo spokesman told AFP yesterday, as the authorities look to clean up the image of Japan's roly-poly sport. "It was stipulated that items such as long nails, tattoos and beards grown out of an excessive wish for good luck shall be banned," said the spokesman for the Japan

Sumo Association (JSA). Superstitious sumo wrestlers often decline to shave their beards during tournaments as they believe it brings them luck, but the sumo association have decided they will no longer tolerate such slovenliness.

"Wrestlers must preserve their personal hygiene," JSA elder Oguruma told reporters after a board meeting. "Officials and referees will be on the lookout. The sumo ring is sacred and it's important spectators don't see anything unsightly," Grand champion Kakuryu said. "It's an important point so we must absolutely adhere to it."

The ancient sport of sumo has been tarnished by a series of scandals in recent years—from allegations of bout-fixing and the involvement of organized crime to drugs arrests and severe bullying, the most serious case resulting in the death of a teenage wrestler in 2007. Grand champion, or yokozuna, Harumafuji was charged over a brutal assault on a rival wrestler while out drinking in 2017, ending his illustrious career.

Believed by historians to date back some 2,000 years, sumo was plunged into further controversy when women who rushed to the aid of a local mayor who had

collapsed during a speech were repeatedly told to leave the ring, creating a flurry of embarrassing headlines. The JSA was forced to make a groveling apology after being accused of deep-rooted sexism, but just days later a female mayor from the western city of Takarazuka was barred from delivering a speech inside the sandy ring. To add insult to injury, the gaffe-prone JSA was slammed again for trying to prevent girls from participating in a children's sumo event, citing "safety concerns". — AFP



## TEDDY GIRLS MAKE COMEBACK IN DIOR'S REBEL PARIS SHOW

**D**ior went back to the feisty Teddy Girls of 1950s Britain for its vision of a feminist future in its Paris fashion week show Tuesday. With black leather jackets, long nipped-waist Dior "New Look" skirts with leather cummerbunds and tartan a-go-go, designer Maria Grazia Chiuri raided the wardrobes of the rebel girls of the early days of rock 'n' roll. The original royal rebel Princess Margaret—a Dior addict—and the proudly proletarian Teddy Girls who were the "queens of the ravaged landscape" of postwar Britain were the two pillars of the Italian creator's autumn winter collection.

She took some of the most feminine clothes of the epoch—kitten heels with black socks, shiny bucket hats and tight woollen sweaters—and mixed them with a more masculine and sportswear silhouette. Chiuri has been on something of a crusade during her time at the most feminine of French labels to make its famously chic clothes simple and adaptable enough for everyday wear.

And you could easily imagine women wearing trainers under even the most intricate of dresses in this collection. The Teddy Girls were the punks of their time, "impertinent characters with wild quiffs who wore Edwardian-style men's jackets with ample skirts, jeans and black leather jackets," the designer said. "London always represents tradition and at the same time the breaking with tradition," Chiuri told AFP.



Models present creations for Christian Dior during the Fall-Winter 2019/2020 Ready-to-Wear collection fashion show in Paris. — AFP photos



Anthony Vaccarello is less up to speed with latest feminist theory.

Shortly after he took over the label he found himself in the firing line of outrage over a "hypersexualised" 2017 ad campaign for the label that put painfully thin models in "degrading" poses. The young Belgian designer has not backed down from his sexed-up vision for the brand, and his Paris show was a procession of leggy models in black micro dresses and hotpants.

Vaccarello's women are night owl vampires and his only concession to winter was to drape some in big overcoats with exaggerated shoulders—all the better to show that everyone was a man-eater, wearing her sexiness like a weapon. These were clothes to sin in, to turn heads at glitzy cocktails and nightclubs, with a line of fluorescent looks literally lighting up in the dark. His co-ed show under the Eiffel Tower also made a game bid to steal a march on his Saint Laurent predecessor Hedi Slimane, who has created a male line for the first time at Celine. Vaccarello's response has been to go toe-to-toe with Chelsea-boot-toe, out-Slimane-ing the man they call the "sultan of skinny" at his own lux-grunge rock god game. — AFP

### 'Fashion is a political act'

The show was a long love letter to the iconoclasm of British style, and comes as an exhibition about Dior at the V&A museum in London has become a sold-out hit. "I tried to create pieces in this collection in which everyone can express themselves in their own way by using different combinations while respecting the codes of the brand," Chiuri said. Since her debut collection in 2017 — when she made headlines with a "We Should All Be Feminists" T-shirt—Dior's first female designer has put down a ladder to women artists and writers.

This time she lionized the veteran Italian artist Tomaso Binga, who took on a man's name to satirize male privilege. One of her most iconic works, an alphabet formed from the naked body of a middle-aged woman, was the backdrop for the show in a huge pavilion in the grounds of the Rodin Museum in Paris. With Hollywood star and #MeToo activist Jennifer Lawrence in the front row, the 87-year-old artist (whose real name is Bianca Menna) dressed up like a kind of cardinal to read a stirring declaration urging female solidarity before Chiuri sent out her models.

### Saint Laurent's killer vamps

In another feminist nod, three wore T-shirts bearing the titles of books by the American feminist thinker Robin Morgan—"Sisterhood is Powerful", "Sisterhood is Global" and "Sisterhood is Forever". "Today fashion and the act of buying is a political act," Chiuri told AFP.

"Apart from clothes, bags and shoes, people want to know that behind objects there are values in which they believe," she said. It is safe to say that Saint Laurent's



Models present creations by Saint Laurent during the Fall-Winter 2019/2020 Ready-to-Wear collection fashion show in Paris.



## World's smallest baby boy goes home from Japan hospital



**A** baby boy weighing just 268 grams (9.45 oz) at birth was sent home after months in a Tokyo hospital, the smallest surviving male baby in the world. Keio University hospital said. The boy was born through Caesarean-section last August after he failed to gain weight during the pregnancy and doctors feared his life was in danger. The boy was in intensive care until his weight reached 3.2 kilograms and he was discharged on Feb 20, said Dr Takeshi Arimitsu of the university's School of Medicine, Department of Paediatrics. "I am grateful that he has grown this big because, honestly, I wasn't sure he could survive," the boy's mother told Reuters.

The previous record was held by a boy born in Germany in 2009 weighing 274 grams, according to the Tiniest Babies registry managed by the University of Iowa. The smallest girl was born weighing 252 grams in Germany in 2015, according to the registry. — Reuters

This undated handout shows a five-day-old baby, who weighed 268 grams at birth, at the hospital in Tokyo.



This undated handout released by Japan's Keio University Hospital shows a baby, who weighed 268 grams at birth, at the hospital in Tokyo. — AFP photos

## Malaysia's flying car plan jets into controversy

**M**alaysia plans to launch a flying car, a minister has said, sparking a flood of mockery in a country with a chequered history when it comes to automotive projects. The prototype of the vehicle, which uses local technology, will be unveiled later this year, said Entrepreneur Development Minister Redzuan Mohamad Yusof, according to state news agency Bernama. The vehicle cost about one million ringgit (\$245,000) to develop and will fly at low altitudes, he said Tuesday, without revealing any more details.

Previous car projects in Malaysia have not always met with great success—the country started producing Protons in the 1980s but they are routinely criticized for unimaginative models and shoddy workmanship, and their popularity has steadily fallen. For many people, the flying car project was just another harebrained scheme cooked up by foolish politicians. "Words fail me. I have never read so much stupidity in my life," one commentator wrote online.

Aman Shah posted on Facebook: "How come this idiot is selected as a minister? Solve the public transport problem first, instead of inventing flying car." There have been several attempts around the world to develop flying cars, such as the Transition made by US firm Terrafugia and the AeroMobil, produced in Slovakia.

Both have taken years and a lot of money to develop, and are yet to go on sale. Some questioned the wisdom of trying to develop a flying vehicle in Malaysia with the national car industry already facing problems. "We cannot even promote hybrid and electric car properly and sell them at affordable price, now talking about flying cars. What a joke," said one comment. Since returning for a second stint as prime minister, Mahathir Mohamad—who previously championed Proton—has announced plans for a new national car project, triggering widespread criticism. — AFP

## 50 YEARS SINCE ICONIC PARIS MARKET UPROOTED

**I**n the early hours of Friday February 28, 1969, Parisians headed to the centuries-old fresh food market in the heart of the city to bid a nostalgic goodbye. By Monday the market would be uprooted from its prized location in central Paris and reestablished in the suburbs at Rungis, today the world's largest fresh produce market. Here is an account of the transfer 50 years ago of the ancient Les Halles market, replaced by a modern shopping mall of the same name.

### Farewell with flowers

Many of the Parisians who flocked to the site in the early hours of its last day came with their cameras to capture "for the last time the strange atmosphere" of the much-loved old market being dismantled, AFP reported. Armfuls of flowers were tossed into the complex's central square and there was a "bed of azaleas, roses and tulips" outside the adjacent Saint-Eustache church, lit up for the occasion. "A last tribute from the florists" who were the first to move to Rungis, the report said.

Near the church, people danced around pyramids of vegetable crates as a band played popular songs. But they were not able to dispell "the heavy atmosphere of melancholy". A market had existed here since the 12th century when the first two halls were built, the start of what eventually became Les Halles with 12 pavilions over a dozen hectares (about 30 acres). It supplied some eight million people with their fresh produce, according to the Rungis website. But it had become too big for the narrow roads of the old city centre. For reasons of hygiene, traffic and access, authorities decided in 1959 to move it out.



This file photo taken on September 25, 1978 shows the construction site of the Forum des Halles shopping center in Paris after the destruction of the Halles market following its reestablishment in the suburbs at Rungis in 1969. — AFP photos



In this file photo taken on December 1, 2017 a man pulls a trolley at the vegetable area of the international food market of Rungis, outside Paris.

### 'Move of the century'

The relocation was a quasi-military operation and entrusted to a reserve officer specialized in army logistics. Carried out overnight March 2-3, the "move of the century" involved nearly 30,000 people, the Rungis site says. Around 5,000 tons of merchandise from 1,000 businesses and masses of material were bundled into 1,500 lorries for the seven-kilometer (four-mile) trip south of Paris, it says.

Dairy and eggs vendor Didier Maitre was disappointed with the modern new premises. "With its goods lift and its big aisles, Rungis looked more like a little town than a big market like the old Les Halles," he told AFP in 1969. The "belly of Paris", the old market had been busy and vibrant, even if a little seedy because of the prostitutes on nearby rue Saint-Denis, he remembered.



In this file photo taken on February 25, 1969 a woman grabs fruits and vegetables left on the ground in front of the Halles in Paris as the market closed for good and was transferred in Rungis, south of Paris, on February 28, 1969.

### World's biggest

On Monday March 3 Rungis opened its brand-new doors, offering fresh fruit, vegetables, seafood, dairy and flowers. It also took in the city's main meat market in 1973. It is today the world's biggest fresh produce market, covering 234 hectares (580 acres) with an annual turnover of nine billion euros (\$10.2 billion), according to its official website.

Rungis employs around 12,000 wholesalers, producers, porters, restaurateurs and other workers, with the seafood section opening the earliest at 2:00 am. The move also introduced new innovations. "People don't carry meat anymore," said Guy Eschalier, 96, who had worked at the old La Villette meat market. "Everything is automated, the cold chain is enforced, the traceability, to give the customer all the guarantees."

With the Paris site of Les Halles abandoned, petitions circulated to preserve its landmark cast-iron, steel, brick and glass pavilions. In 1970 they hosted cultural activities, keeping alive the hope of an architectural rescue, but in 1971 demolition began and the great market turned into a giant excavation. A major railway hub opened on the site in 1977 and, two years later, a shopping mall known as the Forum des Halles, its latest transformation unveiled just last year.

One original pavilion survived, reassembled piece-by-piece in the Paris suburb of Nogent-sur-Marne where it houses a concert hall. The framework of another pavilion is also on display, some 10,000 kilometers away, in a park in Yokohama, Japan. — AFP

## Robinson Crusoe island sets example for the world in conservation

**F**or almost a century, the inhabitants of Robinson Crusoe—named for literature's most famous castaway—have known that their island's fragile ecosystem depends on them conserving its unique wildlife. One of three islands in the Juan Fernandez archipelago, 700 kilometers (430 miles) off the Pacific coast of Chile, it was discovered in the sixteenth century. The island chain secured its place in history as the home of Alexander Selkirk, the Scottish sailor marooned there for four years and four months, a tale he later related to Daniel Defoe, who penned his adventure book based on his story.

One of the other islands in the chain is called Alexander Selkirk, the third is Santa Clara. In 1977, the archipelago was named a biosphere reserve and almost a year ago, Chile announced the creation of the enormous Juan Fernandez Marine Park. Covering an area of 262,000 square kilometers (101,000 square miles) of ocean, it is one of the largest protected zones in the Pacific.

It also connects to a network of marine reserves in Chile totaling some 1.3 million square kilometers, meaning that about 44 percent of the nation's waters have some level of protection against mining and industrial fishing. "Until 10 years ago, Chile was one of the biggest ocean exploiters in the world, but now it has changed course and become one of the leaders in ocean conservation, with the creation of huge marine parks which will really help fish stocks recover," said Alex Munoz, Latin America director

of the NGO National Geographic Pristine Seas. "But we are still a sick patient in need of recuperation," he said.

### Cats, rats and coatis

The wildlife of these remote islands faces various threats, including ocean trash—in particular plastic—and invasive species that have been introduced to the fragile ecosystem of Juan Fernandez, home to around 1,000 people. Cats, rats and coatis (a type of South American raccoon) are the main hazard for the Juan Fernandez firecrown, a type of hummingbird found only in the islands, and whose eggs and chicks are easy prey. They are also a threat to the pink-footed shearwater, a migratory seabird which only nests in the archipelago, where there are 35,000 pairs, and on Mocha Island, close to the mainland, where there are 60,000 breeding pairs.

The environment ministry has just launched a recovery plan to protect the underground nests of the shearwaters, which fly in to mate every year from the United States and Canada. "People are taking this seriously," said Pablo Manriquez, coordinator for the NGO Oikonos, noting that residents have changed their street and house lights from white to red or green to help the shearwaters avoid crashing into buildings and trees in foggy weather, when the bright lights appear to disorient them. Downed birds are vulnerable to predators. Work has also been started to preserve the luma trees where hummingbirds nest, eradicating non-native blackberry bushes that strangle the trees.



A male Juan Fernandez firecrown (*Sephanoides fernandensis*) hummingbird perching on a sprig at Robinson Crusoe Island.

### Sustainable fishing

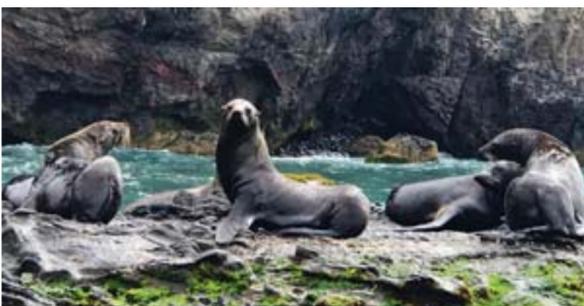
Sustainable fishing is the archipelago's main goal. As far back as 1935, fishermen started introducing measures to preserve the islands' principal source of income, the lobster, which is mainly sold to China where a live crustacean can bring in \$200. "They brought down the catch by 75 percent!" said fisherman Wilson Gonzalez, whose family has been fishing here for generations. The result was the first sustainable fishery in South America, said Daniel Gonzalez, head of the islands' fishing union. Fishing is only permitted from October 1 until May 15 and only then using wooden

lobster pots. There are also limits on the size of lobsters that can be taken, and females with eggs are returned to the sea.

There are other notable success stories: the South American fur seal, a species that was almost extinct 40 years ago, now has a population of 30,000 on the islands. "The great asset of Juan Fernandez is that the local population takes part in conserving species, together with the NGOs," said Environment Minister Carolina Schmidt on a recent visit. A paradise for divers and hikers, the islands are opening up to tourism, though getting here is tricky—the small planes that fly in carry a maximum of eight passengers because they have to carry enough fuel for the return trip, which means tickets are expensive at \$800 a head.

### Plastic-free by 2020

Plastic that arrives on supply ships from the mainland every two weeks, or is washed up on ocean currents, is one of the islands' main challenges. Unlike Easter Island, another far-flung Chilean outpost in the Pacific which ships some of its plastic back to the mainland for recycling, the archipelago burns all its waste, some 315 tons of it. Munoz, together with local authorities and the environment ministry, has just signed an agreement that will see the islands eradicate plastic by 2020. "If we want a zero waste world, we need to start with a world without plastic," said Schmidt. — AFP



Sea lions bask on rocks on Robinson Crusoe Island.



View of the town of San Juan Bautista, on Robinson Crusoe Island, in the Pacific Juan Fernandez Islands, off the coast of Chile.







Sports

# Nishikori bundled out in second round of Dubai Championship

## Fun in Acapulco as Nadal eases into second round

**DUBAI:** Japan's top seed Kei Nishikori was bundled out in the second round of the Dubai Championships yesterday, losing 7-5, 5-7, 6-2 to unfancied Hubert Hurkacz. The Polish number one ranked 77th in the world handed the favourite his exit papers as Nishikori played the gulf event for the first time.

He came to the emirate with an early season title from Brisbane, where he claimed his first trophy since 2016. Hurkacz moved into his first ATP quarter-final after scoring his first career victory over a Top 10 opponent, needing just over two hours completing the upset.

The outsider caught Nishikori with a late break in the opening set but the favourite looked like making up ground in the second when he moved from 4-0, 5-2 up. But Nishikori failed on four occasions to serve it out before squeaking through with a break for 6-5 followed by a serve hold to make it a set each after 92 minutes.

Hurkacz finished the job as he claimed the final set to advance, winning with six breaks of serve from seven chances. The Japanese top seed was at a loss to explain exactly what went wrong in the first-time meeting with the lowly ranked Pole.

"I didn't play perfect today, but I think he was playing good serves, better than I thought," Nishikori said. "With this wind and this surface, it's not easy. I didn't serve well when I wanted to."

"He played well in the important games, I didn't make many first serves when I wanted to.. that cost me some important points."

In Acapulco, Mexico Rafael Nadal powered into the second round at the Mexican Open Tuesday,

breezing past Germany's Mischa Zverev in straight sets to advance to a meeting with Australia's Nick Kyrgios.

World number two Nadal, playing in his first event since being thrashed by Novak Djokovic in last month's Australian Open final, was always in control during a 6-3, 6-3 victory.

The 17-time Grand Slam champion completed the victory in 1hr 20min at Acapulco's Princess Mundo Imperial venue, defeating his 76th ranked opponent with ease. The tournament top seed seized the advantage in the opening set, scoring a break to go 3-1 ahead with a delicate lob that left Zverev floundering.

With Nadal's superior variety proving too much for Zverev, the Spaniard quickly wrapped up the opening set. The second set went with serve until the seventh game, when a wild forehand from Zverev sailed wide to give Nadal the break for a 4-3 lead. Zverev hung his head following the miscue, seemingly realising there was no way back.

Nadal then held for a 5-3 lead and wrapped up victory in the ninth game, moving to match point when Zverev could only plop a return tanely into the net. Nadal then produced a sublime backhand winner down the line to seal a deserved win.

"I'm happy for the victory. It's never easy against Mischa, especially without competing for a while," said Nadal. "I'll try to enjoy this moment for the next few hours and then be ready for tomorrow," added Nadal, who said he is wary of the threat posed by the mercurial Kyrgios.

"Nick is one of the most talented players on tour,"



DUBAI: Kei Nishikori of Japan returns the ball to Hubert Hurkacz of Poland during the ATP Dubai Duty Free Tennis Championship in the Gulf emirate of Dubai yesterday. — AFP

Nadal said. "It's a big challenge for me and I hope to be ready for it." Elsewhere Tuesday, Zverev's younger brother Alex had little difficulty in advancing to the second round, defeating Australia's Alexei Popyrin 6-3, 6-3.

Second seed Zverev's service game overwhelmed Popyrin, with the German hammering down 13 aces en

route to victory. Australia's Kyrgios meanwhile was made to work hard for victory in his win over Italy's Andreas Seppi, battling into the second round with a 6-3, 7-5 win.

Third seed John Isner of the United States also had a testing opening game, needing three sets to subdue France's Adrian Panatta 6-3, 4-6, 6-3. — AFP

## Fury to fight before Wilder rematch: WBC

**LOS ANGELES:** Tyson Fury has informed the World Boxing Council he plans to fight an as-yet-unnamed opponent before any rematch with reigning heavy-weight champion Deontay Wilder, the WBC said Tuesday.

The WBC said on Twitter that it had been notified by Fury's camp that the British fighter was planning another fight before climbing back into the ring with Wilder.

Wilder and Fury fought to a draw in Los Angeles in December after an epic 12-round battle at the Staples Center. Their rematch is likely to be one of the most anticipated fights of the year following a first meeting which reignited interest in the heavyweight division.

However, doubts over a possible rematch emerged last week when Fury signed a deal with US promoter Top Rank and ESPN, potentially complicating negotiations with Wilder.

On Tuesday, the WBC confirmed that Fury's team had notified them that they planned to fight at least once more before scheduling a rematch. Wilder "vs @Tyson\_Fury is officially not happening next," the WBC said on Twitter.

"@WBCBoxing has received communications as our process and while Wilder confirmed its willingness to fight the rematch, Fury will take on another fight with expectations to do rematch at a later date."

The WBC had earlier given the greenlight for a direct rematch between Wilder and Fury following their



LOS ANGELES: In this file photo taken on December 1, 2018, Tyson Fury punches Deontay Wilder in the seventh round fighting to a draw during the WBC Heavyweight Championship in Los Angeles, California. — AFP

December 1 meeting. "Wilder and Fury gave boxing one of the best fights in the heavyweight division in a long time, which has created tremendous popular demand for the fans to see a rematch," the WBC said in December. Wilder, who retained his title with a contro-

versial split decision draw against Fury, had earlier signalled his desire to schedule a rematch as quickly as possible. "I'm ready to do it again," Wilder said last December. "I'm looking forward to giving him the rematch as soon as possible." — AFP

world titles because you have the year and you can make a couple of mistakes during the series but still win the championship as long as you are pretty consistent," she said.

"Olympics is like one chance, a 30-minute heat. Who knows what (the) waves will be like. The pressure will be incredible with no mistakes allowed, and (you have to) go out there and put together the best performance of the entire last four years of your life.

"There are swimmers who break world records in other competitions, but they get to the Olympics and when they get there they crumble and you ask what went wrong there."

### 'A HUMBLING EXPERIENCE'

Gilmore, who claimed the first of her world titles in her rookie year in 2007, says despite surfers being seen as rebels and free spirits, they can embrace the Olympics.

"Surfers and skaters (skateboarders) keep some kind of street credibility, some coolness about them, because they are sub-cultures. They are rebels and do not want to follow path of corporate sports," said Gilmore.

"There are a lot of top pros I have spoken to who love (the) idea of it (the Olympics). They are athletes, so to compete on (the) world's biggest platform, not only is a great marketing tool for our sport, but just a wonderful experience.

"It can really enhance WSL (World Surfing League) events. Maybe we will bring a whole new audience and they will fall in love with it." But Gilmore says that her relationship with the sea will not be altered just because surfing has gained acceptance amongst the grey suits of the International Olympic Committee.

"I think that surfing is always a spiritual experience. It is funny when you are competing you tap into that spirituality to find a clarity to what you are doing," she



Stephanie Gilmore

said. "It is easy to be overwhelmed by the commentators and the sound (of) the judges and your opponents, but I find as a surfer it (the ocean) is a sacred place you can go to.

"That sacred place is remembering this is what you love, being in the ocean it is such a free feeling. "You are being paid to surf, it is crazy." Laureus is a global movement that aims to use the power of sport to tackle social challenges in the world. — AFP

## Five athletes arrested in doping raids

**VIENNA:** Five athletes from Austria, Kazakhstan and Estonia were arrested yesterday in anti-doping raids at the Nordic skiing world championships in the Austrian resort of Seefeld, police said. The raids were part of a broader operation targeting a Germany-based "criminal organisation" suspected of having carried out blood doping for years, the Austrian police said.

A 40-year-old sports doctor is believed to be at the centre of the organisation, the police said in a statement, adding that he was also arrested in Germany yesterday. In total nine people were arrested in 16 raids in Seefeld and Germany, the Austrian police said, adding that the operation was coordinated with the German authorities.

Two of the athletes arrested in Seefeld are from Austria, two are Estonian and one is from Kazakhstan, the police said. Austrian media quoted an official from the country's skiing federation as saying the two Austrians arrested were cross-country skiers Max Hauke and Dominik Baldauf, both 26.

"Athletes have been caught using unauthorised methods or substances. Unfortunately, it shocks me, two of our athletes are among them. They have been taken into custody, Baldauf and Hauke," the federation's sporting director for cross-country skiing and biathlon, Markus Gandler, told the APA news agency.

Reuters was not able to immediately contact the federation for comment. Two other people were arrested in Seefeld while two people including the sports doctor were arrested in Germany, the police said.

The raids were part of an investigation that has lasted several months on suspicion of "professional sport fraud" and "use of prohibited substances and methods for doping purposes".

This is not the first time that Austrian skiing has been hit by a doping case. At the 2006 Olympics in Turin, the Austrian cross country and biathlon teams had their headquarters raided by Italian police and drugs testers in a high-profile doping scandal.

None tested positive but half a dozen athletes were banned for life after the discovery of syringes and other equipment, and the Austrian Olympic Committee was fined for anti-doping rules violations by the International Olympic Committee. — Reuters



Markus Gandler

## Aussie surfer Gilmore hopes to ride Olympic waves of success

**MONACO:** Cathy Freeman's memorable run to Olympic gold at the 2000 Sydney Olympics is a moment her compatriot Stephanie Gilmore wants to emulate in Tokyo next year, she has told AFP. The 31-year-old will bid to become the first women's Olympic surfing champion, and with seven world titles to her name, the odds are in her favour.

Gilmore, who began surfing aged 10 and first competed on the world circuit seven years later, says Freeman storming down the straight in Sydney to secure 400 metres gold was etched in the memory of the then-13-year-old.

"Watching her (Freeman) win blew my mind," Gilmore told AFP at the Laureus Awards. "I was so inspired thinking she was a super hero, the suit she had on with the hood and everything. "Imagine the pressure of the entire world, not just Australia, on her shoulders. She did it so cool, calm and collected, incredible.

"So when I heard surfing was in the Olympics, I said to myself, "Great I want to try and have a moment like that." Gilmore, though, is not already placing herself on the top step of the podium, as despite her multiple world crowns, she knows from watching other champions fall short that the Olympics are an entirely different challenge.

"It is funny. It seems so easy to win a couple of

## Sports

# Red-hot Flames streak past Isles, Wild stun Jets with two late goals

## Pacioretty's two goals key Knights' win over Stars

UNIONDALE: Mikael Backlund and Rasmus Andersson scored early in the third period Tuesday night for the Calgary Flames, who remained red hot with a 3-1 win over the New York Islanders in Uniondale, N.Y. Matthew Tkachuk opened the scoring for the Western Conference-leading Flames, who have won a season-high six straight, including the first two games of an Eastern Conference road trip. Calgary earlier had two winning streaks of five straight games. Flames goalie Mike Smith made 26 saves. Josh Bailey scored for the Islanders, who lost for the third time in the past four games—a skid that began with a 4-2 loss at Calgary last Wednesday—to fall into a tie for first place in the Metropolitan Division with the Washington Capitals.

### WILD 3, JETS 2

Minnesota scored two goals in the last 87 seconds of the game to steal a road victory over Winnipeg. After Jason Zucker's power-play goal at 18:33 of the third period tied the score, Joel Eriksson Ek forced in a rebound just 26 seconds later for the winner. Eriksson Ek's goal stood after both a video review and a coach's challenge from the Winnipeg bench. Ryan Donato and Eric Staal each had two assists for the Wild, who extended their winning streak to four games. The Jets got goals from Patrik Laine and Mark Scheifele.

### COYOTES 4, PANTHERS 3 (SO)

Nick Cousins, Alex Galchenyuk and Vinnie Hinostroza scored in a shootout as host Arizona won its fourth straight game, defeating Florida. Jonathan Huberdeau scored for the Panthers in the shootout, but Coyotes goalie Darcy Kuemper stopped Panthers captain Aleksander Barkov, and that was the difference in a wild game. Arizona hit the post three times in the final two frantic minutes of regulation, failing to score each time. Both Kuemper and Panthers goalie Roberto Luongo made spectacular saves in overtime.

### CAPITALS 7, SENATORS 2

T.J. Oshie scored twice in a four-goal second period as Washington defeated visiting Ottawa. The Senators dominated the early minutes and scored the game's first two goals, but it was all Capitals after that. Washington scored twice late in the first period to tie it and added four more in less than eight minutes in the second. Evgeny Kuznetsov, Brett Connolly, Lars Eller and Tom Wilson each finished with one goal and one assist for the Capitals, who also got a goal from John Carlson. Anthony Duclair and Oscar Lindberg were the scorers for Ottawa.

### FLYERS 5, SABRES 2

Oskar Lindblom, Jakub Voracek, James van Riemsdyk, Travis Sanheim and Claude Giroux each scored a goal to lead host Philadelphia past Buffalo. Giroux also added an assist as the Flyers earned their fifth straight win over the Sabres in Philadelphia. Goaltender Brian Elliott made 34 saves as the Flyers won their second in a row. Jack Eichel and Casey Mittelstadt each scored a goal for the Sabres.

### PENGUINS 5, BLUE JACKETS 2

Jared McCann scored twice to lead visiting Pittsburgh past Columbus. Sidney Crosby had a goal and assist, and Jake Guentzel and Evgeni Malkin also scored for the Penguins, who ended a two-game losing streak. They have won seven in a row against the Blue Jackets. Goaltender Matt Murray stopped 21 of 23 Columbus shots. Oliver Bjorkstrand and Cam Atkinson scored for the Blue Jackets, whose two-game winning streak ended. Sergei Bobrovsky made 22 saves for Columbus.

### HURRICANES 6, KINGS 1

Dougie Hamilton scored two goals as Carolina won its ninth game in 11 outings by routing Los Angeles at Raleigh, N.C. Sebastian Aho, Micheal Ferland, Jacob Slavin and Teuvo Teravainen also scored for the Hurricanes. Teravainen also provided three assists, while Jordan Staal assisted three times and Hamilton had one assist. Carolina goalie Petr Mrazek stopped 22 shots, blanking the Kings until the final eight minutes. Dustin Brown scored for Los Angeles off an assist from Alex Iafallo.

### BRIUNS 4, SHARKS 1

Brad Marchand recorded his franchise-record-tying 25th short-handed goal and added two assists as host Boston extended its point streak to 14 games (10-0-4) with a victory over San Jose. David Krejci collected a goal and an assist for the Bruins, who defeated San Jose for the sixth straight time. Boston's Charlie McAvoy and Jake DeBrusk scored 37 seconds apart in the second period, and Jaroslav Halak finished with 19 saves to improve to 4-0-2 in his past six starts. San Jose's Erik Karlsson exited early in the second period after appearing to aggravate a groin injury that had sidelined him for the Sharks' 5-3 win over Detroit on Sunday. Karlsson returned midway into the period, but Marchand breezed by him before back-handing the puck past Martin Jones (28 saves) at 12:28 to tie Rick Middleton for the most short-handed goals in franchise history.



COLUMBUS: Seth Jones #3 of the Columbus Blue Jackets gets called for slashing while trying to block a shot from Sidney Crosby #87 of the Pittsburgh Penguins during the third period on Tuesday at Nationwide Arena in Columbus, Ohio. Pittsburgh defeated Columbus 5-2. — AFP

### CANADIENS 8, RED WINGS 1

Andrew Shaw notched his first career hat trick, Max Domi had two goals and three assists, and visiting Montreal pounded Detroit. Jonathan Drouin collected four assists while Tomas Tatar, Brendan Gallagher and Joel Armia also scored for Montreal. Carey Price made 28 saves as the Canadiens defeated Detroit for the third time in three meetings this season. Anthony Mantha scored for the Red Wings, who have lost six straight. Detroit starting goaltender Jimmy Howard was pulled early from his third start in a row after allowing six goals on 22 shots in the first two periods.

### GOLDEN KNIGHTS 4, STARS 1

Max Pacioretty scored twice, including the deciding goal with 5:08 to play, and Marc-Andre Fleury recorded 23 saves as Vegas defeated visiting Dallas to snap a three-game losing streak. Pacioretty's second goal came as he swept behind the net and lifted the puck off the stick of Dallas goaltender Ben Bishop, then tried to center the puck. Instead, his pass deflected off the

Stars' Tyler Seguin and trickled across the goal line before Bishop could swipe it away. Vegas earned just its fourth win in the past 14 games (4-9-1), while Dallas fell to 3-6-1 in its past 10 outings. Bishop stopped 44 shots for the Stars, who got a goal from Roope Hintz. Brayden McNabb and Nate Schmidt had goals for the Golden Knights.

### BLUES 2, PREDATORS 0

Tyler Bozak broke a scoreless tie with 7:25 left in regulation, and rookie Jordan Binnington needed to make just 19 saves for his fifth shutout as St. Louis beat visiting Nashville. The Blues were finally rewarded for outshooting the Predators 44-19 in the game as Bozak fired a Vladimir Tarasenko pass just as an unsportsman-like conduct penalty on Nashville's Ryan Johansen ended. Alex Pietrangolo added an empty-netter for the Blues. Binnington continued his stellar play, improving to 7-0-0 with a 1.55 goals-against average at home as a starter for St. Louis. Juuse Saros was just as tough, making 42 saves for Nashville, which was shut out for the second time in three games. — Reuters

## German athletes earn more advertising rights during Games

BERLIN: German athletes and their sponsors will have more possibilities to advertise during the Tokyo 2020 Olympics following an easing of restrictions, the German Cartel Office said yesterday. Athletes competing at the Olympic Games have been severely restricted in commercial advertising and promotion activities in the weeks running up to the Olympics as well as during the Games.

The International Olympic Committee charter rule 40 states that "except as permitted by the IOC Executive Board, no competitor, coach, trainer or official who participates in the Olympic Games may allow his person, name, picture or sports performances to be used for advertising purposes during the Olympic Games."

This was long seen as major problem for the vast majority of athletes who depend heavily on their visibility during the Olympics every four years to generate sponsorship and advertising revenues.

"We ensure that the advertising opportunities of German athletes and their sponsors during the Olympic Games, which the DOSB (German Olympic Sports Confederation) and IOC significantly restricted in the past, are extended," Andreas Mundt, President of the Cartel Office, said in a statement following the comple-

## 'Anybody can beat anybody': Test upsets keep Black Caps wary

HAMILTON: New Zealand captain Kane Williamson said yesterday recent Test upsets mean "anybody can beat anybody" and the world number two ranked side can have no room for complacency against minnows Bangladesh. The Black Caps made history this week when they were elevated to second in the ICC Test team rankings for the first time following South Africa's shock 2-0 defeat at home to Sri Lanka, the only time an Asian team has won a series in South Africa.

It came hot on the heels of the eighth-ranked West Indies also enjoying a stunning result at home by winning a Test series against England for the first time since 2009.

"Sri Lanka over in South Africa was a fantastic effort," said Williamson when naming his team for the



German athletes Lisa Mayer (L-R), Tatjana Pinto, Gina Luckenkemper and Rebekka Haase celebrate after taking fourth place in the women's 4 x 100 metre relay.

tion of administrative proceedings that started in 2017.

He said sports organisations pursuing economic activities were also subject to competition law. "While athletes are the key figures of Olympic Games, they cannot benefit directly from the IOC's high advertising revenue generated with official Olympic sponsors. However, as the games mark the height of their sporting careers, self-marketing during the games plays a very important role."

"Our decision grants German athletes more leeway when it comes to marketing themselves during the Olympic Games, for example as far as the use of certain "Olympic" terms or their pictures taken in sports events, or social media activities are concerned."

Among the changes are that advertising activities

opening match of a three-match Test series against Bangladesh which begins in Hamilton on Thursday.

"It's so hard to beat a side like South Africa anywhere, let alone in their backyard, but anybody can beat anybody." Ninth-ranked Bangladesh, who have enjoyed home Test wins against England and Australia in recent years, say Sri Lanka's victory in South Africa stands as a beacon for them.

"What Sri Lanka did was remarkable," said Bangladesh coach Steve Rhodes. "When the boys look at those results it definitely will be an inspiration for them and I will use it in the team talk."

"If we play anything like we can do, we will surprise the New Zealanders." New Zealand dominated Sri Lanka before Christmas, leaving Williamson to suggest it was best to shut the rankings out of the conversation.

"It's all about winning the series, as in every series that is sort of the goal you take into it," he said. "As we've seen, the rankings are sometimes in your control and sometimes outside your control so it's a very difficult thing to focus on. "We know if we are playing good cricket day in and day out then perhaps those things will lean your way."

New Zealand have made one change from the side that played their last Test, a victory over Sri Lanka two months ago by 423 runs, with Todd Astle coming in for Ajaz Patel. The Seddon Park wicket is usually regarded

planned for during the Olympics no longer need to be cleared by the DOSB beforehand. They can also include some terms such as "medal, gold, silver, bronze, winter or summer games."

It is now also permitted to use certain photographs taken during the Olympic Games, while athletes are allowed to use social media more freely during the Olympic Games. These changes apply only for German athletes. The IOC, whose Rule 40 has been aimed at protecting the rights of its own Olympic sponsors, had already somewhat eased restrictions at the 2018 Pyeongchang winter Olympics after the Cartel Office had launched its administrative proceedings for "suspected abuse of a dominant position against the DOSB and the IOC."—Reuters



Kane Williamson

as a good batting strip but Williamson said it "looks a little different" this year and he was undecided on what he would do should he win the toss.

New Zealand: Jeet Raval, Tom Latham, Kane Williamson (capt), Ross Taylor, Henry Nicholls, BJ Watling, Colin de Grandhomme, Tim Southee, Neil Wagner, Todd Astle, Trent Boult. — AFP

## China turns eye to diaspora as new league season gets underway

HONG KONG: After more disappointment on the international stage and with the 2022 World Cup on the horizon, Chinese football is shifting focus yet again in another attempt to join the global elite—this time with talent developed elsewhere.

The Chinese Super League (CSL) season kicks off on Friday with the sport in a state of flux following the national team's limp exit from January's Asian Cup and Marcello Lippi bowing out as coach.

As the Italian shuffled into retirement he left behind an aging team in need of a complete overhaul if President Xi Jinping's hopes of qualifying for the World Cup are to be realised in Qatar in less than four years' time.

"This is a problem and can be a problem for China in the next few years," World Cup winner Lippi said during the Asian Cup, where his team surrendered meekly to Iran in the quarter-finals.

"At the moment these players are 32-, 33-years-old and there aren't too many younger players. Maybe the younger players don't have the same experience these players have."

China's squad, with an average age of 29, was the oldest at the Asian Cup but with a lack of quality in the domestic ranks CSL clubs are attempting to use naturalisation as a way to improve the player pool for Lippi's eventual successor.

A lack of development work at the turn of the millennium has led to a shortage of candidates to replace stalwarts such as Zheng Zhi and Gao Lin, leaving Chinese football to cast the net overseas for players who are eligible through parentage.

Norway-born John Hou Saeter—known in China as Hou Yongyong and who qualifies to play for China through his mother—became the first such player to make his debut for a CSL side at the weekend.

The 21-year-old midfielder was introduced from the bench during Beijing Guoan's 2-0 Chinese Super Cup defeat to league champions Shanghai SIPG.

He was joined at the Chinese FA Cup holders by former Arsenal midfielder Nico Yennaris, who also claimed Chinese citizenship through his mother after moving to the Chinese Super League from English second tier side Brentford in January.

Both Saeter and 25-year-old Yennaris have secured their Chinese passports while others are embarking on similar moves. — Reuters

## Sports

# Milan secure Lazio stalemate in Coppa Italia semi-final, first leg

## Di Maria fires PSG into French Cup semi-finals

ROME: AC Milan held Lazio to a 0-0 draw in the first leg of their Coppa Italia semi-final in Rome on Tuesday as the home side wasted numerous chances. The 2013 winners had plenty of opportunities to claim an advantage, including Ciro Immobile's delicate lob in the second half, but Gennaro Gattuso's side will return to the San Siro the happier of the teams.

"The regret is that we didn't manage to score," Lazio coach Simone Inzaghi told Rai Sport. "We were only missing a goal. But the lads put in a great performance, were always very focused against Milan, who are the form team in Serie A right now."

After a poor opening quarter of an hour as both teams failed to assert any control, the ball broke to Lucas Paqueta in the home side's box.

Tiemo Bakayoko's deflected shot fell to Paqueta but his shot was weak in threatening Thomas Strakosha.

The capital city side dominated the remainder of the first half with plenty of chances which they should have taken. Patric, Immobile and Sergej Milinkovic-Savic all saw tame efforts from inside the box glance past Gianluigi Donnarumma's right-hand post.

The hosts had a penalty shout turned down just after the hour mark. Immobile was pushed to the ground by Alessio Romagnoli as he cushioned the ball with a header, but he was judged to be offside by the assistant referee.

Serbian Milinkovic-Savic finally had a shot on target on 66 minutes as his deflected effort forced Donnarumma to dive to his left. The best chance of the final 45 fell to Immobile with 10 minutes to play.

“Regret is we didn't manage to score”

He found himself in space one-on-one against youngster Donnarumma, but his audacious attempted chip hit the post and rolled out for a goal kick. He was immediately substituted for Felipe Caicedo by Inzaghi, whose first touch was to earn a wasted corner.

The visitors had a chance to secure an away-goal advantage with three minutes to go as Fabio Borini's impressive overhead-kick cross found Krzysztof Piatek, but his header sailed over the bar. The second leg takes place on April 24, but Lazio's attentions will be fixed on a Rome derby on Saturday while Milan welcome Sassuolo in Serie A this weekend.

Meanwhile in Paris, Paris Saint-Germain continued their bid for a fifth straight French Cup title as Angel Di Maria scored twice in a comfortable 3-0 quarter-final win over Dijon at the Parc des Princes on Tuesday.

Di Maria's eighth-minute lob put the holders ahead, before adding his second before the half-hour mark, with Thomas Meunier sweeping in a late third. Thomas Tuchel's men remain on course for a historic treble, as they also lead Ligue 1 by 17 points with a game in hand and will take a 2-0 advantage over Manchester United into the second leg of their Champions League last-16 tie next week. Head coach Tuchel, with Neymar and Edinson Cavani still out injured ahead of the Man United game, decided to leave Kylian Mbappe on the bench against a Dijon side languishing in the Ligue 1 relegation zone.

The German singled out the first-half performance of January signing Leandro Paredes for special praise.



PARIS: Paris Saint-Germain's French midfielder Christopher Nkunku (R) kicks the ball as Dijon's Icelandic goalkeeper Runar Runarsson (L) leaps during the French Cup quarter-final football match between Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) and Dijon (DFCO) at the Parc des Princes stadium in Paris on Tuesday. —AFP

"(Paredes) played a very good first half, like the rest of the team," Tuchel said. "He's a guy who can make very precise passes. It was his role to set the pace and speed up the passing game."

The hosts got off to a quick start, with former Stoke City forward Eric Maxim Choupo-Moting denied only his

second goal for the club by Dijon goalkeeper Runar Alex Runarsson. But PSG did not have to wait long to break the deadlock, as Julian Draxler found Di Maria in space, with the Argentinian making the most of poor positioning by Runarsson to loft the ball into the far corner for his 12th goal of the season.—AFP

## Leicester welcome Rodgers with win, Newcastle end Burnley run

LONDON: New Leicester manager Brendan Rodgers watched on from the stands as the Foxes beat Brighton 2-1, while Newcastle pulled further clear of the relegation battle by defeating Burnley on Tuesday.

Rodgers was confirmed as Claude Puel's successor just before kick-off at the King Power after dramatically leaving Celtic despite being on course for a third straight domestic treble in Scotland.

The Northern Irishman saw what his new side are capable of as Demarai Gray and Jamie Vardy put the hosts into a 2-0 lead before Davy Propper pulled a goal back.

"I spoke to them about the incoming manager and just said we had to concentrate on the game. He's given the players a boost. He said he's excited to get started," said Leicester's caretaker manager Mike Stowell.

"It's been a difficult season on and off the pitch but I think we should be seventh for the quality we have."

"Today's win broke four defeats on the spin so hopefully the shackles are off because there's still plenty of games to play—let's look upwards not down."

However, Brighton's alarming slide towards the bottom three continued as they could not find an equaliser and now have not won in seven league games.

Newcastle are headed in the other direction as once again they were inspired by the performance of record



LEICESTER: Appointed earlier in the evening, Leicester City's Northern Irish manager Brendan Rodgers (C) is welcomed by supporters ahead of the English Premier League football match between Leicester City and Brighton and Hove Albion at King Power Stadium in Leicester, central England on Tuesday. —AFP

signing Miguel Almiron to end Burnley's eight-game unbeaten Premier League run with a 2-0 victory.

Fabian Schar's stunning long-range effort put Rafael Benitez's men in front before Sean Longstaff scored his first league goal for the club to give Newcastle a commanding half-time lead they never looked like surrendering. "It is amazing to be playing every week, it was my dream as a young boy," said Newcastle native Longstaff.

"There is something different about night games at St James' Park. The atmosphere is the best in the world, I got lost in the goal. It was amazing."

Cardiff remain just a point above the relegation zone as Everton inflicted a second heavy home defeat on the Welsh side in five days with a 3-0 win to boost their confidence ahead of Sunday's Merseyside derby against title-chasing Liverpool.

"player welfare". While Stajcic has threatened legal action and many in Australia's soccer community still want answers about his sacking, Milicic said Kerr's appointment was a chance for the team to move on.

"What I said to the group is the message is clear—what's happened in the past, we can't change that," he told reporters. "But from today, the first meeting we had, the first training session we had, this is our chance to move forward and we can definitely together make an impact on how this journey's going to end."

Kerr has earned 72 caps for Australia and scored 27 times since her debut in 2009, frequently celebrating her goals with a trademark back flip. She said it was a "tremendous honour" to captain the Matildas, ranked sixth in the world, with Steph Catley as her vice-captain.

"Together with Steph and the team we are committed to excelling at the 2019 Women's World Cup and there will be no bigger honour than to wear the armband in France," she said. The duo replaced co-captains Clare Polkinghorne and Lisa De Vanna, both of whom remain with the squad. —AFP

since Solskjaer replaced Jose Mourinho in December. That has been a factor in a huge upturn in results, with 14 matches under Solskjaer bringing 11 wins and just one defeat. "It's probably linked, yes," said Solskjaer. "But when do you make that change? Do you wait until pre-season and think you will change results by just not asking them to run? Or do we start now and show them demands of intensity and how we want to play?" The caretaker manager has made a point of getting United to play the fast-paced attacking game for which they were renowned during much of Alex Ferguson's 26-and-a-half years in charge at Old Trafford.

"You have seen what I have chosen," he added. "We need to play as a Manchester United team. If you want to be a part of Manchester United, it's a survival of the fittest isn't it?"

Solskjaer acknowledged that the physical demands of a hard-running style may take its toll on some of the more experienced members of his squad. But he stressed the importance of professionalism off the pitch, saying his players could prolong their careers.

"They are getting older aren't they, Juan, Nemanja

(Matic), Ander. So it's about the preparation, the standards that you have to live up to on and off the pitch as a Manchester United player, and as a professional player in the Premier League."

"It's not just turning up, playing and training and then going home and doing all these little out-of-football activities that we have all seen too many players doing. I'm pleased with the way my lads have responded in that way, that we don't see too much of them outside football."

"That was a big part of my career—as long as you are a footballer and you play in the Premier League, make the most of it because suddenly you get these injuries and you are done."

Solskjaer, meanwhile, is confident that Romelu Lukaku will get himself into the right shape to rediscover his best form. The striker, who has gone 10 games without scoring, admitted in December that the muscle mass he put on to help Belgium finish third at last year's World Cup has hampered his form at club level.

"I can understand why, when you go to a World Cup and see the teams you play, the physicality might take over in terms of your preparation.—AFP



Sam Kerr

## Kerr named World Cup captain as Australian women seek fresh start

WELLINGTON: Striker Sam Kerr was named captain of the troubled Australian women's football team yesterday, with coach Ante Milicic confident she can lead the Matildas into a new era. Kerr, 25, will head the team at this year's World Cup and has her first taste of leadership as Australia hosts the Cup of Nations this week in Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne.

Her appointment comes after Milicic's predecessor Alen Stajcic was dumped in controversial circumstances last month over unspecified concerns about

## Solskjaer admits his demands contributing to injury pile-up

MANCHESTER: Ole Gunnar Solskjaer believes the privilege of playing for Manchester United should be about the "survival of the fittest" as he deals with a mounting injury crisis. Solskjaer had to make three first-half substitutions during Sunday's 0-0 draw with Liverpool as Ander Herrera, Juan Mata and Jesse Lingard all hobbled off injured.

The Norwegian could be without 10 players in total for Wednesday's trip to Crystal Palace and acknowledged that at least some of the muscle problems suffered by his squad may be a result of the rising physical demands he is placing on them.

United's running statistics have increased significantly



Matches on TV  
(Local Timings)

SPAIN COPA DEL REY

Valencia C.F v Real Betis  
beIN SPORTS

23:00

## Guardiola sorry to derailed Pellegrini's final days at City

MANCHESTER: Pep Guardiola has apologised if the early announcement of his arrival at Manchester City in 2016 destabilised his predecessor Manuel Pellegrini's attempt to win the quadruple.

Pellegrini will bring his West Ham side to Manchester yesterday, making his first visit to the Etihad for a match since City sacked him to make space for Guardiola.

The Chilean confirmed in February 2016, three months before his departure, that he was being replaced, and City, who were still in contention to win four trophies at that point, picked up only seven points from the seven league matches that followed. They did win the League Cup that season, and reached the semi-finals of the Champions League, but needed a draw at Swansea on the final day of the campaign to secure fourth place.

Pellegrini acknowledged in May 2016 that his decision to announce his departure contributed to City's subsequent loss of form, saying that "something was broken in that moment".

Guardiola, who joined City from Bayern Munich, said he was unaware that his impending arrival caused such instability. "I don't know. He can answer that. I was in Munich, so I don't know what happened in the locker room and what the reason why is," he said.

"But if it was the reason I think nobody can know it—I'm sorry and I apologise. Everybody was honest to tell Manuel what was happening, but really it's a question for Manuel." Pellegrini won the Premier League and the League Cup in the first of his three seasons at City, and his role in the club's rise was acknowledged by Guardiola.

"Of course, all the players I have in my hands now were with other managers and they learned a lot from that—and I benefit from that."

"In the past decade, they were involved with (Roberto) Mancini and Manuel and myself, with all the staff and all the players, we have created Manchester City."

"I didn't build it. I didn't create it. Many incredible players and managers, everybody, did something."

"I hope we can leave something for the next manager to do that. That's the best we can do for other managers, leave something for the club—and, of course, I got something with what Manuel did here."

One of the most important signings City made under Pellegrini was Raheem Sterling, who scored the decisive kick as Chelsea were beaten in a penalty shoot-out in Sunday's League Cup final.

Sterling has scored 15 goals this season, including the 90th-minute winner in the 3-2 Champions League last-16 first-leg win over Schalke on February 20.

And Guardiola was impressed by the 24-year-old's bravery to take the deciding spot-kick against Chelsea.

"I cannot anticipate how far his career will go. But I admire the fact that, in Sunday's situation, he took responsibility," he said.

"The fact he said he wanted to hit the last penalty or even the first one, or take that responsibility, that means a lot. 'Of course, he helps us a lot, but he will retire and say: 'I took responsibility and I was brave with courage in the big moments'."

"These kinds of players are judged on these kinds of actions. In basketball, the last seconds, who is the taker in the last action? That makes the difference."

"The penalty in the final of the World Cup, who's the taker? So that is what makes the difference—to have the feeling that, when everyone has doubts, says: 'I am going to do that'. That is massive." —AFP

# Sport Times

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2019

**25** Aussie surfer Gilmore hopes to ride Olympic waves of success



**26** Red-hot Flames streak past Isles, Wild stun Jets with two late goals



**27** Kerr named World Cup captain as Australian women seek fresh start



## Nuggets hold off Thunder for 5th straight win

### Raptors continue home domination of Celtics



DENVER: Paul George #13 of the Oklahoma City Thunder handles the ball against the Denver Nuggets on Tuesday at the Pepsi Center in Denver, Colorado. — AFP

DENVER: Nikola Jokic had 36 points, 10 assists and nine rebounds, Will Barton scored 23 points, and the host Denver Nuggets beat the Oklahoma City Thunder 121-112 on Tuesday night. Jamal Murray added 20 points and Paul Millsap finished with 12 points and 10 rebounds to help Denver win its fifth straight. The Nuggets have won each of their first three matchups against Oklahoma City this season. Russell Westbrook had 22 points, 14 rebounds and nine assists, and Paul George added 25 points, eight rebounds, seven assists and six steals for Oklahoma City. Jerami Grant contributed 21 points for the Thunder, who have lost three of their past four. The Nuggets held a 13-point lead early in the fourth quarter before Oklahoma City came storming back to take a three-point lead. Then Denver responded to the run with one of its own. Millsap hit two free throws, and Murray followed a Thunder miss with a corner 3-pointer to give the Nuggets the lead again. Millsap hit a layup and split two free throws to make it 105-101 with 4:19 left.

#### RAPTORS 118, CELTICS 95

Pascal Siakam scored 25 points and grabbed eight

rebounds to help Toronto defeat visiting Boston. Kawhi Leonard added 21 points and six rebounds for the Raptors, who have won eight straight home games against the Celtics and eight of their past nine games overall. Marcus Morris had 17 points and six rebounds for the Celtics, who have lost three in a row and five of their past seven.

#### KNICKS 108, MAGIC 103

Emmanuel Mudiay scored 19 points to lead a big night from the reserves as New York overcame a 16-point deficit to record a victory over visiting Orlando. The Knicks won consecutive games for the only time this season other than a three-game stretch in late November. They posted a second straight home victory after a team-record, 18-game home losing streak. Rookie Allonzo Trier scored 12 of his 18 in the fourth while first-year center Mitchell Robinson finished with a career-best 17 points, 14 rebounds, six blocks and three steals for New York. Aaron Gordon and Nikola Vucevic scored 26 points apiece for Orlando, which lost for the third time in its past 11 games. —Reuters

#### NBA results/standings

LA Clippers 121, Dallas 112; Brooklyn 101, San Antonio 85; Miami 121, Phoenix 124; Chicago 106, Milwaukee 117; Houston 119, Atlanta 111; Memphis 110, LA Lakers 105; Minnesota 112, Sacramento 105; New Orleans 110, Philadelphia 111; Charlotte 110, Golden State 121; Cleveland 110, Portland 123; Detroit 113, Indiana 109.

Eastern Conference				Western Conference					
W	L	PCT	GB						
Milwaukee	46	14	0.767	-	Golden State	43	17	0.717	-
Toronto	44	17	0.721	2.5	Denver	41	18	0.695	1.5
Indiana	40	21	0.656	6.5	Oklahoma City	38	21	0.644	4.5
Philadelphia	39	22	0.639	7.5	Portland	37	23	0.617	6
Boston	37	23	0.617	9	Houston	35	25	0.583	8
Brooklyn	32	30	0.516	15	Utah	33	26	0.559	9.5
Detroit	29	30	0.492	16.5	LA Clippers	34	28	0.548	10
Charlotte	28	32	0.467	18	San Antonio	33	29	0.532	11
Orlando	28	33	0.459	18.5	Sacramento	31	29	0.517	12
Miami	26	33	0.441	19.5	Minnesota	29	31	0.483	14
Washington	24	36	0.400	22	LA Lakers	29	31	0.483	14
Atlanta	20	41	0.328	26.5	New Orleans	27	35	0.435	17
Chicago	16	45	0.262	30.5	Dallas	26	34	0.433	17
Cleveland	14	47	0.230	32.5	Memphis	24	38	0.387	20
New York	12	48	0.200	34	Phoenix	12	50	0.194	32

## Maxwell ton fires Australia to T20 series sweep

BANGALORE: Glenn Maxwell hit a breathtaking century to single-handedly lead Australia to a 2-0 series sweep over India with their seven-wicket win in the second Twenty20 international yesterday.

Maxwell smashed 113 off 55 balls as the tourists chased down their target of 191 with two balls to spare at Bangalore's M.Chinnaswamy Stadium.

Maxwell's knock laced with 7 fours and 9 sixes eclipsed Indian skipper Virat Kohli's 72 off 38 balls that lifted the hosts to 190 for four after being put into bat first. The Aussies lost two early wickets in their chase but Maxwell stood his ground with two good partnerships including an unbeaten 99-run stand with Peter Handscomb, who made 20.

He finished the game with a six and four off paceman Siddarth Kaul to give the Aussies a convincing win after their last-ball finish in the opening match. Put into bat, the hosts rode on a century stand between Kohli and Mahendra Singh Dhoni, who made 40 off 23 balls, to take the attack to the opposition bowlers.

Opener K.L. Rahul gave his team a brisk start with his 47 off 26 deliveries but Australia

hit back with a couple of wickets to check the opposition surge. Fast bowler Nathan Coulter-Nile got Rahul, who scored a fifty in his team's opening loss, with a change of pace as the batsman was caught out at deep third man.

Jason Behrendorff got Shikhar Dhawan for 14 and D'Arcy Short claimed Rishabh Pant for one with a brilliant catch from Jhye Richardson. Kohli then clobbered the ball to all parts of the ground as he hit Coulter-Nile for three straight sixes in the 16th over to entertain a raucous home crowd.

Dhoni soon joined the party as the veteran wicketkeeper-batsman hit 3 fours and 3 sixes before falling to Pat Cummins. The two teams now head into five one-day internationals starting Saturday in Hyderabad. — AFP



BANGALORE: Australian batsmen Glenn Maxwell (R) and Peter Handscomb embrace after victory in the second Twenty20 international cricket match between India and Australia at The M. Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bangalore yesterday, winning by seven wickets. — AFP